

# Member Profiles

To nominate yourself or another member, email JASNA News Editor Susie Wampler at [jasnanews@gmail.com](mailto:jasnanews@gmail.com). Responses may be edited for length, style, and format.

## EMMA KANTOR

New York Metro



### When did you first discover Jane Austen?

Like so many '90s tweens, my first encounter with Jane Austen was via *Clueless*—though I didn't realize the movie was an adaptation of *Emma* until sometime after. (It's still my favorite screen retelling, by a mile.) I read my first Austen novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, as a sophomore in high school and went on to read all of her books independently and as part of a seminar at Vassar College.

**What do you love most about Austen?** Austen's wit is unmatched. Every time I return to her work, I uncover new layers of irony and insight. So many of her novels are about reading and rereading, as the characters amend their (often flawed) first impressions. There's a way in which we, as readers, undergo this same process of critical reevaluation. It makes for a rich and rewarding experience—one that mirrors the way we navigate our own social interactions in everyday life, centuries later.

**Member since:** 2022

**What do you enjoy most about JASNA?** What draws me to JASNA is the vibrant community (equal parts scholars and fans), along with the many opportunities to deepen my knowledge and appreciation of all things Austen.

**Tell us about your involvement in JASNA.** I joined JASNA at the suggestion of JASNA News Book Review Editor and longtime Massachusetts Region member Betsy Groban, and I'm so glad I did! I've loved writing reviews for the newsletter, especially on Austen-inspired young adult fiction. I've also attended a number of terrific lectures and events. This May, I had the opportunity to moderate a conversation at Books of Wonder in Manhattan with Sayantani DasGupta, author of the YA novels *Debating Darcy* and *Rosewood: A Midsummer Meet Cute* (a love letter to *Sense and Sensibility*, *Bridgerton*, and Shakespeare). I'm part of the New York Metro Region's Juvenilia Group as well. I look forward to becoming more involved with JASNA and attending my first Annual General Meeting in the fall.

**Background:** I'm a Brooklyn-based writer and deputy children's book editor at *Publishers Weekly*, where I cover new and

forthcoming books for young readers. The best part of my job is getting to speak with authors and illustrators about their work and creative process. I've written for *The New York Times Magazine*, *Electric Literature*, *Literary Hub*, and more.

**Other passions/interests:** I'm also a humor writer. You can find a number of my pieces on the web, including "Emmaleh: A Jewish Regency Romance," a loving parody of *Emma* and *Bridgerton*—with a bit of Yiddish thrown in. Other passions include (classic) film and Italian language/culture.

**Favorite Austen work/character:** No surprise here: *Emma* (the book and the heroine). Three cheers for unlikable female characters!

**Other favorite authors/genres:** I'm an avid reader of 19th century British literature (Dickens, Conan Doyle, and the Brontës). In terms of more modern writers, Elena Ferrante and Jhumpa Lahiri are two of my favorites. And, of course, I love children's literature, both classic and contemporary.

**What are you reading now?** I'm currently reading an essay collection by Briallen Hopper, *Hard to Love*. It's a moving celebration of sisterhood, female friendship, and the bonds that are too often overshadowed by our culture's obsession with heterosexual romance. There's one essay in particular, "On Spinsters," that should resonate with Janeites.

**Fun facts:** Contrary to what you might think, my parents didn't have Miss Woodhouse in mind when they named me Emma.

## DAVID FREEMAN

Northern California



### When did you first discover Jane Austen?

It was my junior year of high school, when my English teacher assigned *Northanger Abbey*. This was a bold move in an all-boys class of 16-year-olds! I loved it, and