



“It is a truth universally acknowledged...”

Conference Programme & Schedule

Manor Mill

*2029 Monkton Road
Monkton, MD 21111*

Oldfields School

*1500 Glencoe Road
Sparks Glencoe, MD 21152*

Friday, May 1 — Sunday, May 3

<https://www.manor-mill.com/janeausten>

Welcome!

— to a weekend in the company of Miss Austen —



We are delighted to welcome you to the **Maryland Jane Austen Fest**, a three-day gathering of Janeites for talks, workshops, dancing, theatre, and the pleasures of good company. This programme lays out the weekend at a glance, followed by a full set of session descriptions and presenter biographies.

How to Use This Programme

The **Schedule-at-a-Glance** on the following pages shows every session by day and time, so you can plot your own path through the weekend. Concurrent sessions appear together in each time block. Where a session repeats at multiple times, you'll find it listed in each of its slots — choose whichever suits your day. After the daily schedules you will find **Session Details & Presenter Biographies**, arranged alphabetically by presenter.

Venues

Manor Mill	Friday evening events
Oldfields Campus	Saturday walking tours & main festival grounds
Oldfields Dance Studio	Period Ball and Yoga
Oldfields Dining Hall	Breakfast & dinner service
Rodney Quad	Lunch, Tea, and the Emporium
Rodney Hall	Austen Explorations
Miss Nan's (Old House)	Austen Explorations
Theatre	Saturday evening performance and Austen Explorations

Please note that all locations are subject to change.

Friday Evening

An evening of cards, a Regency dinner, and a Period Ball — a proper commencement to the weekend.



Time	Event	Location
4:00 – 6:00 pm	Check-in <i>Weekend Day Pass: check-in at Manor Mill</i> <i>Overnight guests: check-in at Oldfields</i>	<i>Manor Mill / Oldfields</i>
4:00 – 6:00 pm	Shuttle to Manor Mill <i>For overnight guests</i>	<i>Oldfields → Manor Mill</i>
5:00 pm	Whist Demonstrations and Games <i>Jennifer Jones</i>	<i>Manor Mill Loft</i>
6:00 – 7:30 pm	Regency Dinner <i>Netherfield White Soup (V); Asparagus (V) with Red Crab Sauce on the side; Chilled Poached Salmon Fillet with Cucumber Dill Sauce; Curried Chicken with Rice Pilaf; Garden Pye; Spring Vegetable Medley in Mushroom Sauce and Mash (V); Puddings: Strawberry Fool and Assorted Cakes & Tarts. Wine, beer, water & seltzers.</i>	<i>Manor Mill</i>
8:00 – 10:00 pm	Period Ball with Called Dancing	<i>Oldfields Dance Studio</i>

Saturday

A full day of talks, workshops, performance & tea



Time	Session	Location
8:00 am	Yoga	<i>Oldfields Dance Studio</i>
9:30 am	Continental Breakfast	<i>Oldfields Dining Hall</i>
10:00 am	Walking Tours <i>Meet at the Oldfields Office</i>	<i>Oldfields Campus</i>
10:00 am	Crafts	<i>TBA</i>
10:00 am	Escape from Rosings Park <i>Maggie Schmidt</i>	<i>Rodney — Gallery</i>
11:00 am	Boxed Picnic Lunch <i>Pick up at Dining Hall</i>	<i>Oldfields Dining Hall and Rodney Quad</i>
11:00 am – 6:00 pm	Emporium	<i>Rodney Quad</i>
11:00 am – 4:30 pm	Water Color Portraits	<i>Rodney Hall Octagon Room</i>
12:00 – 12:30 pm	Opening Session (all hands)	<i>Theatre</i>

