

Seaside Conversation with Teresa Brown

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Friends and family know her as Teresa Brown, but readers will recognize the local historical romance writer as Paula Judith Johnson. Brown says her pen name is actually the daughter her mother never had. When her mother was pregnant with her first child, she hoped for a daughter, she would name Paula Judith. However, Brown's older brother was named Steven. After giving birth to another son, the couple chose the name Paul Phillip. When she was finally born, her parents didn't want to have two children - one Paul and one Paula, so they named their daughter Teresa. Two additional brothers were born into the family - Martin and Kenneth - but no daughter to call Paula Judith. When she wrote her novel, "Sweetbriar," Brown selected the pen name Paula Judith Johnson finally gave her mother the daughter she had always wanted.

SIGNAL: How long have you lived in the area?

BROWN: I was born in Tacoma, Wash., and raised in California. At age 20, I moved to Seaside during Labor Day weekend, 1973. After marriage to my husband, Wayne Brown, we lived in Gearhart for 29 years, before moving to Hammond.

SIGNAL: You are a publisher author, how did you get started?

BROWN: I have been interested in writing since grade school, but rarely made time to pursue it as a pastime. The idea for my book started more than 30 years ago, but I found researching the history difficult, especially since I don't read or speak French. After finally taking the time to explore my abilities as a fiction writer, the Internet provided answers in English. As far as I can determine, the history in my book is accurate, however the actual historical characters may be different than I have portrayed them. I love the time period of the early 1800s. As far as becoming published, my brother Steven W. Johnson was extremely helpful in connecting with a Print-On-Demand (POD) publishing process. For other authors interested in being published, I would recommend his book, "Need a Job - Publish a Book."

SIGNAL: What did you do prior to focusing on your writing career?

BROWN: After taking business classes at Clatsop Community College, I started my career as a mortgage loan processor for FHA/VA loans. After moving to Seaside, I worked in the banking industry for 18 years, the last 11 years as a branch manager at a local savings and loan. I later transitioned into the financial services industry and am a licensed investment/financial advisor representative.

SIGNAL: Do you belong to community groups or volunteer on local projects?

BROWN: I was involved with the Pioneer House when it was located at the Pioneer Presbyterian Church and anticipate renewing my involvement with them in the near future. I have recently joined both the Astoria/Warrenton and Seaside Chamber of Commerce. Since about 1985, both my husband and I have been involved with the local black-powder club - the former Fort Clatsop Muzzleloaders - now the Clatsop Firearms Safety Training Association.

SIGNAL: Tell us about your family?

BROWN: I married my husband, on Easter Sunday, in 1974. He had three children from a previous marriage and we have numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

SIGNAL: Do you have hobbies or special interests?

BROWN: In addition to writing, I enjoy gardening, cooking, sewing, crochet and knitting, although the last three are catch as catch can. Of course, Wayne and I love the black-powder hobby. Our era is primarily the Mountain Man period from 1800 to 1840. We shoot replica cap lock rifles and pistols and throw knives, tomahawks and spears. Wayne has made our Indian clothing and I have made the cloth period clothing. Wayne also makes powder horns, decorative knives and is a wood carver.

SIGNAL: What is your favorite book?

BROWN: My favorite book is "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austin. I suppose it was female authors of that time period that initially sparked my interest in history. I have read extensively about our founding fathers and the time period and political climate from the French and Indian War through the Mountain Man era. My reading interests are extremely expansive.

SIGNAL: If you could have dinner with anyone living or dead, who would it be and why?

BROWN: There are a number of historical persons, politicians, actors and authors that would be fascinating to converse with. But most of all, I would like time with other successful authors. If I had to pick one, it would be Nora Roberts, a prolific New York Times bestselling author of romance novels.

Editor's Note: Seaside Conversation is a weekly feature by Signal editor Rosemary Dellinger. It is an opportunity for local residents to learn more about their local neighbors in the Seaside area. Do you know someone you would like to have considered as a Seaside Conversation guest? E-mail signaleditor@seasidesignal.com or call the Seaside Signal office at (503) 738-5561.

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