

# Letter from Chicago

Winter 2011

## Luncheon

Saturday, February 12, 2011

Noon–3:00 pm

The Parthenon Restaurant  
314 S. Halsted, Chicago, IL  
(Free Valet Parking)

**The Readers' Theatre  
presents**

*No Pleasure in London*

### LUNCHEON REGISTRATION FORM

Members: \$25; Guests: \$35

**Registration deadline: February 7**

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

Guest(s) Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### You can register by

1. Going online to [www.jasnachicago.org](http://www.jasnachicago.org) and pay using your Visa or MasterCard.
- or
2. Mailing your check—payable to JASNA-GCR—and this form to **Cathy Feldman, 17 East Goethe St., Chicago, IL 60610-2312.**

Jeffrey Nigro



The JASNA Annual General Meeting in Portland, Oregon at the end of October was sheer joy for those of us who were privileged to be able to attend. If you have never had the experience of attending an AGM, I

hope you will be able to take advantage of the opportunity sometime. There is nothing quite like the experience of wallowing in Austen over a long weekend, in the company of over 600 equally devoted Janeites. This year's event in Portland had more than its share of thought-provoking papers and just plain fun, with a strong presence of GCR members. You can read more about it on the next page.

At the AGM, I had the privilege of meeting and speaking with several of my fellow Regional Coordinators. It was truly gratifying to hear so many of them tell me how admiring they are of GCR's large and active membership, and the enlightening and enjoyable programs that we are able to present. Many JASNA members shared happy memories of the AGM our region hosted in Chicago in 2008. It was also exciting to hear about the array of events that other regions are offering, from intimate book club discussions to full-fledged Regency balls. In that spirit of presenting a variety of programs, our Program Director **Elisabeth Lenckos**, with input from the JASNA-GCR Board, continues to come up with fresh and thought-provoking ideas for our members.

Our next event will take place on Saturday, February 12, 2011 at the Parthenon Restaurant in Greektown, where we have enjoyed so many Winter Meetings in the past. I am certain that everyone looks forward to our Winter Meeting. How

pleasant it is, after a couple of months of cold and darkness, to enjoy an afternoon of Austen over a sumptuous Greek lunch! Our special treat will be the GCR Readers' Theater, presenting the premiere of a new piece by our own **William Phillips**, entitled *No Pleasure in London*, exploring the relationship between town and country in Austen's work and in her time. Austen's feelings about this relationship are quite complex: London may be the place where poor Marianne is devastated by Willoughby's self-serving fecklessness, but her solitary walks in the country do not necessarily do her much good, either. Still, you will want to join us for this delightful imaginary ramble.

*Sense and Sensibility* will be prominently featured in William's script, because, as you know, 2011 marks the first in a series of major Austen anniversaries. Austen's first published novel will celebrate the 200th anniversary of its publication, and it will also inspire our GCR Gala on April 30, for which we are putting together an outstanding program suitable to such an important occasion (more information to follow!), as well as the next JASNA AGM in Fort Worth. Yeehaw!

I often wonder what Austen would make of all this fuss: hundreds of people gathering in cities on the other side of the world (from Hampshire), always finding something new to say about her work, not to mention the sequels, spinoffs, mashups, movies, mugs, tea towels, etc., etc. Would she think it all a bit vulgar, or would she be secretly pleased? Well, can you ever have too much Jane? I cannot help but paraphrase the famous remark (about London, as it happens) made by Austen's admired Dr. Johnson: anyone who is tired of Jane is tired of life!

