



Sass and Sasparilla

Newsletter of the Jane Austen Society of Puget Sound

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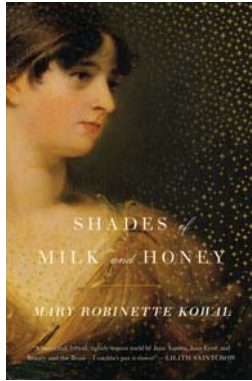
Jane Austen enjoys birthday immensely! Doesn't look a day over 200!



Last December 16th found us enjoying a birthday tea in Miss Austen's honor. We were greeted with an invitation to try a festive glass of butterbeer (almost as refreshing as sasparilla, and without the kick!) Barkeep Jim Nagel was freshly arrived from Honeydukes and had brought some for everyone to try!

The tea party was lovely – everyone brought wonderful food to share. Our speaker, Portland area author Mary Robinette Kowal, regaled us with tales of her adventures writing in the Austen style.





Her books sound wonderful, full of whimsy and I can't wait to start reading! Later in the day, Ms Kowal revealed another talent as she presented a shadow puppet show very like one seen in parlors in Regency England! As you see, Miss Austen was very interested in the workings of the show.



Everyone got a chance to spend a moment with Jane, and there were photo-ops galore!





New member Becky deVries-Wong said: I so enjoyed my first Christmas party with the Jane Austen Society. Our speaker was so interesting. I only wish she had longer to share with us and I look forward to reading her book in the future. It was a treat to try the Harry Potter butterbeer and I so enjoyed it that on Xmas day I made a large batch to share with my husband's family who joined us for the day.

We toasted Jane with a glass of sherry.



A Toast to Jane

JASNA PS Jane Austen Birthday Tea, December 11, 2011

Presented by Debra Alderman

(offering a few selections about Jane Austen by Rudyard Kipling)

Rudyard Kipling was a big Jane Austen fan and wrote a well known story about shell-shocked WWI soldiers, one of whom reminisces to his Masonic brethren about his initiation into a society of Janeites while on active duty during the war.

This is one of the famous statements Rudyard Kipling wrote about Jane Austen:

“The more I read the more I admire and respect and do reverence... When she looks straight at a man or a woman she is greater than those who were alive with her - by a whole head... with a more delicate hand and a keener scalpel.”

Kipling began his story, “The Janeites,” with this little poem:

Jane lies in Winchester—blessed be her shade!
Praise the Lord for making her, and her for all she made!
And while the stones of Winchester, or Milsom Street, remain,
Glory, love, and honour unto England's Jane!

Humbert, Kipling's main character in “The Janeites,” says:

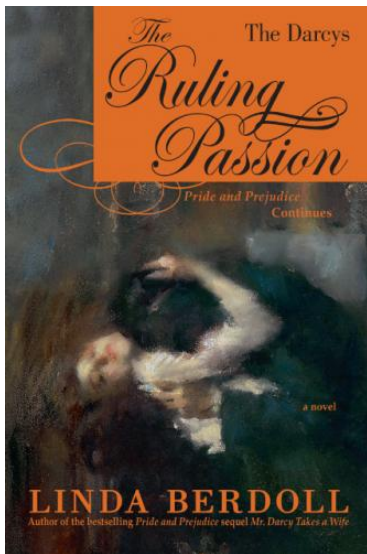
“Well, as pore Macklin said, it's a very select Society, an' you've got to be a Janeite in your 'eart, or you won't have any success. An' yet he made *me* a Janeite! I read all her six books now for pleasure 'tween times in the shop; an' it brings it all back—down to the smell of the glue-paint on the screens. You take it from me, Brethren, there's no one to touch Jane when you're in a tight place. Gawd bless 'er, whoever she was.”

More photographs from the December Chapter meeting can be found on our website:

<http://www.austenps.com/>

Book/Movie Reviews!

Read a book or seen a film that you would like to share with our members? Please consider writing a quick review for the newsletter. Rate the book or movie with 1-5 teacups!



The Ruling Passion by Linda Berdoll



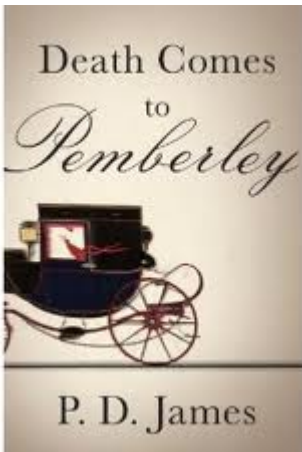
Four and a half **steaming** cups of tea!