Time	Session	Location
12:30 – 1:15 pm	“Conflict Conversations in Pride and Prejudice” <i>Dr. Juliette Wells</i>	<i>Theatre</i>
	Neckerchief Stamping <i>Junemarie Brandt</i>	<i>Rodney — Art Room</i>
	Austen’s Narrative Dance <i>Nalani Brown</i>	<i>Miss Nan’s</i>
	The Immature Prefrontal Cortex of Lydia & Mrs. Bennet <i>LeShawn King</i>	<i>Rodney — Boardroom</i>
	Thomasine Gyllembourg: A Danish Jane Austen? <i>Troy Wellington Smith</i>	<i>Rodney — Science Lab 134</i>
	Pride and Prejudice and Poetry — Versifying with Jane Austen <i>Dr. Tara Moore</i>	<i>Rodney — Library Classroom side</i>
	Sisters and Daughters: The Heart of the Novels <i>Carol Phippen, Ph.D.</i>	<i>Rodney — Science Lab 125</i>
	Dressing through a Regency Day <i>Ann Wass, Ph.D.</i>	<i>Rodney — Science Lab 121</i>
	Escape Room <i>Maggie Schmidt</i>	<i>Rodney — Gallery</i>
	1:30 – 2:15 pm	Neckerchief Stamping <i>Junemarie Brandt</i>
Austen’s Narrative Dance <i>Nalani Brown</i>		<i>Miss Nan’s</i>
Pride, Prejudice, and Compassion <i>Dara Friedman-Wheeler</i>		<i>Rodney — Science Lab 121</i>
Jane Austen’s Romantic Tropes: From Regency Novels to Korean Dramas <i>Karen Sagun</i>		<i>Rodney — Boardroom</i>
A Respectable Distance from Revolution: Jane Austen & Martha Washington <i>Christina Stetler-Rodriguez</i>		<i>Rodney — Science Lab 124</i>

Time	Session	Location
1:30 – 2:15 pm	The Nitty, the Gritty, and the Pretty of Pride and Prejudice <i>Elizabeth Jane Steele</i>	Rodney — Library Classroom side
	Fox Hunting in the World of Jane Austen <i>Amanda Halla</i>	Rodney — Science Lab 134
2:30 – 3:15 pm	Regency Sing-a-long <i>Rita Baker-Schmidt</i>	Rodney — Science Lab 128
	“Conflict Conversations in Pride and Prejudice” <i>Dr. Juliette Wells</i>	Theatre
	The Immature Prefrontal Cortex of Lydia & Mrs. Bennet <i>LeShawn King</i>	Rodney — Boardroom
	Thomasine Gyllembourg: A Danish Jane Austen? <i>Troy Wellington Smith</i>	Rodney — Science Lab 134
	Pride and Prejudice and Poetry — Versifying with Jane Austen <i>Dr. Tara Moore</i>	Rodney — Library Classroom side
	Sisters and Daughters: The Heart of the Novels <i>Carol Phippen, Ph.D.</i>	Rodney — Science Lab 125
	Dressing through a Regency Day <i>Ann Wass, Ph.D.</i>	Rodney — Science Lab 121
	Regency Sing-a-long <i>Rita Baker-Schmidt</i>	Rodney — Science Lab 128
	Jane Austen and the Navy <i>Margie Burns</i>	Rodney — Art Room
	Transformative Connections in Jane Austen <i>Amanda MacMurtrie</i>	Miss Nan’s Room
2:30 pm	Escape from Rosings Park <i>Maggie Schmidt</i>	Rodney — Gallery
3:15 – 4:00 pm	Tea	Rodney Quad (tentative)

