



# Jane Austen Society of North America, Southwest Region

## August 2021 Newsletter

### Recap of Sonali Dev event: "Jane Austen and Telling Contemporary Tales"

Sonali Dev—author of *Pride, Prejudice, and Other Flavors*, *Recipe for Persuasion* and the newly released *Incense and Sensibility*—was the featured speaker at our Zoom event on July 17.

She revealed that her earliest memories of becoming an author were in kindergarten composing couplets. Her introduction to Austen was in middle school, when a real prince played Mr. Darcy in a TV adaptation that was a sensation in India, where she grew up (in Bombay, now Mumbai).

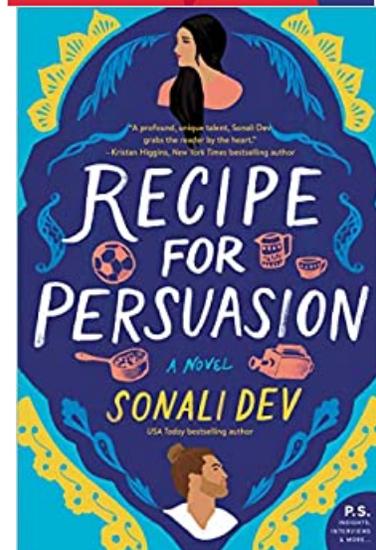
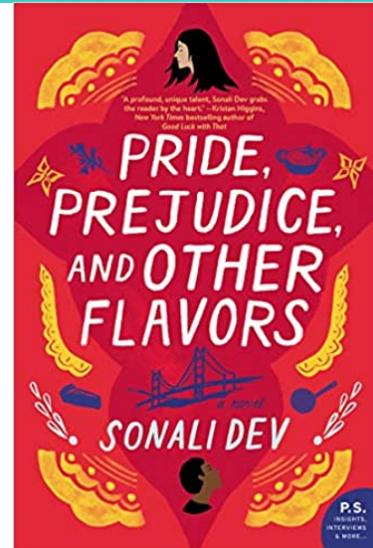
Dev explained that she was drawn to Austen because of her striking heroines. For instance, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Dev saw “a heroine who always spoke her mind, had opinions about everything and didn’t temper them. She expressed her opinions ‘very decidedly for so young a person’ and was liked for it. It changed the woman I became.” She added that, in Elizabeth Bennet, she saw “everything I believed about myself that wasn’t being reinforced by the world I lived in suddenly visible in a story. Elizabeth had a sense of self worth and was rewarded and not punished for it.”

She described Austen as a contemporary writer, reflecting the world she lived in through her unique vision. Dev said the rigid rules of Regency England felt similar to the rigid rules she grew up with in India. “The sharpness of Austen’s social commentary was so relevant,” she noted.

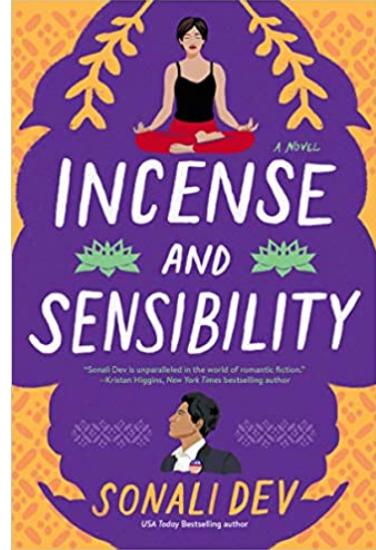
Reading *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Persuasion* and *Emma* taught her about female agency and self worth, Dev told the audience. It became her dream to write contemporary versions of these four novels, her favorites, and to place the characters within the same story universe. Her goal was not to retell Austen’s novels or to simply translate them to another culture—which had already been done—but to pay homage to what these novels taught her.

Dev added that her novels explore and comment on subjects like truth, love, agency, politics, and privilege (among other flavors), and learning from loss, while playing with conventions and Austen’s character archetypes. She also gender-swapped some characters, as in *Pride, Prejudice, and Other Flavors* in which the heroine is the Darcy character.

Dev recounted how publishers suggested she make Trisha—the Darcy character—more likeable, which only emboldened Dev to tell the stories *she* wanted to tell.