Best-selling author Linda Berdoll's *Mr. Darcy Takes A Wife* and *Darcy & Elizabeth* have been hailed as "sexy, hilarious, poignant" and "wild, bawdy and utterly enjoyable (Booklist.)" But also "blasphemy, smut and trash" are not uncommon adjectives used by her severest critics. Rarely has there been such a clear division of thought between two camps: those that fervently love her work and those that vehemently hate it. *The Ruling Passion*, her highly anticipated sequel to the sequels, has finally come to fruition. This self-published sequel opens in the year '18, approximately two years after *Darcy & Elizabeth, Night and Days at Pemberley* concludes wherein Darcy had saved the family from scandal (again) and that scurrilous rat George Wickham has received his comeuppance -- his "whennymegs" were shot off! The Darcy's still have an exceedingly loving marriage in this continuation of one of classic literatures most beloved couples. Albeit, what bedevils the Darcy's is the re-introduction of Lady Howgrave, formerly Juliette Clisson, newcomer to the neighborhood, but as Darcy's courtesan of his bachelor days, not new to this narrative. As we discover that Juliette's marriage contract was partially based on her presenting Sir Henry Howgrave with a son and heir, his own potency comes into question. Although the beautiful Juliette could easily engage any number of competent studs, her own experiences with Darcy's virile credentials and his now known accomplishment at fathering sons, she becomes well-nigh obsessed with getting him back into her bed. Or carriage. Or wherever she can entrap him. Whilst Reactionaries and Civil Libertarians rally for political support, and as radicals and rabble rousers incite riots in London, sadness falls upon Pemberley: the Darcy's lose an infant son to a putrid fever. Elizabeth slips into a deep depression and closes herself off to her husband and his comfort. Therefore, as Elizabeth undertakes a circuitous quest for redemption from Pemberley to her childhood home of Longbourne and back, the Darcy's too must find a way back to each other.

Berdoll weaves a rich cabal by her own coloring of classic Austen characters as well as those she thusly contrived. Her style of recounting each character's tale, entangling with all the others is mesmerizing and kept me turning pages as I puzzled out their fit. I laughed heartily at the tongue in cheek (and other

sensitive spots) euphemisms of the burlesque, smirked at her quirky yet exacting vernacular, smiled at the quick-witted teasing, and sighed at the tender exchanges between a man and woman who truly adore one another. I might add, unlike the *Mr. Darcy Takes A Wife*, when the Darcy's were newly married and their conjugal proclivities numerous -- and ubiquitous-- this latest offering does not focus as much on those amorous seductions. As much. But more on the vicissitudes of Elizabeth & Darcy, Juliette's scheming, and the intrigue of a Mr. Alistair R. Thomas. If your sensibilities are offended by explicit, passionate love scenes with Jane Austen's original namesakes, this is presumably NOT the book for you. However, those who delight in reading about the Darcy's beyond *Pride and Prejudice*, including all their complexities, and intimacies (in and around the bedroom,) and most particularly if you are a fan of Berdoll's previous works, *The Ruling Passion* is not to be missed! Indeed, hold on to your bonnets as Linda Berdoll has quite done it again.

Submitted by Christina Boyd



Death Comes to Pemberley by P.D. James



Sadly, one and a half teacups!

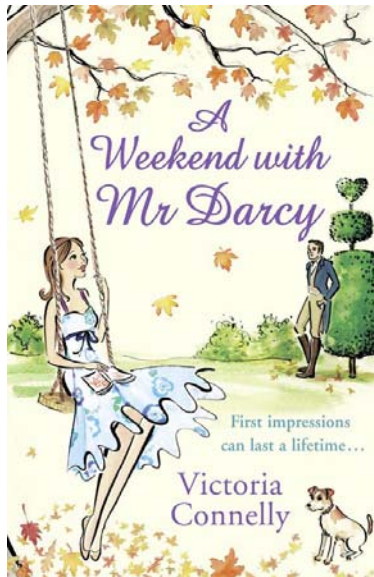
Several months ago I was excited to read that P.D. James--one of my favorite mystery writers and an avowed admirer of Jane Austen--had written a mystery sequel to Pride and Prejudice.

