

## **JASNA Dayton Newsletter**

[www.jasnadayton.org](http://www.jasnadayton.org)

November 2014

### **“Jane Austen’s Museums” with Crystal B. Lake December 7, 2014**

On Sunday, December 7, JASNA Dayton will celebrate Jane Austen’s birthday (December 16, 1775—this is her 239<sup>th</sup>) with tea and a talk, “Jane Austen’s Museums” by Crystal B. Lake, Assistant Professor of English at Wright State. Many of us are familiar with Crystal as a former member of JASNA Dayton and organizer of Wright State’s splendid *Pride and Prejudice* gala in October, 2013. She will talk about the growing interest in museums during Jane Austen’s lifetime and its effects on Austen’s outlook and writings.



Crystal’s talk considers the kinds of artifacts Austen might have seen in private collections and in a range of public museums that displayed zoological, biological, and archaeological specimens. Through archival research, Crystal has sought to reconstruct many of these collections and to track appearances of the artifacts in literary works. She is especially interested in reevaluating Austen’s youthful *History of England* and *Northanger Abbey* for clues about how her representations of history were indebted to these kinds of collections and the popular debates they inspired.

**LOCATION:** 401 Millet Hall, Wright State University. There is a parking lot behind Millet Hall that visitors may use free of charge on Sundays. Elevators to the fourth floor are located by the door from the parking lot.

#### **SCHEDULE**

12:45-1:30	Arrival and Socializing
1:30-2:30	Talk by Crystal B. Lake
2:30-3:45	Tea and Toasts to Jane Austen

**REFRESHMENTS:** Gary Mitchner has agreed to organize our refreshments. Gary makes an avocation of putting on teas, lately often as fundraisers for the Peace Museum. Our longer-term members will remember a Jane Austen tea he organized at Books & Company back in 2007 and another tea in 2009, at Marilyn Rueth’s home, in tribute to Jean Long for her work as leader of

the Reading Group. Gary will supply the tea and cups from his elegant collection and, as on the other occasions, we are to provide the rest of the menu.



Gary surveys his work at tea for Jean Long

Menu:

Scones and jam (from Central Perc)  
Finger sandwiches (savories) such as ham salad, egg salad, and cucumber/watercress  
Branston pickle sandwiches (from Central Perc)  
Cake, cupcakes, or petit fours  
Chocolates  
Other tea-appropriate treats  
Punch (by the Program Committee)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! This being an uncatered party, we will need plenty of help to bring it off smoothly. The members of the Program Committee will all be on the job, but we will need help with registration, setup, and cleanup, as well as tea sandwiches, cakes, and other delicacies. We will be contacting people later on for help on the day of the meeting, but as part of your RSVP please let us know whether you will be bringing food, and what item. (The items labeled "from Central Perc" are already on order.)

COST: \$15

RSVP by December 4 with a check made out to **JASNA Dayton**. Mail your check along with contact information (phone number or e-mail) and menu item, if any, to:

Mary Ann Gasior  
2727 Old Whipp Court  
Centerville, OH 45440

For questions contact Mary Ann at 937-434-5992 or [gasiormaryann@yahoo.com](mailto:gasiormaryann@yahoo.com).



## Crystal B. Lake Studies Austen in Cultural Context



Crystal B. Lake completed her PhD in 2008 at the University of Missouri, specializing in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British literature and culture. She joined Wright State in 2011, after completing three years as a Marion L. Brittain Postdoctoral Fellow at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

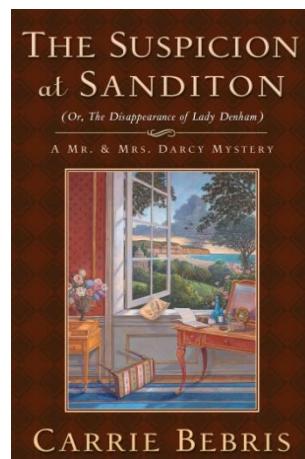
Crystal first became interested in Jane Austen while studying as Devoney Looser's student during her doctoral coursework at the University of Missouri. She has been particularly intrigued by the ways in which Austen inserts quiet but trenchant critiques of

British culture or politics into her novels. Often an object, a setting, or a name carries far more weight than contemporary readers realize, and Crystal enjoys uncovering these allusions so that we can appreciate them once again. Her interest in Austen floats through her current book project, which is titled *Artifacts: 1660-1837* and explores representations of historical objects in a wide range of British texts from the period. Writers like Austen, she says, often used historical artifacts purposefully and carefully to engage in a number of philosophical, historical, and political debates.