## Jane Austen and the Abbey: Portland, Oregon AGM

Thursday evening, British actress **Angela Barlow** in the opening event, *Jane Austen: An Actor's View*, shared her love of Austen's words and brought to life a range of characters and scenes. Friday morning a panel, *Team Tilney Explains It All*, emphasized Henry Tilney's wit, fidelity, and sound judgment. Three special sessions and two breakouts highlighted members of our Region. **Jeff Nigro** showed how Gothic fiction permeated fashion, art and theater with slides and a witty talk. **Elsie Holzwarth** speculated about a London meeting between a young Edgar Allan Poe and a mature Jane Austen, and about Austen's influence on Poe's writings. **William Phillips**, on the final panel of the AGM, pointed out that issues at the heart of Austen's other novels are introduced in *Northanger Abbey*, albeit from the perspective of a younger author and a younger heroine. **Vicky Hinshaw** and **Kim Wilson** led a visual tour of abbey history. **Elisabeth Lenckos'** *The Perils and Delights of Gothic Aesthetics in Northanger Abbey* was read.

**Stephanie Barron**, author of mysteries with detective Jane Austen, talked about how Catherine Morland develops into an effective investigator. From her naïve beginnings she learns to penetrate the veil of deceit and make critical judgments based on the weight of evidence. Her only sources of information are appearance, manners and conduct at social gatherings. The crime in this comic novel is greed. John Thorpe's lies to General Tilney trigger the turning points of the novel: Catherine's invitation to Northanger and her expulsion. The crux of the matter is her real understanding of General Tilney. **Juliet MacMaster** in "A Surmise of Such Horror": *Catherine Morland's Imagination*, suggested Catherine may be the "holy fool" of King Lear. She says, "I cannot speak well enough to be

unintelligible." She is honest, stands up to pressure and is heroic with true moral discernment. Catherine's embarrassment when Henry discovers her in Mrs. Tilney's room leads to an illuminating exchange, and change of subject—to hyacinths. Her fascination with Gothic horror is transformed into appreciation of natural beauty, as she "learns to love a hyacinth," and she shows an aesthetic sensibility. Catherine's imaginative awakening is correct in spirit.



Judy and Natalie at  
Multnomah Falls, Oregon

Breakout sessions Judy attended included *The Probability of Some Negligence: Avoiding the Horror of the Absent Clergyman*. Though Henry Tilney's serious side is revealed by his dedication to his parish, there was a clerical reform movement in Austen's time

because of the perceived failure of parsons to be present to serve parishioners due to non-residency or plural livings. In addition to Sunday sermons, there were regular parish meetings, and it was important to be aware of sick and otherwise needy parishioners. Parsons, who generally had to pay for repairs to their parsonages, often supplemented meager clerical income by farming, schools, and in one case even an ale house.

*Dismemberment in the Library with the Quill Pen* clarified the legal issues of inheritance that define and limit the circumstances of so many of Austen's characters. There were few statutes; judge-made common law provided a trial-and-error method for interpreting contracts, wills, and other legal documents. Family was perceived not as one's nuclear or immediate family, but as the family through

history; a fiduciary duty to ancestors and descendants, even if unknown, made it “a sacred trust” to preserve, protect, and enlarge holdings – and not to permit division or dissipation of an estate. *The Art of Lying and Fiction Making* began with the assertion that Catherine had to go away and work through a web of plausible lies to become a woman. Isabella Thorpe exhibits histrionic personality disorder. Her brother John and General Tilney are narcissistic. Personality disorders prompt lying, and all the characters (except Catherine?) tell lies. *The Abduction of Catherine Morland: Deception, Sex and Courtship* suggested that “the relationship between Henry and Catherine can best be appreciated if we look at it against a social world that is characterized by deceptions and polite (or impolite) fictions.” Catherine’s challenge is to “negotiate a world that is often dishonest.” *The Rules of the Assembly* was useful to better understand how social life in Bath was organized in the Lower and Upper Rooms, including the role of the Master of the Ceremonies, clothing requirements, and detailed customs of dance.

