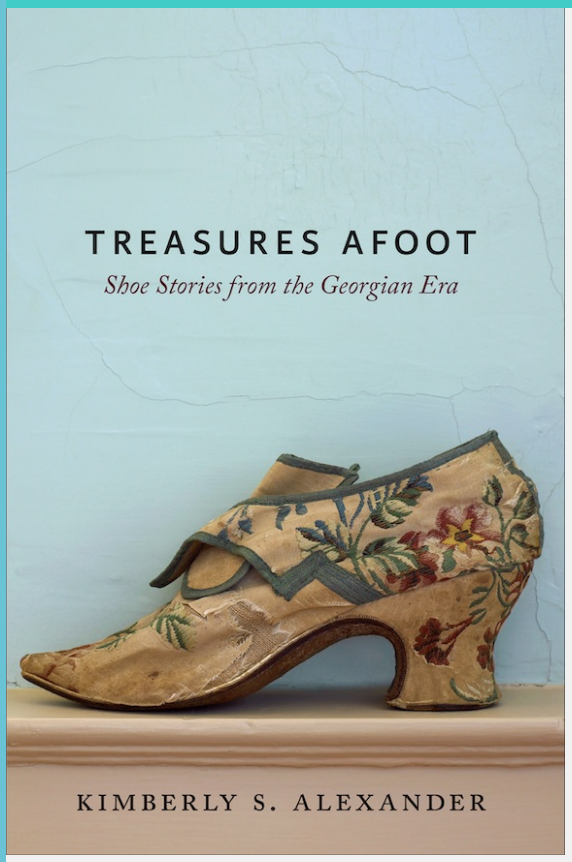
Jane Austen Society of North America, Southwest Region

April 2021 Newsletter

Treasures Afoot: April 24, 2021



Join us on Saturday, April 24, from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Pacific time, for a talk by author Kimberly Alexander on her 2018 book, *Treasures Afoot: Shoe Stories from the Georgian Era*.

Alexander teaches museum studies, material culture, American history and New Hampshire history in the History Department of the University of New Hampshire. She has held curatorial positions at several New England museums, including the MIT Museum, the Peabody Essex Museum and Strawbery Banke Museum.

Her book *Treasures Afoot* (Johns Hopkins University Press) traces the history of early Anglo-American footwear from the 1740s through the 1790s. Alexander was Andrew Oliver Research Fellow at the Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS) (2016-2017) and guest curator of "Fashioning the New England Family" (October 2018-April 2019) at MHS. Her companion book, *Fashioning the New England Family*, was published in 2019.

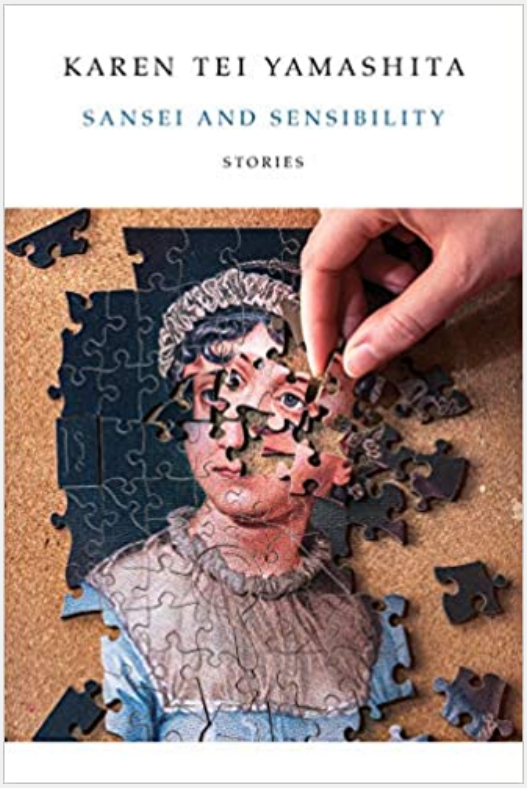
Register Now!

Sansei and Sensibility Video Now Online

Author Karen Tei Yamashita's enlightening March 27 talk on her 2020 book, *Sansei and Sensibility*, is now available on the JASNA Southwest YouTube channel.

