



Northern California Region

Help Us Plan for 2019 and Beyond

Welcome to 2019 and our new quarterly newsletter format! We hope this PDF will be easy for you to save, share with friends, and to mark your date-book for future events. Thanks to Eleanor Farrell for making it so.

We have another great year ahead, with close to 200 JASNA NorCal members ranging from Mendocino to Monterey. We hope you will join us for our upcoming quarterly meetings. You can help shape what happens. All JASNA members are invited to sit in on our post-meeting planning sessions and share what topics they would like to see covered in our future events.

Our March 9 meeting is a special event at the San Mateo Public Library: a public lecture-concert featuring composer Kirke Mechem, who's finished the *Pride and Prejudice* opera he shared with us years ago. **Question:** In recent years we've partnered with the San Mateo Public Library producing AustenFests with three parallel tracks of programming. Should we have another AustenFest in 2020? "Jane Austen around the globe" has been suggested as a theme.

Longtime members have missed our teas, as some venues no longer permit food. For our June 29 meeting on Regency Food, we've booked the Alta Mira Club in San Leandro, which lets us bring home-cooked goodies and has a prep kitchen. Historic recipes will be welcome.

Looking ahead to fall, on September 21 we'll have a *Sense and Sensibility* double-header in San Mateo: a JASNA talk by Professor Devoney Looser in the afternoon, followed by the BAERS *Sense and Sensibility* Ball in the evening. On December 7, we'll return to the Bellevue Club in Oakland for our annual Gala, toasting Jane's birthday.

Our volunteers are an essential part of JASNA NorCal, and critical to creating successful events. Check out our "Call for Volunteers" on page 4, and email us at rc@jasnanorcal.org to get involved.

Danine Cozzens

Regional Coordinator, JASNA NorCal

Note: Because of changes at the national level of JASNA, regions may no longer charge dues. We can, however, accept donations and will have a "kitty" out at our future meetings. For full JASNA participation and numerous benefits, please join the Jane Austen Society of North America, now celebrating its 40th year, at www.jasna.org. A portion of your JASNA dues is credited to your selected region. You can also attend JASNA events in other regions; Sacramento and Fresno have their own regional programs.

Our Next Meeting

Opera in Concert

Saturday March 9, 1:00–3:00 pm
Kirke Mechem's *Pride and Prejudice*
San Mateo Public Library
55 West 3rd Street
San Mateo, CA

Jane Austen Society of North America

Northern California Region

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Newsletter Contributions

Like what you're reading here? Or do you want to add something of your own? We encourage newsletter submissions. Whether it's a book review, a tale from your Jane Austen travels, or tips on upcoming events, we'd love to know. Please drop us a line at rc@jasnanorcal.org.

Opera in Concert

2019 Meeting Calendar

Pride and Prejudice opera preview March 9

Go behind the scenes with celebrated *Pride and Prejudice* opera composer Kirke Mechem and Redwood Symphony Maestro Eric K on Saturday, March 9, as they share how this beloved classic finally has been made into an opera.

“Opera in Concert: *Pride and Prejudice*” preview is sponsored by the San Mateo Public Library Foundation and the Jane Austen Society of North America, Northern California Chapter. The event is free and open to the public.

“At last, this revered novel has been transformed into a brilliantly witty and soulful opera that Redwood Symphony and Notre Dame de Namur University Performing Arts are honored to premiere this spring,” Eric K said.

Mechem, a Bay Area resident with international acclaim, began his passionate adaptation of the book more than a decade ago; after many workshops, partial tryouts and revisions, his work is finally ready for its first complete performance.

“I am delighted to share with ‘Janeites’ how I took this classic from novel to opera,” Mechem said. “I can’t wait to share how I wrote the arias and duets for the various passages, and to offer a preview of our upcoming concerts.”

Joining Mechem in a peek behind the curtain of “Opera in Concert: *Pride and Prejudice*” are Eric K., founder and maestro of Redwood Symphony, now in its 34th season; and Debra Lambert, an acclaimed singer and actress who leads the Notre Dame Department of Music and Vocal Arts.

Redwood Symphony, a recent winner in the San Francisco Classical Voice’s Best of the Bay competition, is an all-volunteer orchestra dedicated to the performance of an ambitious, contemporary repertoire, as well as the great orchestral classics. The innovative programming and emphasis on education are two reasons why so many of the most talented musicians from throughout the San Francisco Bay Area volunteer their time to play, and why audiences and critics have been so enthusiastic about Redwood Symphony’s artistry.

Redwood Symphony and a cast of soloists from Notre Dame University under the direction of Debra Lambert premiere the opera Saturday, April 6, at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, April 7, at 2:30 p.m. at Cañada College Main Theater. Tickets are available at RedwoodSymphony.org.



March

Date: Saturday March 9, 1:00–3:00 pm

Topic: Opera in Concert

Speaker: Kirke Mechem, *Pride and Prejudice* opera

Location: San Mateo Public Library
55 West 3rd Street, San Mateo, CA

June

Date: Saturday June 29, 1:00–4:00 pm

Topic: Regency Food in Social Context

From Bath Buns to white soup, what did people eat and drink in the Regency era? Special guest Amira K. Makansi, author of *Literary Libations*, will examine how to party Austen style, with food and drink of the day. Plus, our own Sheri Forbes on Jane’s friend Martha Lloyd and her cookbook, and former RC Anne Krause on the role of food in the novels. Bring a special dish to share at our tea table.

