

# Letter from Chicago

April 2007

## The 27th Annual Gala

Saturday April 28, 2007 9:15 am–3 pm

*Heroes, Heartbreakers & Heels:  
Looking at Plot and Character  
through an Austen Lens*

- Speakers Sarah Franz and Elisabeth Lenckos
- Greater Chicago Region Readers Theatre
- Meet and Greet friends
- Jane Austen Books
- Luncheon

Allerton Hotel, 701 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

**JASNA–GCR Members: \$65; non-members and guests: \$70**

(The public is invited to attend our Gala celebration.)

**Registration deadline: April 20, 2007**

### GALA 2007 REGISTRATION FORM

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

Guest(s)/Non Members \_\_\_\_\_

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. Make your check payable to JASNA-GCR and mail  
with this form to Elsie Holzwarth, 1410 East 55th  
St., Chicago, IL 60615.

Questions? E-mail [jasnagcr@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jasnagcr@sbcglobal.net)

Natalie Goldberg

March brings to a close our 2007 Outreach Grant program. Next September, our outreach program will call for high school students' participation in our 2008 AGM program. If you know a teacher who would like to learn more about "Austen's Legacy: Life, Love & Laughter," please send us the contact information. If you want to help plan and promote our high school outreach program, please contact Linda Relias, our Education Outreach Chair.

Spring for JASNA-GCR means the annual Gala—our chance to enjoy a full day of programs and, of course, to browse among a selection of books on Austen and her period. Did you know that Jane Austen Books has been in operation over 20 years? Pat Latkin started her bookstore informally in 1986 to raise funds for our region and has developed a niche for her independent catalog business. She has brought her unique selections of books, CDs and DVDs to AGMs across the country and regional meetings throughout the Midwest and has a reputation of being the first place to shop for all things Austen. Come with your checkbook and you won't be sorry.

Meanwhile, count on a few cold days and curl up with some good mysteries. Two featured speakers on the Mystery Panel of our **2008 Chicago AGM**, Stephanie Barron and Carrie Bebris, have created entertaining Regency stories. Bebris has detectives Mr. and Mrs. Darcy in *North by Northanger (Or, The Shades of Pemberley)*. A pregnant Elizabeth Darcy finds comfort and solace in letters from her late mother-in-law when her husband is accused of a theft that could have him transported or worse. Of course, the Darcys solve the mystery, but not before characters from *Northanger Abbey* meet those from *Pride and Prejudice*. The story draws elements from Austen's own family history. Jane's Aunt Perrot, after purchasing a card of

black lace, was accused of stealing a card of white lace, a capital crime in Regency England. Mrs. Leigh Perrot was refused bail and placed under house arrest. Jane was almost sent to live with her aunt and uncle in the jailor's drafty London quarters for the seven months until her aunt had her day in court.

Stephanie Barron's mysteries depend on the detective talents of Jane Austen herself. Two good tales to try—*Jane and His Lordship's Legacy* and *Jane and the Barque of Frailty*—should be read in that order, since information from the first helps solve the mystery in the second. Here, a mature Jane is establishing herself at Chawton and surrounded by difficult neighbors. Barron blends fact and fiction, citing her research in the epilogues as the basis for her characterizations and situations. Apparently, Mrs. Austen and her daughters were not welcomed by the villagers, and Jane's brother Edward had to make an out-of-court settlement to a neighbor with a rival claim on the Chawton inheritance. Could Jane have written *Emma*, *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* without a settled place like Chawton cottage to call home?

Jane Austen moved to her Chawton cottage in **July, 1809**. In her honor, JASNA is supporting two **Jane Austen Bicentennial Projects** that are being organized this year in the Village of Chawton: the bells of St. Nicholas Church and the kitchen of Jane Austen's House. Though the original church was destroyed by fire 1871, the bells that called Jane Austen and her family to worship were rescued when the building was demolished. The bells have a history dating back to the seventeenth century. The second project, the restoration of Jane's kitchen, Jane Austen House hopes to complete before the bicentennial celebration.