Crystal has already built up an impressive resume. Her work has been published in *English Literary History* (Johns Hopkins), *Review of English Studies* (Oxford University Press), and *Modern Philology*, among others, and she has been awarded research fellowships from the Yale Center for British Art, The Lewis Walpole Library, the Centre for the Study of Early English Women's Writing at Chawton House, and CELIA. Additionally, Crystal received Wright State's Presidential Early Career Achievement Award in 2013.

## New Mr. and Mrs. Darcy Book Announced on Amazon

Carrie Bebris, our new RC and author of the successful Mr. and Mrs Darcy Mysteries, has just submitted the final version of her seventh novel in the series to her publisher. Her new title is *The Suspicion at Sanditon (Or, The Disappearance of Lady Denham)*. The book is already available for pre-publication sale at bookstores and on Amazon, with a release date of July 14. Carrie is looking forward to a break from her intense writing schedule, during which she will explore possible new directions for her next project.



## JASNA Dayton Executive Committee

Regional Coordinator	Carrie Bebris	937-436-3716	cbebris@carriebebris.com
Secretary	Mariah Busher		
Treasurer	Judy McCoy		
Program Coordinator	Vacant		
Membership Coordinator	Deb Bentley	937-429-5123	<a href="mailto:extraone@woh.rr.com">extraone@woh.rr.com</a>
Newsletter Editor	Meredith Stoehr	937-434-7567	<a href="mailto:stoeha@yahoo.com">stoeha@yahoo.com</a>
Librarian	Toni Tumbusch	513-752-5115	<a href="mailto:victoriantoni@netzero.net">victoriantoni@netzero.net</a>
Webmaster	Tom Tumbusch		
Reading Group Coordinator and Social Secretary	Jean Long	937-287-6919	<a href="mailto:jtrnlong@aol.com">jtrnlong@aol.com</a>

### Help JASNA Dayton While You Shop

The JASNA Dayton Executive Committee has been looking into ways of developing new income sources so that we can bring in more speakers from outside our immediate area. As a first step, we have joined Dorothy Lane Market's Good Neighbors Program. In this program, a small percent of the amount each registered shopper spends in the store will be returned to our organization each year. We are enrolled as "Jane Austen Society of North America, Dayton Region," with number 813. If you already have a DLM Club card, you can sign up in one easy step:



Online: At <http://www.dorothylane.com/clubdlm/goodneighbor.pl> enter your name, your full Club number (the 11 digit number below the bar code on your Club card, omitting spaces), and our charity number, 813.

In person: At the Customer Desk, request a Good Neighbor form, write your name and DLM Club number, and check the box for "Jane Austen Society"

If you do not have a DLM Club card yet, sign up at <http://www.dorothylane.com/clubdlm/> or request a form at the Customer Desk before registering for the Good Neighbor Program.

## Jean Long Announces Plan to Leave Dayton

Jean Long, who has been a member of JASNA Dayton since its very earliest days and who has just stepped down from a two year term as RC, has announced that she plans to leave Dayton in the spring. She and her husband Bob are planning to move to the Grand Rapids area in Michigan. This will be a deeply felt loss for our group as well as for many of us personally. The Reading Group, which Jean started in 2005, is one of our most popular events and has done much to bring in new members. As we attend her Reading Group sessions this coming year, we will savor more than ever Jean's deep appreciation and understanding of Jane Austen, the skill and graciousness with which she manages our various opinions, and the elegance of her tea table.



I just checked whether Grand Rapids has its own Region in Michigan. It does not. Perhaps Jean will soon be introducing Jane to a new set of admirers.

## Reading Group to Start *Pride and Prejudice* November 9

Having already made one pass through all of Austen's major novels and some of her letters, the Reading Group is ready to return to *Pride and Prejudice*.