Natalie’s breakout sessions included “*People that Marry Can Never Part*”: *Real and Romantic Gothicism*. Several French real life stories and three Gothic novels demonstrated the vulnerability of married women. Domestic reality met nightmare unreality. Real life stories focused on women kept hostage in darkness and isolation; even an apparent funeral masked a woman’s incarceration. In Gothic fiction, women’s lives are confiscated. Elinor Tilney shows how real that can be. The laundry list Catherine discovers in her room connects to a visit by Elinor’s suitor, a love almost lost because of the General’s greed. *Is Catherine a Lightweight? In Defense of Austen’s “Ignorant and Uninformed” 17-Year Old Heroine*. Austen explored the ethics of persuasion: how much influence can one exert over decisions of another. Catherine has inadequate guardians in the Allens. Isabella’s insistence brings psychological pressure with a dangerous play on love, friendship and guilt. Even Catherine’s brother makes special appeals to a sense of duty. Catherine is on a quest for understanding and shows great

strength of character. Unsophisticated but good natured and open-hearted, she has an inquiring mind and well-developed conscience. *Money, Mystery and Morlands: Filthy Lucre in Northanger Abbey* showed the novel can be read as a coded discussion of the British banking system and the Banking Restriction Act of 1797. Paper notes stated the Bank of England would convert the notes into gold on demand, a legally binding obligation. When the government printed more notes, insufficient gold reserves threatened to collapse the entire banking system. Parliament deemed the Bank “too big to fail,” and freed it from its obligation. This breach of promise brought a crisis of confidence. Politics, money and deceit are embedded themes throughout the novel. Isabella Thorpe breaks all of her promises; General Tilney thrusts Catherine from his house. Both dissemble. Catherine’s puzzlement that people say one thing, but mean another, reflects the lies on the Bank of England’s paper notes. “*This roof was to be the roof of an abbey!*” *What is Northanger Abbey?* included slides and discussion of how abbey property was transformed into outrageous country estates. The theatrical architecture of Gothic fiction inspired some badly built structures which soon fell down. *Ingenious Torments: Reading Instructive Texts* considered conduct books that inspired a common sense approach to problems. But for some situations good sense is not appropriate. Mrs. Morland’s response to Catherine demonstrates the limits of pragmatism. Her advice is complacent and circular; she does not recognize or help Catherine. The didactic text the mother plans to give her daughter exposes the content of the family library and the kind of education Catherine was likely given.

The Halloween weekend inspired costumes for the Regency Ball. **Lori Davis** has our vote for best designed mask. **Sue Forge’s** elegant gown was among the most photographed. Dance workshops at the pre-convention were at capacity, and more attendees joined the four long lines of the English country dances. **Corinne McArdle** was seen dancing the night away.

## Birthday Tea

Having braved a record snowfall for Dec. 4 Tea-goers were rewarded with a warm gathering in the beautifully decorated Lathrop House, home of The Fortnightly of Chicago, whose member (and ours) **Jane Hunt** told us is a landmark of Georgian Revival architecture. Jackie Kennedy used some of the wallpaper design for the restoration of the White House. **Sara Okey** gave the champagne toast for Austen's 235th birthday. **Michael Allocca**, Chair of the Basic Program of Liberal Education for Adults at the University of Chicago, was introduced by **Cathy Feldman**.

"What does 'horrid' mean?" asked Allocca. It can be positive. When Isabella lists the titles of Gothic novels, Catherine asks if "they are all horrid." Isabella assures her they are, relying on her friend Miss Andrews who "has read every one of them." It is also negative. Although Mrs. Morland reads *Sir Charles Grandison*, Isabella questions, "That is an amazing horrid book, is it not?" because Miss Andrews, ("our famous literary critic"), couldn't get through the first volume. John Thorpe considers *Camilla* "the horriest nonsense you can imagine; there is nothing in the world in it but an old man's playing at see-saw and learning Latin." Said Allocca, "One must consider the source and who is applying the word."