## Adventurous New Format—Sizzling Presentations

An enormously important part of Austen's enduring legacy is that spring simply can't come to Chicago without the GCR Gala. This year we return to the Allerton Hotel on **April 28** with an exciting new format, thanks to the efforts of our events planner, Beverly Roth. The day's program, "Heroes, Heartbreakers & Heels," promises to range from the tender and the tempting to the torrid.

**9:15** Registration begins. Sip coffee or tea. Browse Pat Latkin's **Jane Austen Books**.

**10:00** Our Academic Liaison, Professor **Elisabeth Lenckos** presents: *Jane Decided That She Was Really Much More Like Emma Woodhouse: Plots of Love and Heartbreak Borrowed from Austen*. "Jane" is not an Austen, or a Bennet, or a Fairfax, but who? Dr. Lenckos was awarded the Graham School Excellence of Teaching Award in the Humanities, Arts, and Sciences (2006). Her seminars at the University of Chicago and the Newberry Library highlight Austen's influence on modern women writers. She has extensive publications on women novelists and poets, but she is currently working on *Jane Austen and Philosophies of Love* and *Austen and Modern Women Writers*.

**11:15** Enjoy a brunch buffet and our traditional toast to Austen given by **Linda Reinert**. (Menu below)

**12:15** Professor **Sarah Frantz** presents: *Following Fitzwilliam and Frederick: Austen's Heroes and the Romantic Novel*. Her talk will show the influence of two of Austen's favorite men on subsequent heroes.

Dr. Frantz is on the faculty of Fayetteville State University in North Carolina and a JASNA AGM favorite. She has published extensively on Austen, with a particular interest in how women writers create male characters.

**1:15** Sample the sweet delights of our ice cream buffet.

**2:00** Our Readers' Theater group presents *The Manipulative and the Vicious: Lady Susan in the Best of the Worst of Company*. When she was only 19, Jane Austen created her most morally reprehensible character, Lady Susan Vernon, in an epistolary novel. Laugh at the farce created by Lady Susan's manipulations and the gossip and complaints which follow in her wake.

### *Brunch Buffet*

Freshly Squeezed Orange Juice & Grapefruit Juice  
Sliced Seasonal Fruit Garnished with Wild Berries  
Basket of Freshly Baked Muffins, Croissants & Cinnamon Rolls  
Sweet Butter & Fruit Preserves  
Homemade Potato Onion Pancakes with Chive Sour Cream  
Sauteed Chicken Breast Florentine with Asiago Béchamel Sauce  
Scrambled Eggs with Fresh Herbs and Scallions  
Garden Vegetable Quiche

French Toast Souffle with Maple Syrup  
Chocolate Dipped Strawberries  
Gourmet Blend Coffee, Decaf Coffee & Assorted Herbal Teas

### *Wisconsin Dairy Land Ice Cream Buffet*

Scooped Vanilla & Chocolate Ice Cream  
Fudge Brownies, Cherries, Whipped Cream, Chopped Nuts & Chocolate Shavings  
Strawberry, Chocolate Fudge & Caramel Sauce  
Bottled Water & Soft Drinks

## “Summer Breezes” July 21 Meeting Now Finalized

In honor of Jane and her seaworthy brothers, our arrangements are now complete to take to the “gentle seas” of Lake Michigan for our summer meeting on Saturday, July 21. We are scheduled to depart from the pier on our Wendella boat promptly at 11:45 a.m., but we must report in at 11:15 sharp. (Ay! Ay! Captain!) The boat dock is down the stairs at the Wrigley Building (400 N. Michigan Ave.), and you can see the boats from the Michigan Avenue Bridge. We’ll take a 90-minute cruise out through the locks of the Chicago River onto the lovely blue-green waters of Lake Michigan and enjoy the summer breezes. A gorgeous view of Chicago’s skyline is also on the agenda.

After we’ve completed the trip, we’ll gather our sea legs together and walk a very short distance south on Michigan Avenue to the Bella Bacina Restaurant, just around the corner at 75 East Wacker Drive. We’ve reserved a private space at 1:30 p.m. for lunch and camaraderie.