Inspired by her sister Jane Tomi Boltz (pictured left with Yamashita) and her love of all things Austen, Yamashita said she wanted to understand the obsession. Although she majored in literature and taught creative writing and literature at University of California, Santa Cruz, Yamashita had yet to read Austen.

She explained to the audience, which included attendees from as far away as Wales and Ukraine, that *sansei* means third-generation Japanese American. As she read Austen's works, she began to think about and remember her and her sister's experiences growing up in post-war Los Angeles, in an African American and Japanese American community, centered around a church at



Normandie and Jefferson, southwest of Downtown Los Angeles.

"The closed community and social network in which we grew up could be stifling and provincial, but also safe," she said. "I began to think about social similarities between Jane Austen's community and ours. In each Austen novel, there were counters I could draw from that felt familiar. And I could add an element missing in Austen novels -- race."

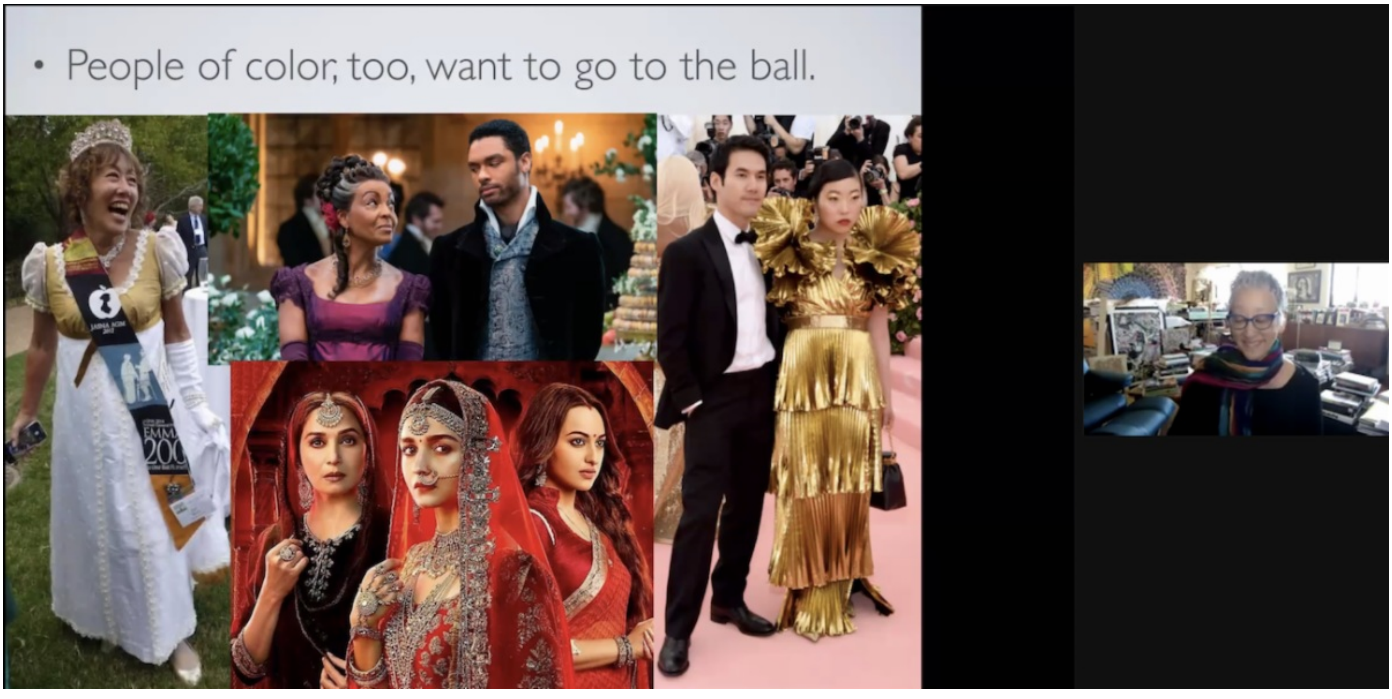
The book includes a collection of stories she had previously written with a new set of tales based on each of Austen's novels plus the novella *Lady Susan*. For her stories based on *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*, Yamashita used key words that mark social attitudes among Japanese Americans. For instance, "pride" becomes "giri" (or duty) and "prejudice" becomes "gaman" (or perseverance).