Our Reading Group sessions begin with Jean's introduction to the assigned chapters. We then proceed around the room, with each person reading a favorite passage or offering a question or comment. Jean advises us to pick at least two favorite passages per chapter, in order to be sure of having something to say.

### Reading Group Schedule 2014-15

	<u>By Volume</u>	<u>By Chapter</u>
Nov. 9, 2014	Vol. I, Chap. 1-10	Chap. 1-10
Jan. 11, 2015	Vol. I, Chap. 11-18	Chap. 11-18
Feb. 8, 2015	Vol. I, Chap. 19-23; Vol. II, Chap. 1-4	Chap. 19-27
April 12, 2015	Vol. II, Chap. 5-12	Chap. 28-35

Reading Groups are held on Sunday afternoons from 2:30 to 4:30 at Jean's home, 927 Far Hills (Route 48), Oakwood, 45419. The back of her condominium faces Far Hills. To enter, turn onto Park Avenue (left if you're going north on Far Hills, right if you're going south), and turn left almost immediately, just before the municipal building. (The street says "City cars only.") You'll be on an alley that leads to the parking lot of Bob and Jean's building. A sidewalk runs between 2 sections of the complex. If you are facing Far Hills, Jean's condominium is on the right. If you have questions, call Jean at 937-287-6919 or e-mail [jtrnlong@aol.com](mailto:jtrnlong@aol.com).

## September 6 Meeting at Sinclair a Delight

JASNA Dayton's first program of the 2014-15 season provided an inside look at Sinclair's production of *Pride and Prejudice*. It featured talks by Kimberly Borst, the play's director, and Kathleen Hotmer, the costume designer, followed by a rehearsal that ran through the entire play. Kimberly and Kathleen are both enthusiastic Janeites. Kimberly loves the "dignity and social grace" of the Austen characters, and Kathleen says she has read *Pride and Prejudice* more than any other book.

Both women talked about how they came to select the Hanreddy-Sullivan version of the play (the same version many of us saw last spring in Cincinnati). They consider it more accessible than other versions to people not already familiar with the plot, and most of all they like the way it moves. During the rehearsal, we could observe how the first part of the story, up to the Netherfield party's departure for London, is condensed into a series of parties, each centered around a dance. Kimberly rigorously drilled the cast in the dance steps and in timing the dialog woven through the dance sequences. These scenes were extremely effective in performance, and the staging emphasized what I think is an important theme in the novel—the fact that the meetings and partings of the courting rituals do not allow pause enough for couples to learn to know each other well.



Kimberly explained that she used color blind casting in selecting her players. (She has even used sex-blind casting in the past, having chosen a female lead for *Godspell*.) Her attractive and compelling Elizabeth and Darcy were African American, as was the exuberant Mr. Collins, while the rest of the major characters were white. The sweet and earnest Mr. Bingley, the graceful Jane, and bubbling Lydia were also excellent in their roles, as were Mr. and Mrs. Bennet and Caroline Bingley, played by actors from the community.

Kathleen talked about her process of developing a design for an historical production. She looks for the characters online (much as Jane Austen would seek out her characters in the London portrait galleries). Kathleen looks at portraits from the period for ideas about hair styles and clothing, but also for traits that remind her of particular characters in the play. She encourages cast members to do the same, but since students tend to be "either timid or lazy" in their research (an apt insight into the nature of students), she herself puts together a board of color portraits for

each character to be costumed. For her overall palette Kathleen looks to landscape paintings of the period.

Once conceived, ideal designs must be trimmed in line with financial constraints. For *Pride and Prejudice*, each character had one basic costume, which could be varied to indicate passage of time, change of season or occupation. Hats, coats, shawls, and props are used to vary the costumes. Many of the costumes are rented and a few are made in-house. Kathleen points out as one problem in relying on rented costumes that student actresses are often larger than professional ones and student actors often smaller.

Both Kimberley and Kathleen conveyed to us the intensity of their passion for creating a great theatrical experience for theater goers and for passing that passion on to their students. It was inspiring and great fun to see the students doing their very best in rehearsal and performance.