When I received Death Comes to Pemberley for Christmas I plunged into it, but found that--alas!--even the great P.D. James could not convincingly write in the style of Jane Austen, and that her efforts to concoct a mystery centered on Pemberley and featuring the characters from P&P resulted in a terribly dull book that was difficult to finish. Much time was spent catching the reader up with events from P&P, and although obvious care was taken to project the actions that the characters in P&P would have taken in future situations, what emerged was a flat portrayal that did not extend or enlarge upon Austen's characterizations. There were anachronisms that I would not have expected P.D. James to make--the references to "sending for the police", or to a character's "lifestyle" for example--but more surprising was the fact that the murder mystery at the heart of the novel could not have been solved by the reader because there were no real clues, and the murderer was quickly pulled like a rabbit out of a hat to bring the book to a close. This was so unlike James' usually carefully constructed plots--sprinkled with clues that seem obvious when the murderer is revealed--that the reader can only think she was so focused on putting into motion again the beloved Pemberley inhabitants that she neglected her trademark intricacies of plot.

I don't mean to be harsh about "Death Comes to Pemberley" because I admire James' writing in general and feel affection for a valiant effort made. But the reality is that it is extremely difficult for anyone to speak with another person's voice, especially the voice of a genius who lived 200 years ago.

The lesson of "Death Comes to Pemberley" is this: that if the great P.D. James--a 20th century mistress of plot and characterization and lifelong devotee of Jane Austen--could not successfully imitate her, then all other writers trying to do so, whether from admiration or the desire to cash in, should simply stop, because it cannot be done.

Submitted by Debbie Johnson



A Weekend with Mr. Darcy by Victoria Connelly



Five teacups.

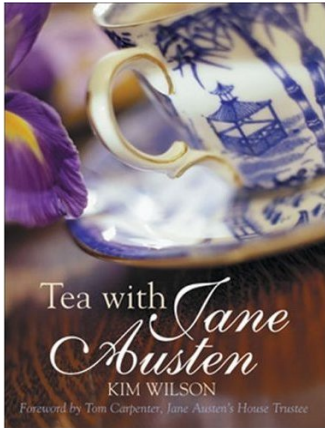
Living here in Thailand I would have to say that there are not many “Jane” sightings so I was surprised to see a book with “Mr. Darcy” in the title on the lower shelf of a small bookstore. While most of you were celebrating Jane’s Birthday at the December meeting I was celebrating Jane’s Birthday my own way, lounging by the pool with the sun (a nice 85 degrees) warming my skin, diet coke in my hand reading **A Weekend with Mr. Darcy, by Victoria Connelly.**

The back of the book blurb looked promising: *“Surrounded by appalling exes and fawning students, the only thing keeping professor Katherine Roberts sane is Jane Austen, and her secret love for racy Regency romance novels. She thinks the Jane Austen Addicts weekend will be the perfect getaway. Maybe she’ll even meet her own personal Mr. Darcy... Breezy and beautifully witty, internationally bestselling author Victoria Connelly’s charming modern love story will appeal to all Jane Austen fanatics... and anyone who loves a good romance.”*

OK, the idea of a “Jane Austen Addicts weekend” is what made me want to read this book. I enjoyed the way Ms. Connelly spun the story line. It is a perfect quick “summer” read. Just what this Jane Austin Addict needed. The book has a love story; it is set in a stunning early eighteenth-century country manor house, cast of colorful & humorous secondary characters, emotional roadblocks and misunderstandings, and two heroines in need of some personal growth before they can fall in love. Ms. Connelly does a good job with voice and her writing style is easy to read. I found my self transported from Thailand to England by reading the first page – just where I wanted to be for Jane’s Birthday!

Submitted by Heidi Gailey

PS I miss the Jane Austen Society of Puget Sound....hopefully I can attend a summer meeting this year.



Tea Reviews!

Did you recently enjoy a tea that you would like to share with our members? Please consider writing a quick review for the newsletter. Rate the experience with 1-5 teacups!

The Tuscan Tea Room – West Seattle

Afternoon tea served Tuesday to Sunday, 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Tuscan Tea room is a lovely little bistro in West Seattle, and while you don't think "Italian" when you think "tea", the combination is charming! My friend and I recently enjoyed the special Christmas Tea and it was lovely. The savories are what really make a tea for me, and they were wonderful – including a bacon and chocolate sandwich on rustic bread that was amazing! Their loose-leaf tea menu is extensive and varied, and there is bound to be something there for you to enjoy. The setting is beautiful and the food was great – a fabulous experience! 5 lovely teacups!