Time	Session	Location
4:15 – 5:00 pm	A Respectable Distance from Revolution: Jane Austen & Martha Washington <i>Christina Stetler-Rodriguez</i>	<i>Rodney — Science Lab 124</i>
	Pride, Prejudice, and Compassion <i>Dara Friedman-Wheeler</i>	<i>Rodney — Science Lab 121</i>
	Jane Austen’s Romantic Tropes: From Regency Novels to Korean Dramas <i>Karen Sagun</i>	<i>Rodney — Boardroom</i>
	The Nitty, the Gritty, and the Pretty of Pride and Prejudice <i>Elizabeth Jane Steele</i>	<i>Rodney — Library Classroom side</i>
	Fox Hunting in the World of Jane Austen <i>Amanda Halla</i>	<i>Rodney — Science Lab 134</i>
	Jane Austen and the Navy <i>Margie Burns</i>	<i>Rodney — Art Room</i>
	Transformative Connections in Jane Austen <i>Amanda MacMurtrie</i>	<i>Miss Nan’s Room</i>
	“Let’s Put on a Show” — Cast & Crew Round Table <i>Cast & Crew of The Complete Works of Jane Austen: Abridged</i>	<i>Theatre</i>
5:00 pm	Escape from Rosings Park <i>Maggie Schmidt</i>	<i>Rodney — Gallery</i>
	Group Portrait	<i>Theatre Steps</i>
5:15 pm	Capstone Presentation: “Pride and Prejudice: A Slideshow History” <i>Dr. Juliette Wells</i>	<i>Theatre</i>
6:00 pm	Regency Dinner	<i>Oldfields Dining Hall</i>
7:30 – 9:30 pm	PLAY — The Complete Works of Jane Austen: Abridged	<i>Theatre</i>

Sunday

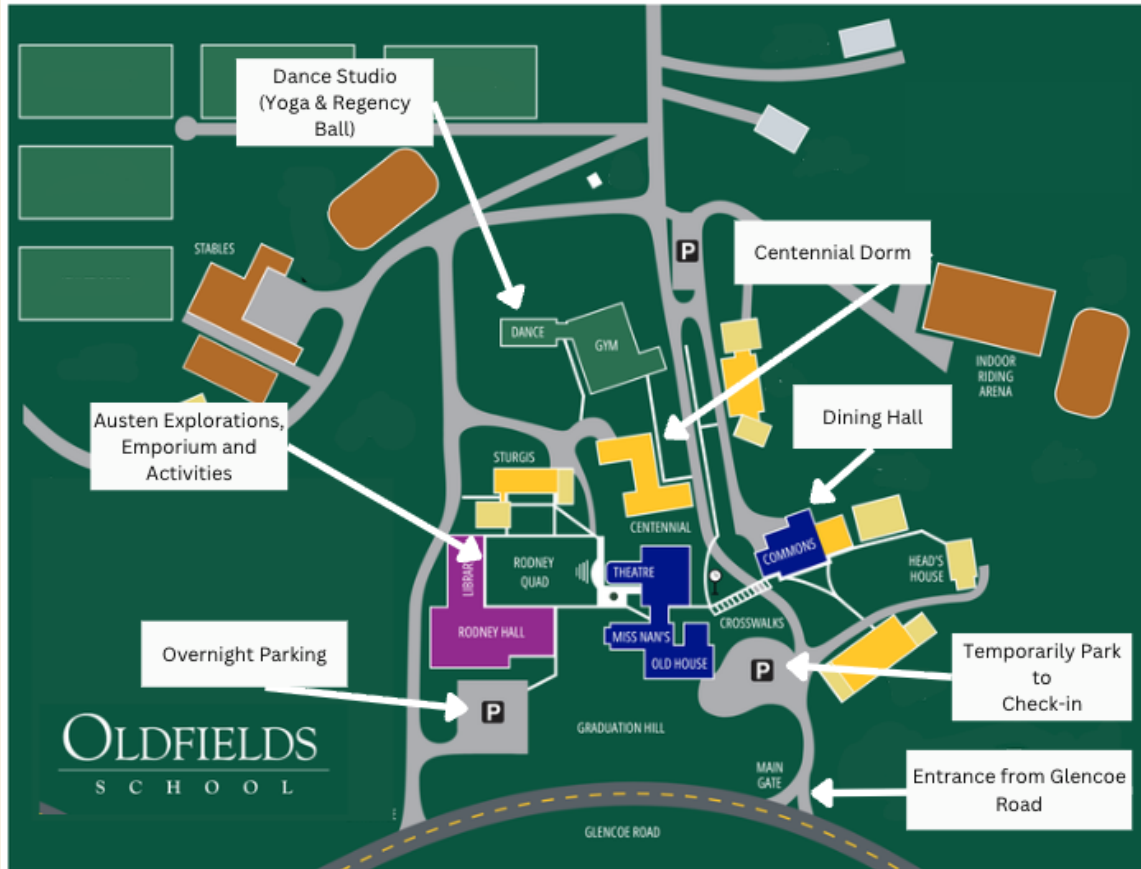
A gentle close to the festival



Time	Event	Location
9:00 am	Continental Breakfast	Oldfields Dining Hall
Morning	Check-Out	Oldfields
After 10:00 am	Drive to Ladew Gardens <i>ladewgardens.com</i> 3535 Jarrettsville Pike, Monkton, MD 21111	Depart from Oldfields

Safe travels, dear friends — and until next we meet on the page.