The cost of the boat trip will be \$15.00 per person, member or guest. We’ll have flyers for our boat trip at the April Gala, but the registration form for this event will be mailed out to everyone in May. Online registration will also be available at this time. For lunch, Bella Bacina will give each of us our own check. This casual Italian restaurant was written up for good food and has a cash bar. Menu prices range from \$7.00 to \$15.00.

In case you’d like to do some reading in preparation of our “sea adventure,” may we recommend *Jane Austen and the Navy* by Brian Southam, available through your local library as an Interlibrary Loan or for purchase on Amazon.com. Noteworthy are any of Patrick O’Brian’s novels dealing with the British navy

at the start of the 19th century. Also available on Amazon.com for \$5.95 is *Jane Austen’s Sailor Brothers: Francis & Charles in Life & Art (AGM 2003: “Homecoming”) An Article from: Persuasion: the Jane Austen Journal* by Brian Southam. . .in case you’ve misplaced your copy.

Hope to see you onboard!

## Jane Austen Day at ICL—Roosevelt

On June 21, 2007, the Institute for Continued Learning (ICL), Roosevelt University Schaumburg campus, will sponsor a daylong seminar, “In Jane Austen’s Day: A Portrait of Regency England.” The seminar will include lectures by JASNA members. **Elisabeth Lenckos’s** lecture, “The Great House in Regency England,” connects country houses to Austen’s novels. **Jeffrey Nigro’s** slide presentation is “Art and Fashion in the Time of Jane Austen.” **William Phillips’s** talk is “Comedy and the Culture of Food in Jane Austen.” Former JASNA Academic Liaison, **Tom Hoberg**, will also give a talk.

Registration for the day, which includes sandwiches for lunch, is \$35.00. Call Mary Fioretti, ICL Administrative Assistant, at 847-619-7288 with questions or to register. Registration starts March 21, 2007.

Part of a nationwide program, the ICL is a peer learning environment for retired adults age 50 or more. Classes and lectures meet at the Roosevelt Schaumburg campus, but the Institute is independent of the university. Programs are designed and led by the members, some of whom are retired professors. Members join for a modest annual fee and sign up for programs throughout the year. Course format varies, and topics range from the humanities, science, politics, business and law to lighter fare like fairy tales and film.

## February Meeting: *Emma*

On February 10 Greater Chicago Region Janeites braved the nippy weather to join in a warm discussion of *Emma*, led by our own **Jane Davis**. After a delicious lunch of Greek specialties at the Parthenon restaurant, Jane remarked that Austen began to write *Emma* 193 years ago, in 1814, on January 21 (which just happens to be Jane's daughter's birthday and Natalie Goldberg's newborn grandson's birthday). Austen ended the novel in March, 1815.

Although "it was a time of financial anxiety. . . with Emma we have somebody different." She doesn't have the problems of Elizabeth Bennet and Fanny Price; she's worth £30,000. Her father earns money from investments to support her. Jane opined: "Emma could have a BMW and she doesn't need a man to do it. . . The more I re-read it, the more I get beyond the sort of fairy-tale princess (after Fanny, at last—and the Bennet girls, darling as they are). Here is a young woman who stands on her own."

Yet, questioned Jane, are we being warned by Austen's use of the word "seemed" in "*seemed* to unite the blessings of existence" in the first sentence of the novel? Emma is very confined. She can't go to London the way Frank Churchill does for a haircut, it was pointed out. She seems bored and lonely and as a result engages in matchmaking. On the other hand, it was noted, she doesn't complain. "She doesn't see anything wrong with her situation." All agreed she really does have a "happy disposition."

She treats her father very well. "If this were a murder mystery Mr. Woodhouse would be the victim." He uses illness as a form of manipulation. It was suggested that, with no mother, Emma "functions as a wife to her father." He is afraid of change and afraid of losing Emma. "People must be about something and he doesn't have

anything to do." He hasn't been to Donwell Abbey in two years. Nevertheless, he extends himself to Mrs. Elton as a young bride because "this is a requirement of good breeding." There was even a kind word for Mrs. Elton. "She has come to a place where she knows nobody" struck a small note of sympathy. She becomes a "catalyst for social life" with the unfortunate result, however, that "she creates chaos and change wherever she goes."