She also shared that the next installment in her series, what she expects to be the last in the Raje family saga, will be based on *Emma* and released in summer 2022.



Watch the video  
now!

## 2021 Young Filmmakers Contest

JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA  
**JASNA SOUTHWEST**  
SOUTHWEST REGION  
PRESENTS ITS  
FIFTH ANNUAL  
**YOUNG FILMMAKERS**  
contest  
INSPIRED BY JANE AUSTEN  
5 MINUTES OR LESS  
CASH, FAME, JASNA MEMBERSHIP & MORE  
DEADLINE OCT 1, 2021  
ENTRY INFO: [JASNASW.COM/YOUNG-FILMMAKERS-CONTEST](https://jasnasw.com/young-filmmakers-contest)

We need your help! Our region has thousands of potential filmmakers eligible for our fifth annual Young Filmmakers Contest (YFC), which is open to all Austen fans and amateur filmmakers under the age of 30. The YFC is our singular contribution to the dynamic growth of Austen appreciation for future generations and, as such, it is important to foster growth and support for the program.

Here's how you can help!

Please consider encouraging *one* entrant: Reach out via email, Facebook, text, phone or face to face with a young person in your life (or the life of someone you know) who loves Jane Austen and filmmaking. Let any K-12 teachers, college professors or parents in your orbit know about the program.

Deadline is October 1 for entries of five-minute or shorter films on any topic relating to the topic of Jane Austen.

Winners will receive cash prizes, one year's JASNA membership and a special screening at JASNA's Annual General Meeting in Chicago in October 2021. Learn more on the [Young Filmmakers Contest](#) section of our website.

Under the leadership of YFC committee chair Erika Kotite, we have recruited another stellar panel of judges. They are Amy Heckerling (*Clueless*), Gurinder Chadha (*Bride & Prejudice*), *Boston Globe* film critic Ty Burr, author Sonali Dev, film and TV producer Laura Rister and author and screenwriter Suzanne Allain.

Don't let our momentum and extraordinary judges panel languish. Contact [Erika Kotite](#) if you need reinforcements or more information!

## 2021 JUDGES PANEL



**AMY HECKERLING**

*Director: Clueless, Fast Times at Ridgemont High*



**GURINDER CHADHA**

*Director/Producer: Bend It Like Beckham, Bride & Prejudice*



**LAURA RISTER**

*Film & TV Producer  
Mr. Malcolm's List, The Tale*



**SONALI DEV**

*Author: Pride, Prejudice, and Other Flavors, Incense and Sensibility*



**SUZANNE ALLAIN**

*Author & Screenwriter  
Mr. Malcolm's List*



**TY BURR**

*Film Critic at The Boston Globe*

Entry Deadline: Oct 1, 2021

Entry Details: [jasnasw.com/young-filmmakers-contest](http://jasnasw.com/young-filmmakers-contest)

## Beware of Scam Targeting Nonprofits

Beware of an email scam targeting JASNA and other nonprofits, spoofing the identify of board members and others, both in regions and nationally. At least two dozen people in our region received the spoofed email the last week of July.

First, if you receive a suspicious-sounding email (asking you to buy gift cards or something else to be reimbursed by "JASNA"), check the email address of the sender (it may show a familiar name—Susie Wampler, for instance, or the name of another board member—but with a completely unfamiliar email address).

Second, another clue to look out for is unusual punctuation and grammar.

Third, and most importantly, know that JASNA would never ask any of our members by email to do anything like what is being requested (buying vouchers and gift cards and then promising to reimburse you later).

You can report this and other scams at [www.usa.gov/stop-scams-frauds](http://www.usa.gov/stop-scams-frauds).

## Call for Southwest Board Nominations

Would you like to get more involved in JASNA Southwest? At the end of the year, the region's membership will be voting on new officers and board members for 2022–23. To nominate yourself or someone else, or to learn more, contact [Nancy Gallagher](#), chair of the nominating

committee. We are also recruiting volunteers to serve on committees or to help with events. We also welcome suggestions for improvement in all aspects of the organization and our operations. Contact Regional Coordinator [Susie Wampler](#) if you'd like to volunteer.