Location: The Alta Mira Club

561 Lafayette Ave., San Leandro, CA

September

Date: Saturday September 21, 1:00–3:00 pm

Topic: *Sense and Sensibility*

Speaker: Devoney Looser, *The Making of Jane Austen*

Location: TBA: North San Mateo/South Burlingame
Held in coordination with the BAERS *Sense and Sensibility* Ball that evening

December

Annual Jane Austen Birthday Gala

Date: Saturday December 7, 11:00–4:00 pm

Location: The Bellevue Club
660 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA



2018 Jane Austen Birthday Gala



JASNA NorCal welcomed JASNA Traveling Scholar Dr. Timothy Erwin to our annual December gala, held at The Bellevue Club in Oakland. Here is Dr. Erwin's elegant and clever toast in celebration of Jane Austen's birthday.

A Toast: to Jane

Late in *Northanger Abbey* Catherine poses a problem for Henry. She has been wondering how her good friend Isabella Thorpe can be in love with her brother James but flirting with his brother Frederick.

Henry gives her a little lesson in the way of the world: "Though Frederick does not leave Bath with us, he will probably remain but a very short time, perhaps only a few days behind us. His leave of absence will soon expire, and he must return to his regiment. And what will then be their acquaintance? The mess-room will drink Isabella Thorpe for a fortnight, and she will laugh with your brother over poor Tilney's passion for a month."

The soldiers will offer toasts to Isabella for a couple of weeks, in other words, and the flirtation will amount to nothing. In fact, James is offended enough to break it off, and Catherine does nothing to help Isabella patch things up. Which leads us to a toast of our own:

To Jane

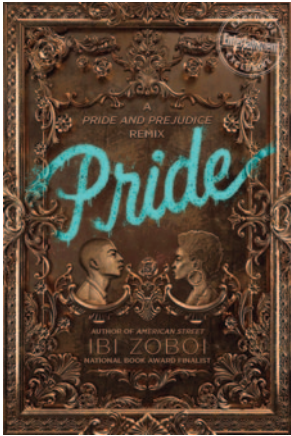
Here's to Chawton's brightest light,
For seeing through romantic schemes
And showing her heroines what's only right;
For making her heroes the men of their dreams,
And sending her villains off in the night.



Book Review

Pride by Ibi Zoboi

Reviewed by Bianca Hernandez



I'm always intrigued by *Pride and Prejudice* adaptations. (Is it a truth universally acknowledged that I get excited for them?) But Ibi Zoboi's *Pride* was a whole new level of buzz for me.

Featuring a diverse cast of characters, specifically Afro-Latinx Bennets (or, in this novel, the Benetiz family) I knew I had to get my hands on this. While it does feature a young adult cast, I wouldn't suggest you shy away from it because it may seem "young adult." This book is one of the best modernizations I have read in a long time (and I dearly hope it gets made into a movie!).

Zuri Benitez is our Elizabeth Bennet. She's dealing with the social tensions of being Afro-Latinx in a rapidly changing Bushwick, applying for college and the possibility of losing her sister's attention for the summer.

No small issues. Zuri is also a poet and besides the poems in the novel, there are many moments that come off as lyrical as well. When she talks about home, family and food you can feel this warmth of realness that is both familiar and refreshing, the later because I haven't read many people who can write this well.

One of the reasons I really enjoyed this adaptation was because the rich Darcy family moving in created the typical romantic tension, but added handfuls of social commentary, an aspect I think many modernizations completely fumble.

Zuri's neighborhood is rich in diversity, but, like many neighborhood's like that, it's slowly being taken over by wealthy white people, and with those people comes changes that eventually push out the original populations. (Hint: it's called gentrification.) So the wealthy Darcy family moving in is a red flag to Zuri, and in Darius Darcy she finds a black boy who has a very different experience in life than she has.

This book has so much depth. From the tension of physical space and perceptions of identity to the struggle of finding your place in the adult world. I read this twice in a row, and savored every second with it.

What you should drink with this: Splurge on your favorite bottle of wine and drink a little each time you pick this up.

Who should read this: Anyone who wants a good modernization of Austen. If your favorite part of Austen is the social commentary you should enjoy this as well.

Review originally published on [Drunk Austen web site](#)

Can't Get Enough Austen?

Other Events around the Bay Area

February 5: [Silent Reading Party](#), San Francisco

February 12: [Talk: "The Development of Romantic Love in the Georgian Era"](#), San Francisco State University Library

February 23: [Talk: JASNA President Liz Philosphos Cooper on "Jane Austen: Working Woman"](#), Brand Library, Glendale

February 24: [San Francisco Jane Austen Book Club meeting](#), Noir Lounge

March 2-3: [San Francisco History Days](#), San Francisco Mint

March 3: [JASNA Sacramento meeting](#)

March 10: [GBACG Costume Academy](#), Berkeley

March 16: [BAERS Cyprians Ball](#), Alameda

April 27-28: [Jane Austen Tea & Faire](#), Aurora, Oregon

May 18: [BAERS Ivanhoe Ball](#), Kensington

Call for Volunteers

We are always in need of volunteers to help us keep things running. From holding down the sign-in table, to setting up tea, we welcome any and all help to keep our meetings running smoothly. If you can't make the meetings, or want to be more involved, please do let us know what you'd like to contribute in volunteer time to JASNA NorCal. We're always looking for more people to help with event planning, membership needs and more! Just drop us a calling card at rc@jasnanorcal.org.