The Southern California community of Monterey Park, with its large Asian American population, stands in for *Mansfield Park*, while Sir Thomas Bertram is translated to matriarch Tammy Wuya, a tiger mom and entrepreneur who, instead of owning a plantation in Antigua, exploits workers in her factory in the Philippines.

For her story based on *Emma*, her favorite among Austen's oeuvre, Yamashita has her heroine Emi born in Manzanar, an internment camp during World War II. This secret is kept from her until she is a teenager -- an experience Yamashita said many sansei experienced after the war.

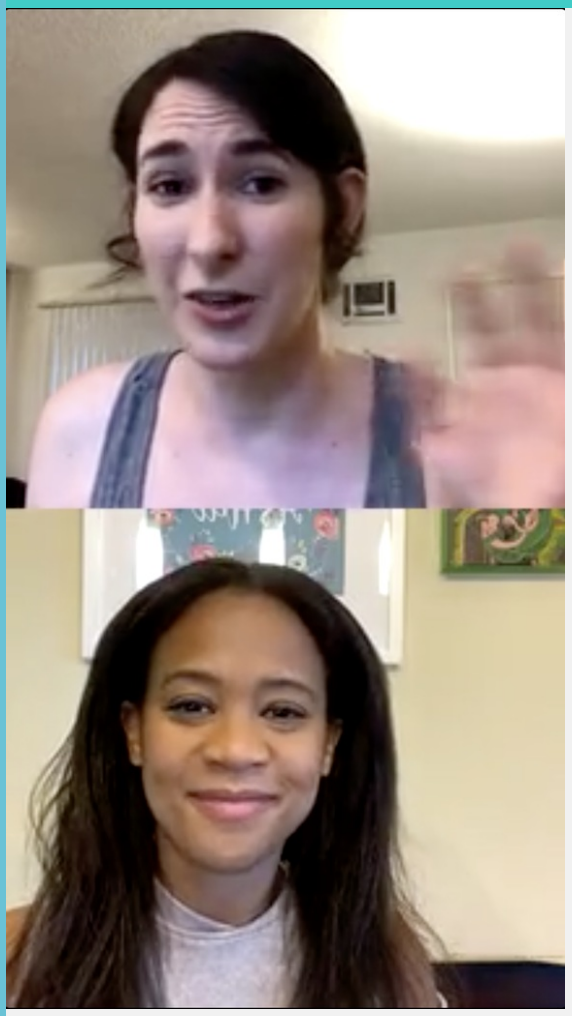
Yamashita is the author of seven books and a professor emerita at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Watch the Video



Yamashita's wonderfully illustrated presentation underscored the insights she infused into her collection of short stories as well as the connections she observed between Austen's world and the close-knit Japanese American community in which she and her sister grew up.

Aydrea Walden Visits JASNA-SW Instagram Live



Aydrea Walden, creator and star of the web series *Black Girl in a Big Dress*, joined Jillian Davis -- co-creator of The Pemberley Podcast -- for an Instagram Live chat on March 30 for JASNA Southwest. Video from the event is now available online.

Walden shared her love of Shakespeare as well as Austen and explained that *Black Girl in a Big Dress* started out as a writing sample in her search for more appropriate projects within the entertainment industry.

The two also discussed the JASNA Southwest Young Filmmakers Contest, for which Walden served as a judge last year. Davis and her writing partner, Yolanda Rodriguez (with whom Davis created The Pemberley Podcast), won first place in the 2020 contest in the over-20 category for their short film "Jane Austen Virtual Book Club."

Walden offered advice for future entrants and shared news of some of her upcoming projects with the audience of nearly 100. Her two cats also made cameo appearances during the live chat.

Both Davis and Rodriguez are serving on this year's Young Filmmakers Contest committee. Entry deadline for the 2021 contest is October 1, 2021.

Watch the Video

Bridgerton Costumer to Join JASNA Southwest's June 19 Event

Emmy Award-winning costumer Ellen Mirojnick, whose talent helped make *Bridgerton* a global phenomenon, will join moderator Deborah Nadoolman Landis for a conversation about costuming Regency-set adaptations at our June 19 Zoom meeting.