Oldfields Campus Map



Session Details

& Presenter Biographies



Rita Baker-Schmidt

Regency Sing-a-long

Saturday · 1:30 – 2:15 pm & 2:30 – 3:15 pm · Rodney — Science Lab 128

From Mary Bennet to Caroline Bingley, Austen's characters come to life with music. In this workshop, we will discover popular music from the Regency period. Come ready to sing, hum, or just tap your toes to the music of the Jane Austen era. This encore presentation from the 2025 JASNA AGM is brought back by popular demand.

About the presenter: Rita came to Jane Austen courtesy of the BBC and Colin Firth. (Support your local Public Television, people!) She's since read Austen's novels and fallen in love with all her characters — except Mrs. Norris. A long-time member of JASNA, she is a former JASNA Maryland Regional Coordinator and was a member of the 2026 AGM planning committee. She coordinated the first two Jane Austen Days (JAD) at Manor Mill in 2023 and 2024. After taking 2025 off for the AGM, the JAD is back — bigger and better than ever — as the Maryland Jane Austen Fest, and she now holds the title of Chief Coordinating Officer (whatever THAT means!).

Junemarie Brandt

Neckerchief Stamping

Saturday · 12:30 – 1:15 pm & 1:30 – 2:15 pm · Rodney — Art Room

Participants will have the opportunity to create a neckerchief reminiscent of those worn during the Regency.

About the presenter: Junemarie read Austen in college but was not a huge fan until the early 2000s. She has been an active JASNA member since 2005, and was a member of the 2026 AGM planning committee. Her favorite Austen book is Persuasion.

Nalani Brown

Austen's Narrative Dance: How the Ballroom Gives Us Insight into Austen's Characters

Saturday · 12:30 – 1:15 pm & 1:30 – 2:15 pm · Miss Nan's

An examination of the narrative importance of dancing in Austen's novels and how a character's relationship to dance aligns with their narrative roles.

About the presenter: Nalani Brown graduated from Goucher College with a major in Dance and Literary Studies. She had the opportunity to work closely with Goucher's special collections, full of interesting and rare Austen materials. During her time at Goucher she also spent considerable time participating in a variety of Austen-based studies under the tutelage of Juliette Wells, which allowed her to attend multiple JASNA AGMs and Manor Mill Jane Austen Days.

Margie Burns

Jane Austen and the Navy

Saturday · 2:30 – 3:15 pm & 4:15 – 5:00 pm · Rodney — Art Room

Naval material contained information relevant to the Austen family's larger concerns, including the slave trade.

About the presenter: Margie Burns, an assistant teaching professor of English literature, is a lifelong superfan of Jane Austen's six novels: Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park, Emma, Northanger Abbey, and Persuasion. Margie says she "read Pride and Prejudice as an undergraduate, and got a doctorate in literature as a Shakespearean." She notes that the Austen family loved Shakespeare, too. Margie's latest book is Jane Austen, Abolitionist: The Loaded History of the Phrase "Pride and Prejudice" (McFarland, 2024).

Dara Friedman-Wheeler

Pride, Prejudice, and Compassion

Saturday · 1:30 – 2:15 pm & 4:15 – 5:00 pm · Rodney — Science Lab 121

The Buddhist concept of "compassion," as incorporated into contemporary psychological approaches, appears throughout *Pride and Prejudice* — and may, in some ways, be the antidote to the obstacles named in the title of the book. Both compassion and self-compassion are areas of growth for the two main characters, allowing them ultimately to connect with each other.