Submitted by Julie Buck

The Salish Lodge Christmas Tea - Salish Lodge, Snoqualmie

I was so excited to see that the Salish Lodge was offering a special afternoon tea during the Christmas season – I love to find a new spot for tea, and I'd had dinner here before and knew their dining room is wonderful. What could be better? A lot, unfortunately. Reading the description online, I was pleased to see that their savories included a crab and avocado sandwich along with the traditional cucumber and egg salad sandwiches. Well, the cucumber and egg salad were great – the crab and avocado tasteless! And there were only four tiny sandwiches for each person. I mean tiny – the daintiest lady wouldn't do anything but pop the whole sandwich in her mouth. The scone was the size of a small piece of fudge. Their "Devonshire cream" wasn't – but it was one of the better substitutions I've seen (I freely admit that I am a snob when it comes to Devonshire cream, and I maintain that the only one who can "make" it is a cow in Devon!) and the strawberry jam tasted homemade, which was very nice! The few pastries were very good, but overall, at \$30 per person, I did not expect to leave hungry, but I certainly did. We were seated at a window table, and watched the falls, which were spectacular. So while the ambience was wonderful, I can only give the whole experience two teacups!



Submitted by Julie Buck



Janeite Spotlight!



Charlene Kern

How delightful to begin 2012 as your new Regional Coordinator!

I have been asked to briefly introduce myself, so for those of you who do not yet know me, or who are new to our chapter, I will share that I am a singer, dancer, gardener, sewer and, it goes without saying, kindred spirit with all of you in my unwavering adoration of things Austen.

I have been a member of JASNA-PS since 1998, which somehow sounds like a long time ago! Although our chapter has evolved and members come and go, one thing remains constant: a collective fervor for our favorite author, aka “our Jane”. I am continually amazed at the myriad possibilities people’s imaginations will find in her writings, her life and the times in which she lived. I consider her a very rewarding distraction.

I look forward to participating in our chapter in a way in which I haven’t before over these next two years. I hope that each of you will challenge yourselves to consider how you might participate in a way you haven’t before to make our chapter even more dynamic and engaging as it begins its next twenty years.



Emma sighting!

UW School of Drama is producing Emma Feb. 8-26. A bunch of us are going on Feb. 19 for the matinee performance and Debra Alderman has arranged discount tickets if anyone still wants to join in. Contact Debra if you are interested. daldermansattle@gmail.com

Members and guests are encouraged to attend the next JASNA PS meeting:

Our Next Meeting!

February 12th 2012, 2 p.m.

Jane Austen's Table: a multi-sensory exploration of food in Regency England

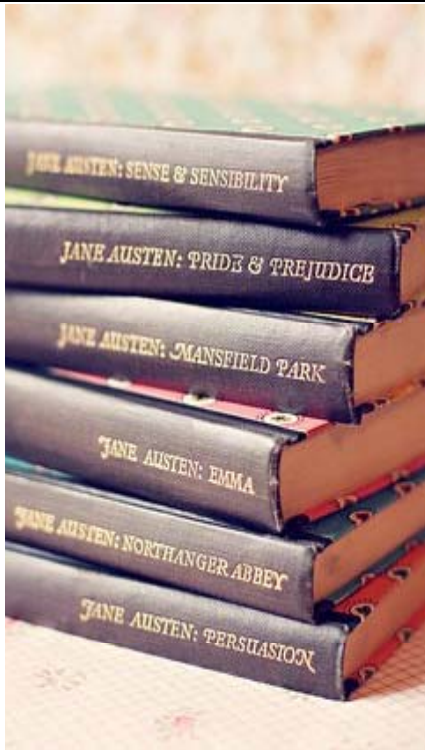
Venue: Magnolia Lutheran Church
2414 31st Ave West, Seattle, Washington, 98199

On the corner of 31st Ave west and West McGraw in Magnolia. The Fireside room is on the north side of the church on the lower level.

Free parking on the street

Presenters: Nichelle Hilton, along with several chapter members in costume, will explain the preparation and serving of a variety of types of food in Jane Austen's day. Samples of a number of authentic Regency era foods and beverages will be served. Our meeting will conclude with our traditional tea, treats and good conversation.





JANE AUSTEN BOOK CLUB OF GREATER SEATTLE

We meet on the third Thursday of each month, at 6:30 p.m. This year, we've decided to go "back to the source" and we are reading each of the 6 novels along with Jane's other writings. In January, we started with Sense and Sensibility.

February – Pride and Prejudice

March – Mansfield Park

April – Emma

May – Persuasion

June – Northanger Abby

July – Juvenalia

August – Unfinished Novels

September – Letters and Literary influences

October – Biographies, Haters and Critics, The Mysterious Death of Miss Austen

November – Planning meeting

December – Christmas Party

Interspersed with the book club meetings, we have social outings and plenty of fun!

To join in, contact Nichelle Hilton momof5girls@hotmail.com or check out the website:
<http://www.janeaustenbookclub.weebly.com/>



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