Mr. Knightley is an Austen "moral hero." "As well as being tall, handsome and desirable, he has moral fortitude and takes care of his estate and his people," said Jane. He is attracted to Emma; he loves to look at her. But he knows that she is spoiled and is granted too much her own way, as he tells Mrs. Weston. "He is the only person who calls Emma to task." Box Hill, Jane informed, is a real place, thought to be "dangerous and licentious." "Emma's manners break down in this wild place." She has "lost her moral standing" which is measured by one's good manners; that is, how to treat others, and "not to be rude to a person not your social equal." But Emma's treatment of Miss Bates is only one episode—in contrast to the Eltons' constant "cruelty in publicly humiliating Harriet."

There was little to say of Jane Fairfax, except that Mr. Knightley finds she lacks an open temper. And there was no time at all for Frank Churchill. As for Miss Bates, to Jane she is "the nightly news for Highbury." She may even be the central figure in the novel. Others are judged by their relationship toward her. Mr. Knightley supplies her with apples. Emma may once be unkind but she is generous; she did send over a "whole hind-quarter of pork." Miss Bates says at the Crown: "Upon my word, this is charming, to be standing about among such friends!" The Janeites of Greater Chicago felt the same way at the Parthenon.

# Photos



The Keelen Family: Calettha, Kaleb, Dyani, Felicia.



Jane Davis, discussion leader



Lori Davis and Linda Reinert



William Phillips and Pat Wieber



Joän Pawelski, Natalie Goldberg and Jane Davis



Intent listeners Beverly Roth, Thomas Gallanis, MD and Vevia Martin

## Come Join the Conversation: an AGM Update

by AGM Co-Coordinator, William Phillips

We have planned a total of seven events to be available to everyone who attends *Austen's Legacy: Life, Love & Laughter* here in Chicago next year. Because our theme of Austen's Legacy cries out for lots of conversation about Austen, her influence and what she means to all of us, four programs take the form of panel discussions. The other three programs are individual talks by speakers noted for wit and insight and their gift for stimulating discussions. More detail will soon be available on our AGM site at [www.jasna.org](http://www.jasna.org); however, here is a brief rundown of the seven events as they stand now:

- Thursday evening, October 2, "Curtain Raiser": GCR member **Jeffrey Nigro**, Director of Adult Programs at the Art Institute of Chicago, will present "Visualizing Jane Austen and Jane Austen Visualizing." Jeffrey's slide/lectures have entertained us and other organizations.
- Friday afternoon, October 3, Opening Plenary Panel: scholars and authors **Inger Sigrun Brodey**, **Paula Cohen**, **Gillian Dow**, **Peter Graham** will address Jane Austen's influence across time, cultures, continents and disciplines. The panel has been organized and will be chaired by our own **Elisabeth Lenckos**.
- Friday evening, October 3, "An Evening of Mysteries and Characters": **Stephanie Barron**, author of the "Jane and . . ." mystery series, **Carrie Bebris**, author of the Mr. and Mrs. Darcy mysteries, and **Steve Martin**, Chicago area businessman, Austen enthusiast and life-long mystery reader, will discuss how mysteries show insight into characters in Austen on the one hand, and how Austen and her characters can lead to mysteries on the other. The

moderator is

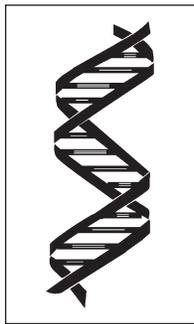
**Jennifer S. Hunter**  
of the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