About the presenter: Dara is a research and clinical psychologist and a longtime Janeite. "P&P is probably my favorite book," she says, "with S&S and Persuasion close behind." Dara thinks "the books have therapeutic qualities, for sure!"

Amanda Halla

Fox Hunting in the World of Jane Austen

Saturday · 1:30 – 2:15 pm & 4:15 – 5:00 pm · Rodney — Science Lab 134

This talk will help readers of Jane Austen understand references to fox hunting in her novels.

About the presenter: Amanda Halla has been a fan of Jane Austen since reading her in high school many decades ago. Her father is an avid fox hunter, which is how she became interested in the topic of fox hunting in Jane Austen's novels. It led Amanda to research what Austen's contemporary readers understood about the sport and what their relationship to fox hunting said about Austen's characters.

Jennifer Jones

Whist Demonstrations and Games

Friday · 5:00 pm · Manor Mill Loft

Learn a little of the history of this game and enjoy a few hands. Whist is a card game — a precursor to modern-day bridge. Austen featured the game in *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, and *Mansfield Park*.

About the presenter: Jennifer Jones has worked in public libraries for more than 20 years, is a former Regional Coordinator of the Maryland JASNA Region, and was Coordinator for the 2025 AGM in Baltimore.

LeShawn King

The Immature Prefrontal Cortex of Lydia and Mrs. Bennet

Saturday · 12:30 – 1:15 pm & 2:30 – 3:15 pm · Rodney — Boardroom

Learn a little science about brain development and have a laugh at the antics of the immature prefrontal cortexes of Lydia and Mrs. Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*.

About the presenter: This is LeShawn's third time presenting at Jane Austen Day, having presented at both the 2023 and 2024 events on Sense and Sensibility (her favorite novel). "I'm excited to turn my eye to Pride and Prejudice," she says, "and hopefully elicit enlightenment and delight in you and me!" Her unique blend of science, humor, and an eye for detail in Austen's text always makes for a fun and interesting session. In her professional life, LeShawn is a Quality Assurance Specialist in Product Nonconformance — a role that makes her a detective, an analyst, and a problem solver. Off duty, she is a voracious reader and an enthusiastic fan of Jane Austen, particularly impressed with the timeless appeal of Austen's work and the perfection of her prose.

Amanda MacMurtrie

Transformative Connections in Jane Austen

Saturday · 2:30 – 3:15 pm & 4:15 – 5:00 pm · Miss Nan's Room

What if reading Jane Austen is a remedy to today's widespread disconnection and depression? We'll explore how Austen defines and promotes connection in the lives of her characters and in the reader's experience with the text. From nature to creativity, to specific writing techniques, let's unpack Austen's ideas to increase connection, acquire self-knowledge, and improve overall wellbeing.

About the presenter: Amanda MacMurtrie is a former English major and current art therapist. Inspired by the many ways that art and healing interact, Amanda hosts workshops and 1:1 creative accompaniment to support wellness and creative growth. Her favorite book to discuss is Northanger Abbey.

Dr. Tara Moore

Pride and Prejudice and Poetry — Versifying with Jane Austen

Saturday · 12:30 – 1:15 pm & 2:30 – 3:15 pm · Rodney — Library Classroom side

Join us for a lively and imaginative creative writing workshop that brings Jane Austen's language to life! Participants will craft their own poetry using Austen's words, with guidance and plenty of fun along the way. No writing experience is needed — just bring a love of language, a spirit of creativity, and a pen!

About the presenter: Dr. Tara Moore teaches writing and design classes at Elizabethtown College, where she shares her love of storytelling and language. She leads tours to Jane Austen sites in the UK and takes students on travel-writing study abroad experiences in Ireland. She has served as a JASNA regional coordinator and has presented at JASNA's annual conference. Like many Austen fans, Tara is captivated by the author's rich vocabulary — and this workshop is the perfect chance to dive in and soak up Austen's words together.

Carol Pippen, Ph.D.

Sisters and Daughters: The Heart of the Novels

Saturday · 12:30 – 1:15 pm & 2:30 – 3:15 pm · Rodney — Science Lab 125

Sisters and daughters are the reason for the stories; their lives, both real and imaginary, explain all.