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### **Next Dayton *Pride and Prejudice* at Wright State Starts in January**

Not much information is available yet on the web about Wright State's Pride and Prejudice, but the schedule will be

Jan. 29, Feb. 4, 5	7:00
Jan. 30, Feb. 6, 7	8:00
Feb. 1, 7, 8	2:00

### **Death Comes to Pemberley and PBS**

The past couple Sundays *Death Comes to Pemberley* has been offered on Masterpiece Mystery. I read the book when it first came out, and I enjoyed it. P. D. James has lovely syntax, and her Austen characters behave pretty much as they ought. As Carrie Bebris lately remarked in *The Washington Post* (Oct. 24, 2014) on the subject of books that have inspired many sequels, "The books we love the most are the ones where you close the book and you're still thinking about those characters. We want to be drawn into their lives again, because we didn't get enough the first time." P. D. James spends much more time inside her characters' heads than Austen, and she creates a whole new downstairs cast that would no doubt have puzzled Jane, but generally her book succeeds in taking us back to Pemberley, albeit in a darker key.



The TV show, however, took liberties in portraying the heroine that could not be overlooked by any true friend of Mrs. Darcy. If the Sinclair production of *Pride and Prejudice* used color blind casting, this one took great pains to avoid lookism. Elizabeth appeared to be 40 at least (she is meant to be 26) and she scorned all feminine attempts at camouflage. I am quite sure she didn't comb her hair once during the first episode (she was out in the wind a good deal), and she seemed to be wearing the same dress all the time, in the daytime and at dinner. The housemaids remained immaculately turned out through all the turmoil, but not our heroine.

The *Wall Street Journal* (Oct. 24, 2014, Opinion Section) found that Mr. Darcy's grooming also left something to be desired: "Elizabeth was never going to be a show off. But she seems here to have made a fetish of plainness, and the hair of her irritable husband looks like a tiny steamroller traveled down one side of it while he slept."

## **JASNA Life Membership Dues to Increase**

If you have ever considered becoming a Life Member of JASNA, now is the time—next year, the price will rise considerably.

For those who know they will be lifelong Janeites, investing in a life membership can be financially advantageous over the long term. Currently, the price of an Individual Life Membership is \$350, while an Individual Annual Membership is \$30, so a life membership pays for itself in twelve years. Moreover, life members reap other benefits, not the least of which is freedom from having to remember to mail in their renewals every September.

However, this bargain, while beneficial to life members, over time becomes a financial liability to the organization as a whole. JASNA's operating costs (including the cost of printing and mailing the JASNA publications *Persuasions* and *JASNA News* to all members) continue to rise with inflation, without any additional dues income from life members to offset that increased expense. Therefore, periodically the dues rate for new Life Memberships must be raised. At last month's AGM, JASNA's national board voted to raise Individual Life Membership dues to \$600 as of the membership year beginning September 1, 2015.

Members who have already paid annual dues for the current membership year (which began September 1, 2014) can convert to a Life Membership before the rate goes up by sending a note and payment for the difference (\$320, if your current membership is Individual Annual) to U.S. Membership Secretary Carol Stokes, 3140 S. Temperance Way, Boise, ID 83706. Questions may also be addressed to Carol by emailing her at [carolestokes@cableone.net](mailto:carolestokes@cableone.net) or by calling 1-800-836-3911.

## **Membership Renewal Period Ends December 1**



If you haven't already done so, it's time to renew your membership in our Dayton Region of JASNA. The cutoff for renewal is 1 Dec. This is consistent with the JASNA national by-laws and customs. Dues for the year are \$10 for a basic membership with electronic newsletter, or \$15 for a basic membership plus a hard copy of the newsletter. Dues year is 1 Sep – 31 Aug.

If you wish, you may also make an optional tax-deductible donation to the Dayton Region to be used for programs, speakers, library materials, etc. An acknowledgement form will be provided for tax purposes.

To renew your membership, please mail your check made out to JASNA - Dayton Region, along with the completed membership form below to:

Debra Bentley  
JASNA Dayton Region Membership Coord.  
1552 Fairground Road  
Xenia, OH 45385

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JASNA Dayton

2014-2015 Membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Dayton Region Dues: \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Tax-Deductible Donation to Dayton Region: \_\_\_\_\_

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