Austen's novels "contain themes on the ways characters develop" and "how we make judgments." Her characters must determine "what good and evil look like and distinguish them." They make snap judgments, but they are often wrong. Catherine Morland "is in training for a heroine. She is immediately charmed by Isabella and has a dislike of John." Her snap judgments come from reading novels and she characterizes General Tinley as a villain for no reason (although she may ultimately be right). "It is easy to be

distracted by a charming, wonderful person who turns out to be a cad; everybody is captivated by bright, shining surface stuff." Consider Willoughby: "by the end of *Sense and Sensibility* he is asking for forgiveness and admitting what he did." He refers to his "horrid state of selfish vanity." Seeing Marianne in a state was to him a "horrid" sight and, when Sir John Middleton tells him she is dying, he wonders "what horrid projects might not have been imputed" to him. On the other hand, "boring Col. Brandon" turns out to be a decent person.

Appearances can be deceiving. Pretty Wickham turns out to be a scoundrel; the pretty Bingley sisters "aren't too pleasant." Even the reader can be deceived. One can at first be charmed by Mr. Bennet's manner, but it is actual pain that he causes. He made a marriage based on appearances and now, Austen writes, "To his wife he was very little otherwise indebted, than as her ignorance and folly had contributed to his amusement." What is truly horrid about Mr. Bennet, said Allocca, is "his exposing his wife to the contempt of their children."

Appearances may be deceiving; except, of course, when they are not. Think of Lady Catherine whom no one likes, except Mr. Collins. "What does that say about him?" asked Allocca. At first Mr. Collins strikes the reader as "fun" with his initial letter filled with pomposity. His later letter, supposedly to comfort the Bennets on the elopement of Lydia, shows a Mr. Collins who "is no longer funny." For the so-called "consolation" of the Bennets "he is inclined to think her own disposition must be naturally bad" and "Lydia's death would have been better than her elopement." The pompous Mr. Collins has become reprehensible. For more on Mr. Collins, see the last page of this newsletter.

# Tea Photos



Michael Allocca



Jane Hunt



Jeff Nigro



Andrea Ciccone, Fran McFadden, Karen Sennett



Mary McHugh, Mary Ciesik, Nina Buzyna



Registrars Martha Jameson, Pat Weiber



Diane Capitani and Georgia Cibul



Steve and Vevia Martin



◀ Delores Henning and the buffet line

Dona Gerson, Carron Maxwell, Mary Schlitz ▶



## The World of Jane Austen

The perfect way to begin a day celebrating Jane Austen is with a visit from the author herself. If this proves too complicated, the next best thing is a presentation by **Debra Ann Miller**. She performed *Jane Austen Speaks*, a light-hearted biographical monologue, in Austen's voice, with an engaging laugh, and in period costume. Whether you were a long-time Janeite, or had only read *Pride and Prejudice*, you were primed for the rest of the day.

*The World of Jane Austen*, a day-long program sponsored by The University of Chicago, Graham School of General Studies and JASNA-GCR, was held at the Gleacher Center on October 2nd. The theme for the day was concrete aspects of the world through which Austen and her characters moved: what they saw, ate, heard. The program featured three of our members: **Elisabeth Lenckos**, **Jeffrey Nigro**, and **William Phillips**. The gracious host for the day was the Graham School's Director of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences, **Marissa Love**, who collaborated with Elisabeth on her proposal for a Jane Austen Day, invited composer **John Gibbons** to complete the list of speakers, and provided the excellent support staff. Her assistant **Pamela Wickcliffe**, editor of the Graham School Portal Newsletter, advertised the event with her splendid "30 days of Austen" feature.

Elisabeth's talk was entitled *Austenworld: the World of a Lady*. Throughout her novels, Austen takes the position that, "One is not born a lady, one must become a lady." In an era of manuals with advice on proper behavior and accomplishments designed to win a husband, Austen counters that a lady demonstrates personal goodness, kindness, and care for all. For example, contrast the titled Lady Catherine de Bourgh with Anne Elliot.

What art was popular in Austen's day? Jeff Nigro gave an historical perspective

illustrated with electronic examples. Portraits were the most common type of painting and paid the bills for most artists. Gainsborough, Reynolds, and Lawrence were among the famous portrait painters of her time. The Royal Academy of Art was founded in 1768, providing artists with both training and a place to exhibit their work. Landscape was a minor genre but gaining popularity. Marianne Dashwood would have liked Turner's landscapes, while Constable, with his local, quiet scenes, might have suited Austen (or Edward Ferrars) better.