- Saturday Plenary Speaker **Claudia Johnson**, Murray Professor of English Literature and English Department Chair, Princeton University, Austen scholar nonpareil and great friend of GCR, will draw on her extensive work on Austen's Legacy through literary, social, historical, and feminist perspectives.
- Saturday Plenary Speaker **Joan Klingel Ray**, immediate past President of JASNA, is most recently the author of *Jane Austen for Dummies*. Joan, who has done an incredible job of calling both Jane Austen and JASNA to the world's attention, titles her AGM talk: "Jane Austen for Smarties."
- Saturday evening Post-Banquet alternative for those not dancing at the Regency Ball: **Sarah Frantz**, a literary critic of both romance and Austen, and **Pamela Regis**, author of *The Natural History of the Romance*, are organizing a colloquium on Austen and Romance Literature.
- Sunday morning, October 5 includes a conversation with JASNA members **Lindsay Warren Baker** and **Amanda Jacobs**, who premiered their musical version of *Pride and Prejudice* at the Ohio Light Opera in 2006. **Arlene Crewdson**, founder of Pegasus Players, director of many productions and recipient of local, national and international awards, will host. As of this writing, a production company has been formed and Baker and Jacobs are revising the work into a form appropriate for the Broadway stage. Words and music from the show round out this event.



## DNA

Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) in our genes is the storehouse of hereditary information. An algorithm is a step-by-step procedure, with a finite number of steps, each step depending on the result of a computation at the previous step. Scientists have just announced Austen's contribution toward finding an algorithm to decode DNA. The news, first published in the magazine *Nature*, was spotted by **Natalie Goldberg**.



When analyzed by automated machinery DNA is represented as sequences of various combinations of the letters A, C, G and T (adenine, cytosine, guanine and thymine). The quest is to decipher useful information from the string of letters. Now Professor **Simon Shepherd**, and colleagues at the University of Bradford, England, have constructed "an algorithm that can unpick the sequences of As, Gs, Cs, and Ts."

Shepherd originally tested his algorithm as a computer program on the entire text of *Emma* "after removing all the spaces and punctuation, leaving just a long impenetrable line of letters." In *Cosmos Online* **Hilary Jones** explained: "So Emma's snobbery becomes 'thoughtitallextremelyshabbyandveryinferiortohero'w'n" Despite having no knowledge of English vocabulary or syntax, the program managed to identify 80 per cent of the words in *Emma* and separate them back into sentences. Shepherd believes this can be applied to the genetic sequences in our cells. The human genome contains around 3 billion letters and is currently baffling scientists as to how to interpret it. He

hopes the *Emma*-tested algorithm will extract "codes that regulate, control or describe all kinds of cellular processes."

Austen has made further genealogical news as one of the descendants of King Edward III (reign 1327-1377). An internet search finds her in the company of George Washington, Daniel Boone, Thomas Jefferson, Fletcher Christian (mutinied on the *Bounty*), John Quincy Adams, the Duke of Wellington (victorious at Waterloo), Lord Byron, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert E. Lee (surrendered at Appomattox), and Charles Darwin. It must be in the genes!

## (Un)funny

**Christopher Hitchens** has created quite a hubbub with his article in *Vanity Fair* magazine entitled "Why Women Aren't Funny." "Wit," Hitchens noted, "is the unfailing symptom of intelligence. Men will laugh at almost anything, often precisely because it is—or they are—extremely stupid. Women aren't like that. And the wits and comics among them are formidable beyond compare: Dorothy Parker, Nora Ephron, Fran Lebowitz, Ellen DeGeneres. (Though ask yourself, was Dorothy Parker ever really funny?)"

Coincidentally, Volume I of *The Paris Review Interviews*, has just been published containing a 1956 interview with Dorothy Parker. **Richard Eder** in his *New York Times* review wrote: "She was the celebrity as wit; people would start to laugh even before she spoke. 'I should have had more sense.' [said Parker] It wasn't really wit anyway. 'Wit has truth in it; wisecracking is simply calisthenics with words,'" according to Parker.