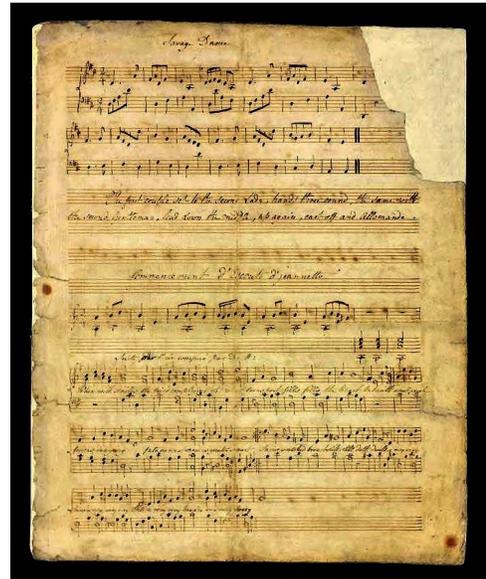
## Other Austen-Related Events

The Valley Area English Regency Society is holding in-person dancing on the third Sunday of each month from 1-4 p.m. Light refreshments are served, along with dancing and conversation!

Dressing in Regency attire is encouraged but not required. No partner or experience is needed, and all dances are taught and prompted by dancing mistress Laura Brodian Freas Beraha. Among the dances learned is one of Austen's favorites: the Cotillion.

A solo Zoom version continues on the second and fourth Sundays from 3-4:30 p.m.

Learn more on the [society's website](#) or [Facebook page](#). Or email [kfreasstudio@earthlink.net](mailto:kfreasstudio@earthlink.net).



## Reading/Film/Game Groups

Sunday, August 1, 1:30 p.m.

### **Riverside Reading Group**

*Excellent Women* by Barbara Pym

Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.

For more information, contact [Vicki Broach](#).

Sunday, August 1, 2 p.m.

### **South Bay Reading Group**

*Evelina* by Frances Burney

Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.

For more information, contact [Jeanine Holguin](#).

Sunday, August 15, 1:30 p.m.

### **West Los Angeles Reading Group**

*Fathers and Sons* (aka *Fathers and Children*) by Ivan Turgenev

Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.

For more information, contact [Katie Boeck](#).

Thursday, August 19, 6:30 p.m.

### **Janeites Reading Trollope**

*The Way We Live Now* by Anthony Trollope

Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.

For more information, contact [Lora Walker](#).

Saturday, August 21, 10:15 a.m.

### **North Orange County Reading Group**

*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (chapters 41-60)

Location: Panera Bread, 1028 S. Harbor Blvd., Fullerton

For more information, contact [Melissa Buell](#).

Saturday, August 21, 10:30 a.m.

### **San Gabriel Valley Reading Group**

*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (second half)

For more information, contact [Kelly Duir](#).

Saturday, August 21

**Westside/405 Reading Group**

*Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D. H. Lawrence

This group is at capacity and cannot accept new members.

Current members may contact [Karen Berk](#) for more information.

Sunday, August 22, 6 p.m.

**Santa Monica Reading Group**

*Carrington: A Life* by Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina

Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.

For more information, contact [Diana Birchall](#).

Saturday, August 28, noon

**Long Beach Reading Group**

*Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen

Meeting will be conducted in person *and* via Zoom.

For more information, contact [Sherwood Smith](#).

Saturday, September 18, 10:30 a.m.

**Ventura Reading Group**

*Pride, Prejudice, and Other Flavors* by Sonali Dev

Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.

For more information, contact [Phyllis Michaels](#).

Sunday, September 19, 12:30 p.m.

**Orange County Reading Group**

*Sansei and Sensibility* by Karen Tei Yamashita

Meeting will be held in person.

For more information, contact [Maryann Pelensky](#).

Sunday, September 19

**San Fernando Valley Reading Group**

Jane Austen and the Arts (book TBD)

Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.

For more information, contact [Catherine Hayes](#).

Sunday, September 26, 7 p.m.

**Pasadena Area Reading Group**

*The Genius of Jane Austen: Her Love of Theatre and Why She Works in Hollywood*  
by Paula Byrne

Meeting will be conducted in person and via Zoom.

This group is at capacity and cannot accept new members.

Current members may contact [Susan Ridgeway](#) for more information.

**Jane Austen Society of North America, Southwest Region**

1129 Maricopa Highway, PMB B-135,  
Ojai, CA 93023

Visit Our Website



Share



Tweet



Share