In *The Food of Austen's Time*, William Phillips pointed out that while food does not take center stage in Austen's novels, it is possible to learn a lot about its role in English life of the time. Mr. Woodhouse is a picky eater; Mrs. Bennet worries about getting fish for dinner with Mr. Collins (where would someone in the middle of the country get fish?). Generally, meals were breakfast at 9 or 10, dinner anywhere from 3:30 to 5:00 pm, and supper in rural areas or at balls. Food was served in courses, with all the food for one course placed on the table, then removed for the next course. Each course consisted of several dishes, including delicacies like preserve tart and pigeon pie. The list of dishes and the visual representations of many of them, made the audience glad we had already had lunch.

The day ended on, literally, a high note, with John Gibbons' talk on *The Music of Austen's Time*. Rossini, Handel, Haydn, and Scarlatti were popular. Even though there was more printing of music, Austen also wrote out her own scores, a very time-consuming job. Italian songs, opera and folk songs were often played at home.

If you missed this Austen Day, there is a possibility the Graham School and our Region will organize another. If you are interested, let Elisabeth, Jeff, William, or The Graham School know.

## First Friday Lecture

On November 5 **Elisabeth Lenckos** gave her talk “*Monsters and Monstrosity*”: *Desire and Corporeality in Jane Austen’s Novels* at the Chicago Cultural Center. **Becky Dolin, Cathy Feldman, Sandra and Esten Gross, Shirley Holbrook, Debra Ann Miller, Gail Murphy, Jeff Nigro** and **Pat Wieber** attended. We learned that recent “mash-ups” of Austen novels, with vampires, zombies and werewolves, are really nothing new. Why in Gothic novels “stories of monsters were already in effect at Austen’s time.” And think of Mary Shelley’s 1818 *Frankenstein*. “*Northanger Abbey* proves Austen knew Gothic romances.” John Thorpe abducts Catherine; General Tilney throws her out and makes her travel home alone. In Austen’s time it was considered that character and personality could be told by facial appearance. Monstrosity was associated with deformity, and goodness with beauty. But in Austen’s novels the moral monsters (“figurative monsters who prey on women”: Willoughby, Wickham, Henry Crawford, Walter Elliot) don’t show it in the faces. “They take in every woman in sight, are immediately sexually attractive, cast a spell on women and insinuate themselves; gentle persuasion is their method.” Austen’s heroes are “strong, silent types” and her heroines’ “observation, intelligence and thinking heart” distinguish “seductive outward appearance” from “true friendship” in finally picking their heroes.

## Chicago Humanities Festival

*Jane Austen and the Body* was the topic of the November 7 presentation by **Cheryl Kinney, MD** and **Elisabeth Lenckos** at the Chicago Humanities Festival. The Harold Washington Library Auditorium was filled to capacity. Kinney’s talk was *Austenitis: Health, Sickness and the Body in the Novels of Jane*



Kinney and Lenckos

*Austen*. In Austen’s novels “bodily events drive the characters”: Mrs. Bennet’s nerves, Fanny Price’s headaches, Louisa Musgrove’s injuries, and the sickly siblings of *Sanditon*. Austen “gives the clinical details” when describing Marianne

Dashwood’s “putrid fever.” Austen’s novels show “how knowledge of the body is used to literary advantage.” Tom Bertram’s illness is his own doing and Austen correctly describes pancreatitis from his alcoholism and fall from his horse. Dr. Grant dies of gluttony which results in cardiovascular disease. “Frail bodies complement frail minds in Regency women” and are a source of “domestic tyranny” (Mary Musgrove, Mrs. Churchill).