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' . . .thoughtitallextremelyshabbyandveryinferiortohero'w'n . . . '

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More than 50 years later the punch lines of Sarah Silverman on her new Comedy Central show have earned her the sobriquet “delightful potty mouth.” Responding to Hitchens’ article **Gloria Goodale** wrote in *The Christian Science Monitor*. “Many people, men and women, find attractive, aggressively funny women like Silverman threatening.” Goodale also noted “another stubborn stereotype: Pretty women aren’t funny, especially when spouting vulgarities.” No wonder Fanny and Edmund would never find Mary Crawford funny, especially her (in)famous “rears and vices” witticism on admirals. Even if Parker might call it only a wisecrack, perhaps there was some truth in it, after all.

The late political columnist **Molly Ivins** was quoted in her obituary that there are two kinds of humor: (1) the kind that “makes us chuckle about our foibles and our shared humanity,” and (2) the kind that “holds people up to public contempt and ridicule. That’s what I do.” We all agree Austen did the first. In two recent terrific *Persuasions On-line* articles **Colleen Sheehan** has persuasively argued Austen also did the second. “*Emma* contains numerous barbs aimed at the Prince of Wales,” writes Sheehan. She has discovered “a second answer to the charade in chapter 9 of the novel.” Harriet makes several wild guesses; Emma’s solution is *courtship*. Sheehan proposes another—a satirical one: *The Prince of Whales*. If one looks back at the charade, it certainly fits.

“Childbearing and rearing are the double root” of why women aren’t funny, according to Hitchens. He claims this basis for “womanly seriousness was well caught by **Rudyard Kipling** in his poem ‘The Female of the Species.’” Yet, as Janeites know, this

self-same Kipling in “The Janeites” has the narrator filled with laughter on meeting a Miss Bates talk-alike.

Gloria Goodale finds hope for women comics in “the rise of sketch comedy.” But surely Austen was already one of the best. Why the scene of Harriet explaining to Emma her *Most precious treasures*: a piece of court-plaster Frank Churchill had pulled about and the end of his old pencil, is nothing short of laugh-aloud funny.

## Comparisons

*Cosmos Online* reported that Professor **Simon Shepherd**, who tested his algorithm on *Emma* (see above), said: “We thought that if we can get the algorithm to work on English, it might work on DNA. Other researchers in related work in the USA chose Melville’s *Moby Dick* which, with the greatest respect to Melville, is not the greatest piece of English literature.” Emma beats Ahab. Janeites have known it all along.

*Arlington Park*, a new novel by **Rachel Cusk**, has been advertised as: “Desperate Housewives’ for the thinking reader”, “darkly hilarious” and “savagely entertaining.” **Elaina Richardson** in *O, the Oprah Magazine* calls it “domestic dramas that Jane Austen would have had a ball with.” **S. Kirk Walsh** notes in *The New York Times* that the book “opens on a rainy night in a well-heeled suburb outside London and then follows an ensemble of disgruntled 30-something mothers through the mundane motions of a 24-hour day, culminating in a dinner party.” Austen would have a ball with this? “As if!” our Emma-like heroine of the film *Clueless* would say.

**Joan Pawelski** found **Maureen Dowd’s** *New York Times* column lamenting her

realization at Borders “with growing alarm, chick lit was no longer a niche.” Dowd “turned frantically from display table to display table, but I couldn’t find a novel without a pink cover... I took home three dozen of the working women romances. They can lull you into a hypnotic state with their simple life lessons—one heroine emulated Doris Day, another Audrey Hepburn, one was the spitting image of Carolyn Bessette, another Charlize Theron—but they’re a long way away from Becky Sharp and Elizabeth Bennet. They’re all chick and no lit.”

## Readers

In her book *Are Men Necessary? When Sexes Collide* **Maureen Dowd** asks, “What guy would drag himself from ESPN’s *Sports Center* to read *Sense and Sensibility* or from beer and pizza to devour *Cakes and Ale*?” W. Somerset Maugham, in his 1930 novel *Cakes and Ale*, created a character thinly veiled as Thomas Hardy. Hardy was dead only two years. From the recent *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revised* by **Michael Millgate** we learn that in 1920 Hardy, then 80, was reading Austen. “Though so set in his ways, so immovable in his likings and dislikings, Hardy was still capable of occasional flexibility and even of a little self-irony.” Millgate quotes a letter from Hardy’s wife Florence. “We have read *Persuasion* & *Northanger Abbey*, & now are in the midst of *Emma*. T.H. is much amused at finding he has *many* characteristics in common with Mr. Woodhouse.”