Mirojnick has worked with numerous prominent filmmakers -- from Steven Spielberg to Kathryn Bigelow and J.J. Abrams to Tony and Ridley Scott. In 2017 alone, her work could be seen in Steven Soderbergh's *Logan Lucky*, Angelina Jolie's *First They Killed My Father* and the opulent movie musical *The Greatest Showman*. She studied at the Parsons School of Design and became a sought-after designer before setting her sights on Hollywood, where her career has spanned three decades. She has been nominated twice for BAFTA and Emmy awards, with a win for her work on *Behind the Candelabra*.

Mirojnick has lectured at UCLA, the Lincoln Center Film Society, the Directors Guild of America and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and has been profiled in numerous international fashion publications, as well as on AMC's Hollywood Fashion Machine series *The Costume Designer*.

She was interviewed by Vogue in December about her work on *Bridgerton*, which included overseeing the creation of 7,500 pieces for 5,000 costumes.

Deborah Nadoolman Landis, PhD, is a costume designer, historian and endowed chair holder at UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television, and the founding director of the David C. Copley Center for Costume Design at UCLA. She received an MFA in costume design from UCLA and a PhD in the history of design from the Royal College of Art, London. Her distinguished career includes *Animal House* (1978); *The Blues Brothers* (1980); *An American Werewolf in London* (1981); *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981); *Trading Places* (1983); *The Three Amigos* (1987); *Coming to America* (1988), for which she was Academy Award-nominated; and the

groundbreaking music video *Michael Jackson's Thriller* (1983).

A two-term past president of the Costume Designers Guild, Local 892, and a past governor of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences (2013-2018), Landis sits on the board of the National Film Preservation Foundation. She is the author of six books, including *Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design*, *FilmCraft: Costume Design*, *Hollywood Sketchbook: A Century of Costume Illustration* and the catalogue for her landmark exhibition, *Hollywood Costume*, which she curated at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London in 2012. Landis is the editor-in-chief of the upcoming three-volume *Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Film and Television Costume Design* (2021).

Registration information for the June 19 event will be available in May.

Save the Date for Our May 15 Event

Austen Family Theatricals
Saturday, May 15, 11 a.m.
Professor Melinda Finberg

Finberg is an associate professor of theatre practice in critical studies at the USC School of Dramatic Arts. She is a nationally known dramaturg and scholar of theatre history. Her volume *Eighteenth-Century Women Dramatists* (Oxford University Press, 2001) is now in its third printing and is taught in colleges and universities across the U.S., Canada and Europe. She has been instrumental in bringing the plays of these women to professional and university stages, receiving the 2006 Elliot Hayes Award for Achievement in Dramaturgy from the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas for her work on the 2005 Oregon Shakespeare Festival's critically acclaimed revival of Hannah Cowley's *The Belle's Stratagem*.

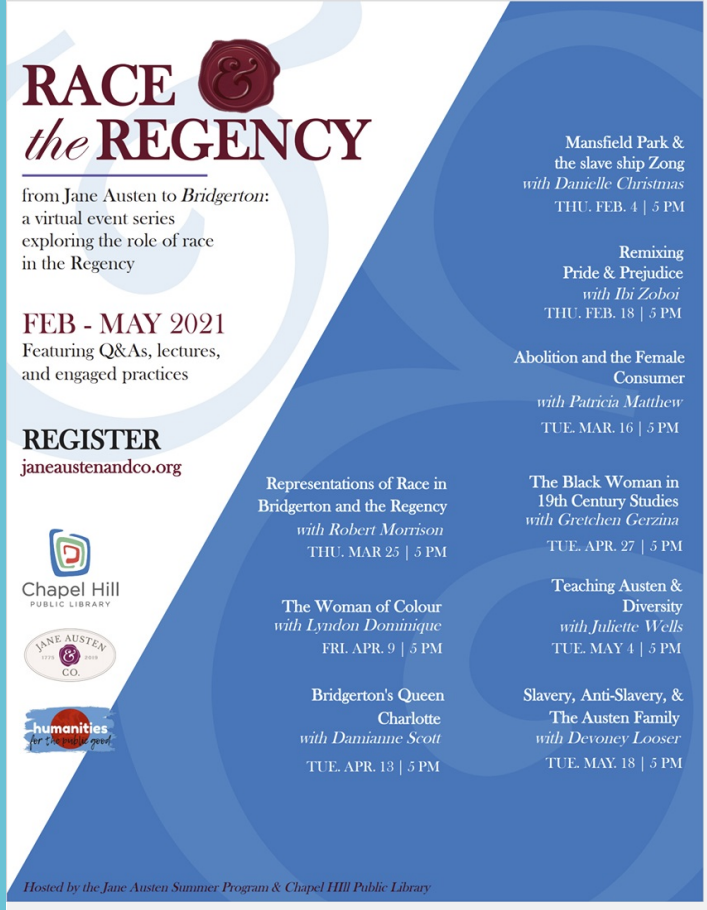
Finberg's interest in theatre history and dramatic literature are professional and pragmatic: She focuses on how plays can be produced on today's stages for today's audiences -- especially plays by historically neglected playwrights. She has taught at Swarthmore College, Princeton University and Rider University, and has been a guest lecturer at University of Puget Sound and Yale and Princeton universities. Her scholarly work is widely published and cited in journals, collections of essays and reference books.