Lenckos focused on *Jane Austen and the Desiring Body*. “The beautiful body of the heroine is the focus of the Gothic novel.” She “must keep her body intact” and is “rewarded at the end by her rescuer.” Austen “does away with actual monsters” in her novels. She writes of “the beautiful male body of the villain and the hero. . . Every female eye turns to Wickham.” According to one critic, “Her novels are almost indecently erotic.” But “looks are not gender-specific” and Austen “uses the word ‘handsome’ at least 20 times in *Pride and Prejudice*.” Yet, “the body is located in a community and interacts with other bodies. . . Etiquette prescribed bodily activity, how to move and be pleasant.” Austen’s characters must come to “understand the truth about a person; is this body the carrier of good intentions?” Plainly Wickham is performing, and “Darcy’s transparency is preferable to Wickham’s deceit.” As an enlightened man he will reform for the woman he loves. “Why does Austen endow a villain with superior sex appeal?” The Austen heroine “must be a detective” and “figure out who’s who” using deductive reasoning to discern the hero’s “inner qualities from behavior and gesture.”



# Sightings/Cittings

## Tour

This past summer our member **Carol Stocking** took the *Pride and Prejudice* tour organized by Helen Wilkerson and Maddy Hall (mother and daughter) found at [pandptours@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:pandptours@hotmail.co.uk).

Had we paid more attention (or possibly any attention) we would have realized this was a tour of the locations where the 1985 Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle *P&P* was filmed. The settings of that version are as close as Andrew Davies, with an almost unlimited budget, could come to places Jane Austen imagined and described.

**Day 1**—Bath, for coffee at Pratts Hotel. Lunch and afternoon in Meryton (real world Lacock). All the film sites were pointed out and explicated. (Since *Cranford* was also filmed there we saw extra sites). Serious information was peppered with fun gossipy tidbits. We had a somewhat casual buffet dinner in period costume [more about this later] at Longbourn (real world Luckington Court) after a tour of gardens and the church where Lizzie and Darcy married. Overnight at the Sign of the Angel (quaintness honestly gained) which Judy Dench is supposed to have said is her favorite hotel in England. To get to our room we walked through a beautiful English-type garden, and over a picturesque (sorry Tilney) bridge, complete with a tumbling stream on which windfall red apples were floating.

**Day 2**—stopped to gaze at the exterior of Netherfield (Brocklet Hall) which is now an IT company full of people working in cubicles—or gazing incredulously out the windows at the busload of Austen addicts, many of whom leapt off of the bus to take pictures. We had afternoon tea and a tour at Hunsford Parsonage, including that corner closet for which Lady Catherine suggested shelves, in real world The Old Rectory at Teigh (pronounced Tea). We

spent overnight at Barnsdale Lodge, Rutland (the smallest county in England).

**Day 3**—We visited Rosings (Belton House, near Grantham). Mr. Collins was totally right. What windows! What staircases! What fabulous gardens! We also visited the interior of Pemberley (Sudbury Hall) which requires even more exclamation points—perhaps only Lydia's style of writing could do it justice. We stayed that night in the Peak District in Derbyshire at the German-owned hotel Peveril of the Peak (in Dovedale).

**Day 4**—After viewing and riding in carriages, (and meeting the only woman to ever win the coach horn competition at the Royal Show), we visited Pemberley (the real world exterior of Lyme Park, near Disley). We walked about the grounds and gardens and Darcy's pond (probably better known as Colin Firth's pond, at least among members of this tour). Although there is a lake in front of the Pemberley location, one had to hike up a hill and through a paddock to achieve a view of (or dunk one's foot in) Darcy's pond.



About the Regency duds: they may be rented from Farthingales and delivered to you on the first night of the tour. There is an on-line catalogue, you e-mail your measurements, then final fittings happen on the spot. [We didn't do this, but a lot of people did and they all looked wonderful.] A group from Louisville brought their own outfits which they wear for several events each year. One was such an enthusiast that she did research, then made herself some regency underwear; another had a bespoke reticule. We thought of them as The Regency Reenactors.