**Claire Tomalin** in her new biography *Thomas Hardy* quotes the Hardys’ maid Nellie. “Mr. Hardy’s last meal before he died was kettle-broth, of which he was very fond. He always asked for it when out-of-sorts. Kettle-broth was made from finely

chopped parsley, onion and bread cooked in hot water.” When we note that in his *Dictionary* **Samuel Johnson** gave one definition to “gruel” as “any kind of mixture made by boiling ingredients in water” we see that Hardy, like Mr. Woodhouse, was a gruel-lover.

Another male reader was John Fowles (*The French Lieutenant’s Woman*) whose *Journal*, Volume II 1966-1990, edited by **Charles Draziz**, is now out. His entry for 12/12/75 is: “There’s a lot about Jane Austen in the magazines at the moment, provided by her bicentenary; her work seen as a sustained attack on the excesses of sensibility, as a triumph of ‘sense’ in her own famous use of it. This seems to me to overlook the fact that the rewards she gives her embodied fragments of ‘sense’—Eleanor,\* Emma, Fanny Price and the rest—are in fact highly romantic, and they have all had to undergo sensibility in one form or another to win ‘sense’. Her real genius is for distinguishing false, exaggerated feeling from true feeling, not between feeling and reason. (\*Perhaps he meant Elinor in *Sense and Sensibility*.)

A poignant reference to Austen involves a woman reader. In the recent *Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature*, **Linda Lear** writes of the marriage proposal Potter received in 1905 from Norman Warne, her editor and publisher. Alas, a month later he was dead. Lear quotes a letter Potter wrote from Bath about reading *Persuasion*. “I thought my story had come right with patience & waiting like Anne Elliott’s [sic] did. It was always my favorite and I read the end part of it again last July, on the 26th day after I got Norman’s letter.” Lear writes: “She had held fast to the ephemeral hope of happiness. But Anne Elliot’s fulfillment was fictional, and Beatrix Potter’s loss was terrible and real.”

# 2007 Calendar

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**April 28** Gala: *Heroes, Heartbreakers & Heels: Looking at Plot and Character through an Austen Lens*. Allerton Hotel, 701 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

**May 19** JASNA-Michigan Region holds a Jane Austen Day in the historic Romeo Masonic Temple. A talk by Professor Migan will be given in the afternoon with dinner followed by an English Country Ball. Registrations by May 5th to: Jane Cuba 31425 Myrna St. Livonia, Michigan 48154. For additional information call Diane Young at 248-652-8584 or email [diane@athenagrouponline.com](mailto:diane@athenagrouponline.com)

**June 21** The Institute for Continued Learning, Roosevelt University in Schaumburg, seminar on Jane Austen. The seminar will include lectures by JASNA members Elisabeth Lenckos, Jeff Nigro, and William Phillips.

**July 21** Summer meeting: 90-minute boat tour through the locks of the Chicago River to view the Chicago skyline followed by lunch at Bella Bacina Restaurant.

**September 8** Fall meeting. Speaker Diane Capitano at Conrad Sulzer Regional Library, 4455 North Lincoln Avenue, Chicago. Free and open to the public. Cake, tea and coffee will be served. 1-3:30 pm.

**October 5-7** Annual General Meeting. *Discovering Emma in Vancouver*. Vancouver, British Columbia.

**December 8** Jane Austen Birthday Tea. Afternoon tea at Fortnightly of Chicago, 120 East Bellevue Place, Chicago. 2-4 pm.

**October 2-5, 2008** Annual General Meeting hosted by JASNA, Greater Chicago Region. *Austen's Legacy: Life, Love & Laughter*. Westin Michigan Avenue Hotel, Chicago.

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

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**LETTER FROM CHICAGO**  
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