*About the presenter: An English professor who came to Austen late but has been with her a long time: Life Member of JASNA; former 8-year editor of JASNA News; Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. Hard to choose a favorite book, but Carol loves *Pride and Prejudice*. She is a former JASNA Maryland Regional Coordinator.*

Karen Sagun

Jane Austen’s Romantic Tropes: From Regency Novels to Korean Dramas

Saturday · 1:30 – 2:15 pm & 4:15 – 5:00 pm · Rodney — Boardroom

This talk will explain “romance tropes” and compare examples from the 2022 Korean romantic comedy *Business Proposal* to *Pride and Prejudice* (and other Jane Austen novels), then discuss their universality. *(If you have not watched Business Proposal, there WILL be spoilers — watch it on Netflix!)*

About the presenter: Karen Sagun is a former librarian and long-term Jane Austen enthusiast and Korean Drama fan. She joined JASNA in 2009 and is currently the co-Regional Coordinator for the Maryland Region. She was a member of the 2026 AGM planning committee.

Maggie Schmidt

Escape from Rosings Park (Escape Room)

Saturday · 10:00 am, 12:30 pm, 2:30 pm & 5:00 pm · Rodney — Gallery

Are you a proper member of the Ton? You must prove your merit — and puzzle-solving ability — to escape from Lady Catherine de Bourgh’s salon... or else no shelves in your closets! Beware: guests can’t outstay their welcome, or you might have to stay *FOREVER!* This is a brand new escape room, designed just for the Maryland Jane Austen Fest!

*About the presenter: Maggie Schmidt regularly subjects her middle school students to escape rooms in the name of their education. Her first Austen Escape Room, *Escape from Northanger Abbey*, premiered at the JASNA AGM in October 2025 and is now puzzling Austen fans across the East Coast. In addition to teaching Art, Music, and American History, Maggie enjoys directing the St. John’s Theatre Program and helping her mother, Rita Baker-Schmidt, with events.*

Troy Wellington Smith

Thomasine Gyllembourg: A Danish Jane Austen?

Saturday · 12:30 – 1:15 pm & 2:30 – 3:15 pm · Rodney — Science Lab 134

In this talk, Troy will introduce the audience to Thomasine Gyllembourg (1773–1856), whose novellas *An Everyday Story* and *Two Ages* he has translated. Gyllembourg is said to have been influenced by Austen, as she was the first author to successfully introduce realist fiction into Denmark. Yet a study of Gyllembourg’s so-called “poetic realism” can show us what makes Austen’s realism so distinctive.

About the presenter: Troy holds an MA in English literature from the University of Mississippi, where he studied nineteenth-century British literature. He also has a PhD in Scandinavian Languages and Literatures from the University of California, Berkeley, where he focused on Golden Age Danish literature (Kierkegaard, H. C. Andersen, and Gyllembourg).

Elizabeth Jane Steele

The Nitty, the Gritty, and the Pretty of Pride and Prejudice

Saturday · 1:30 – 2:15 pm & 4:15 – 5:00 pm · Rodney — Library Classroom side

Reading Jane Austen is a pleasure indeed — but reading Austen after one knows the 18th century as well as her first readers is a much richer experience. Thousands of readers have enjoyed the first sentence, but very few understand that Austen used words and sentence structure from philosophical and religious treatises to make her very funny introduction to a novel that is “light and bright and sparkling.” This talk will point out references that illuminate the novel so that fuller enjoyment will result. Will Darcy be able to get a special license, really? Or is Mrs. Bennet mistaken in her declaration? Is Elizabeth Bennet typical of her time period? And, of course, we’ll talk about the fish in Mr. Darcy’s pond and the significance of the fact that they exist — with many thanks to Janet Todd.

About the presenter: Pride and Prejudice was required reading Elizabeth’s senior year of high school. She read it at sixteen and has been a Janeite ever since. Joining JASNA in 1997 led her to many volunteer activities, as well as local and national offices — all of which were a treat. One of her favorite JASNA tasks was being the “Voice of JASNA” and answering the Society’s 800 number line. What questions were received!

