

Historical performer shows off 'Fashion In Fiction'

Article and Photos by Colin Rajala - Staff Writer Reminder News, Enfield, CT - May 10, 2012

It's not often you get a look at clothing worn by people in the early 1800s - less often that somebody is actually wearing it. On May 9, the Enfield Public Library offered that opportunity when it hosted **'Fashion in Fiction,' presented by Kandie Carle** and sponsored by the Enfield Cultural Arts Commission.

The presentation by Carle was her second program at the Enfield Public Library in the past year. Previously she presented the program she is more well-known for, "Victorian Lady," a demonstration of what was worn during the Victorian time period, starting from the inside out.

Carle's "Fashion in Fiction" program has been in the making for more than two years and is an off-shoot from her original presentation. The historical performance artist's newest program is **a show-and-tell about the clothing of Regency England as it is reflected by and pertains to Jane Austen's novels.** The program uses actual vintage and authentically-reproduced undergarments, clothing and accessories, while providing anecdotes about fashion, home life and etiquette of men and women during the time period.



"There is such a difference between this Regency time period and a mere 20 to 30 years later, and it's really an astounding difference," Carle said. "As I was getting more into it and I got more into Jane Austen specifically, I realized that reflected in her novels is a lot of the information from this time period that I incorporate into my Victorian program. I wondered if people would be interested in this time period as well, and it turns out they are."

Carle highlighted the English novelist's use of clothing and fashion in her novels to define characters, enhance story lines and develop plot points. Carle compared and contrasted the clothing of Regency England to that of its successor, the Victorian era, showing the crowd of 50 people the typical formal attire of a male and female during the Regency period. She dressed the mannequins layer by layer, explaining the design, seaming, fit, lay and purpose of each item while showing how to dress up and dress down the outfits.

"Fashion in Fiction" included every piece of clothing worn, like hats and shoes and even the accessories in between, like pocket watches, silk ribbons, decorative clutches, fans and parasols (dainty, delicate umbrella-like pieces).

"We don't have photographs of the time period; all we have are artistic renderings and fashion plates, and we have to guess how they would be fleshed out," Carle said. **"That's why I like wearing my Regency outfits, so you can see it fleshed out. This program really is like a living photograph."**



For more info on Ms. Carle's programs of History, Humor and High Fashion visit www.KandieCarle.com