Registration information coming soon!

Other Austen-Related Events

Many other regions and Jane Austen-related organizations are offering a wide variety of compelling online events open to people all over North America.

Jane Austen & Co. is a free public book group devoted to reading texts written by historical female authors. Part of the Jane Austen Summer Program at the University of North Carolina, the group's series of talks on the role of race in the Regency continues through May. The recordings from many of their prior



programs are available online.

For a list of JASNA events coordinated by other regions, be sure to check the JASNA.org events calendar. Some have limited capacity, so sign up early for anything that's of interest to you!

And help spread the word about JASNA Southwest's upcoming events. All are open to anyone interested in attending and are a great way to help bring Jane Austen to the attention of new audiences and fans. Visit the JASNA Southwest website for more information.

Reading/Film/Game Groups

Thursday, April 8
Janeites Reading Trollope
The Duke's Children by Anthony Trollope
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Lora Walker.

Saturday, April 10, 12:30 p.m.
Long Beach Reading Group
Cranford by Elizabeth Gaskell
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Sherwood Smith.

Sunday, April 11, 1:30-4 p.m.
West Los Angeles Reading Group
Romance of the Forest by Ann Radcliffe (Oxford World Classics version)
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Katie Walker Boeck.

Sunday, April 11, 7 p.m.
Pasadena Area Reading Group
Sense and Sensibility by Jane Austen
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
This group is at capacity and cannot accept new members.
Current members may contact Susan Ridgeway for more information.

Saturday, April 17, 10:15 a.m.
North Orange County Reading Group
Jane Austen at Home by Lucy Worsley (chapters 19-23)
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Melissa Buell.

Sunday, April 17, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Ventura Reading Group
Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Phyllis Michaels.

Saturday, April 17
Westside/405 Reading Group
Because of the Lockwoods by Dorothy Whipple
This group is at capacity and cannot accept new members.
Current members may contact Karen Berk for more information.

Sunday, April 25, 6 p.m.
Santa Monica Reading Group
Bronte's Mistress by Finola Austin
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Diana Birchall.

Sunday, May 2, 1 p.m.
Riverside Reading Group
Jane Austen: A Life by Claire Tomalin
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Vicki Broach.

Sunday, May 16, 1-3 p.m.
Orange County Reading Group
Jane Austen in Hollywood by Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Maryann Pelensky.

Sunday, May 16, 2-4 p.m.
South Bay Reading Group
The Jane Austen Diet by Bryan Kozlowski
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Jeanine Holguin.

Sunday, May 16, 2-4 p.m.
San Fernando Valley Reading Group
Unnatural Death by Dorothy L. Sayers
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Catherine Hayes.

Saturday, May 22, 10:30 a.m.
San Gabriel Valley Reading Group
Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen (first half)
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Kelly Duir.

Sunday, May 23, 7 p.m.
Pasadena Area Reading Group
Three Men in a Boat by Jerome K. Jerome
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
This group is at capacity and cannot accept new members.
Current members may contact Susan Ridgeway for more information.

Darcy and Colin,
unofficial members of
the West Los Angeles
Zoom Reading Group,
wish all JASNA
members and friends a

happy spring and good health on the occasion of their fourth birthday (March 31). They've also enjoyed attending all of JASNA Southwest's 2020-2021 Zoom presentations.

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