Christina Stetler-Rodriguez

A Respectable Distance from Revolution: Jane Austen and Martha Washington

Saturday · 1:30 – 2:15 pm & 4:15 – 5:00 pm · Rodney — Science Lab 124

Imagine the travails of engaging in proper society in such an improper world as post-colonial America. While Jane Austen and Martha Washington lived vastly different lives, this talk will explore what these two important female figures had in common and offer an invitation to explore digital archives of Mount Vernon and other historical sites, observing letters and artifacts from the Regency and Post-Colonial era. This interactive workshop includes a peek into Martha Washington's own handwritten letters, family life, and — of course — a polite observation of her tea-services, all lending themselves to the engaging subject of how Miss Austen might have described Lady Washington were she afforded the same privilege of curiosity.

About the presenter: Christina Stetler-Rodriguez is an English Instructor at the Carver Center for Arts and Technology and an adjunct professor at the Community College of Baltimore County. A National Board Certified Teacher in English Language Arts for adolescents and young adults, she has served as a curriculum writer and provides mentorship and professional development to educators through her work with George Washington's Mount Vernon, where she served as a Teacher Fellow for the Presidential Library on the topic of post-colonial economics. She is a Regional Ambassador for the George Washington Teacher Institute for the American 250 bipartisan initiative. She earned both her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Goucher College and has pursued additional graduate coursework at Towson University, and studied American Culture and Literature through Harvard University's Summer Teacher Institute. Formerly known as a spirited Emma, she now diligently endeavors to mature more like Mrs. Weston, and less like Mrs. Norris.

Ann Wass, Ph.D.

Dressing through a Regency Day

Saturday · 12:30 – 1:15 pm & 2:30 – 3:15 pm · Rodney — Science Lab 121

From rising in the morning to retiring at night, this will provide an overview of all the different activities in the life of a Regency lady and gentleman — and what was worn for each.

About the presenter: Ann Buermann Wass has a Ph.D. in dress and textile history from the University of Maryland. She is retired from the Riversdale House Museum in Riverdale Park, Maryland, where she began to study Regency/Federal fashion in 1996. She became interested in Jane Austen as she immersed herself in the history of this period. Persuasion is her favorite book and Anne Elliot her favorite character, although she especially enjoys reading Austen's letters for the fashion tidbits. She makes period clothing for herself and her husband and dresses for Austen events. Ann is a member of the Costume Society of America and the Costume Society (UK), in addition to JASNA.

Dr. Juliette Wells

“Conflict Conversations in *Pride and Prejudice*” & Capstone Presentation: “*Pride and Prejudice: A Slideshow History*”

Saturday · 12:30 – 1:15 pm & 2:30 – 3:15 pm (Conflict Conversations); 5:15 pm (Capstone) · Theatre

Two sessions from Dr. Wells anchor the festival’s scholarly programme: a close-reading discussion on the dynamics of conflict in *Pride and Prejudice*, and — as our capstone event — a richly illustrated slideshow history of the novel itself.

About the presenter: Dr. Juliette Wells is a Professor of Literary Studies at Goucher College. Last year, she co-curated A Lively Mind: Jane Austen at 250 at The Morgan Library & Museum in New York City to celebrate the year of Austen’s 250th birthday. Her books include A New Jane Austen: How Americans Brought Us the World’s Greatest Novelist (Bloomsbury Academic, 2023); Reading Austen in America (2017); and Everybody’s Jane: Austen in the Popular Imagination (2011). She has also edited editions of Austen’s Mansfield Park (2025), Persuasion (2017), and Emma (2015). A member of JASNA Maryland, her favorite of Austen’s novels is Persuasion, but her favorite character is Emma.

Cast & Crew of The Complete Works of Jane Austen; Abridged

“Let’s Put on a Show” — Cast & Crew Round Table

Saturday · 4:15 – 5:00 pm · Theatre

Get a sneak peek at the show with the cast and crew as they sit down for a round-table discussion ahead of the evening’s performance.



Thank you for joining us at the Maryland Jane Austen Fest.

<https://www.manor-mill.com/janeausten>