The members of the tour were from all over the world. There were several sets of mothers and daughters, a few married couples. Husbands were variously enthusiastic but were great for the 'theatricals' at Longbourn. Tour members burst into applause at the first sight of Longbourn, and came near collectively to fainting when we came over the hill and saw Pemberley before us. Everyone knew a lot about Jan Austen and her novels so we all had a lot to talk about.

The *P & P* tour can be preceded or followed by the "Two Day Bath Supplement" which is actually one day and two nights. The nights were spent at "Sir Walter's house" (whoops, shift gears to the Amanda Root filmed version of *Persuasion*). The day in Bath was spent with Hazel Jones (a true proficient) who took us to the places lived in by Jane. Everyone in Bath speaks of her in this familiar way. We were all in amazement at the effrontery, and at the locations of scenes in her novels. We all had coffee at the Pump Room and, if we wished, cups of the curative waters

## Prize Winner

Our member **Shirley Holbrook** noted the *New York Times* article on **Howard Jacobson**, this year's winner of the Man Booker Prize for his novel *The Finkler Question*. Writes **Sarah Lyall**, "It is an unusual Booker choice, both because it delves into the heart of the British Jewish experience, something that few contemporary British novels try to do, and because it is, on its surface, at least, so ebulliently comic." Yet, "there is an ominous undercurrent" of anti-Semitism.

Jacobson studied at Cambridge "under the legendary F.R. Leavis. 'I'm an old-fashioned English lit man,' he said. 'Straight down the line – it's George Eliot, it's Dickens, it's Dr. Johnson, it's Jane Austen'. . . Because of his rare position in the literary

landscape, Mr. Jacobson has been called the 'English Philip Roth,' but he says he would prefer to be 'the Jewish Jane Austen'. . . 'I'm an English writer who happens to know about Jews and would like to write like Jane Austen, with a little bit of Yiddish,' he said."



## Murder

"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a married woman in possession of a foolish husband must be in want of relief." So begins the story "On Whom the Bell Falls: The Murder of the Rev. Mr. Collins" by **Tim Jermielity** published in the magazine *Rosebud*. "[Charlotte's] life with Mr. Collins had become intolerable. . . His parishioners had devised various stratagems to ensure the brevity of his visits. . . comparable to those they employed in church to shorten the tedium of his sermons." Mr. Collins insisted he "ring out the bells for Christmas Eve himself" even though "the supports are very worn." A crucial maneuvering of the bell rope by Charlotte and "the bells broke into a cacophonous noise that was followed by a horrendous crash." At a bench in the churchyard Charlotte "held her breath and, surely enough, she fainted." With their baby boy and the annuity Mr. Collins had so timely procured for her Charlotte returned to "a most spacious and airy cottage" at Lucas Lodge. "Charlotte was not at all discomposed at the prospect" that the entail on Longbourn might "pass on to a grandson of the Bennets." Elizabeth was "struck that Charlotte's remark(s) bore not the slightest trace of sorrow. . . 'My dear, dear Elizabeth. Accidents do happen.' "

LETTER FROM CHICAGO  
JASNA-GCR  
Elsie G. Holzwarth  
1410 East 55th Street  
Chicago, IL 60615-5409



**Saturday, February 12**  
**Luncheon**

# Calendar

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**Wishing all a healthy and happy 2011.**



- February 12** Lunch. *No Pleasure in London: A Readers' Theater Reflection on Town and Country in Austen's Work and Times.* The Parthenon Restaurant, 314 S. Halsted, Chicago, IL Noon–3:00 pm
- April 30** Annual Gala. *Staging Sensibility: Jane Austen and the Performing Arts.* Maggiano's Banquet Room, 111 W. Grand, Chicago, IL 9:00 am–3:00 pm
- October 28–30** Weekend retreat presented by the University of Chicago Basic Program. *Jane Austen and the Culture of Sensibility.*

Our website is [www.jasnachicago.org](http://www.jasnachicago.org)