

December 2017 Newsletter

FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Kathleen Thomas



Research. That time we writers spend reading a good book, or going to a movie, or laying in the sun in a hammock. Research can be anything, if we remember to take note of what's around us. Maybe we travel in order to fill in the blanks of that piece we're working on.

Walks to the river, or in the hills, or to the City, can accomplish the desire to explore and investigate. Sitting at a desk with a keyboard at the fingertips.

California girl that I am, I only recently sailed out to Alcatraz. My friends and I couldn't have picked a more beautiful day - warm, sunny, gorgeous clouds overhead. Thought of course, I wasn't there for the weather. I have to tell you, just those few short hours on the rock stimulated a huge desire to know more about that place, about the history of the place, the people who passed through there, and why. More research.

Last summer, I started writing what I thought was going to be a simple little story about a pirate. Now, after six months, it's turned into a novella! LOL. I uncovered, or dreamed up, so many blanks to fill in about this pirate's life - where he lived, the seas he sailed, who he met, who he fought with, his loves, what he ate, what he looks like - that I had to keep writing. I'm on my final revision this week and will send it out for publication before the new year. That's my plan, anyway, and I'm sticking to it.

Wednesday

December 13, 7-9 pm

Next Meeting Speaker TIM CARL

Napa Valley Writers will host speaker **Tim Carl**. Tim grew up in St. Helena and is now a freelance columnist and



photojournalist for publications such as the Napa Valley Register and North Bay Biz Magazine.

Along his journey, his wife of 33 years encouraged him and, as he says "put-up with him." Tim helped raise their two children, who are grown and out of the house. He's been an instructor and coach, and along the way published numerous articles and stories.

Tim Carl will speak about his experience as a photojournalist during the Napa Valley Fires 2017 in a presentation: **Shifting Through the Ashes.**

Everyone touched by the recent tragic fires had their role to play. From first-responders to those that stayed out of the way; each person took on a task and tried their best to achieve what they believed most important.

Tim Carl's role was to document the fires from the local perspective of a person with deep ties to the wine and food industry.

As a photographer and journalist, Tim found himself constantly wrestling with the question, "Did I just cross the line?"

I was recently overwhelmed during the showing of The Ataxian at the Napa Valley Film Fest. This beautifully made film about winning, about struggle and hope and loss and more hope gave everyone in the audience a lot to think about, focusing on health, family, strangers, the lack of health, about our lives and what we do with them. I was boosted out of my 3-years of talking about walking the Pacific Crest Trail, to actually training to do so come this summer. I know, it's going to be a long walk. It's just walking.

But first, for the business of Napa Valley Writers. A few key people closely involved in putting together the NVW "First Press" anthology met the other night to go over what worked, what didn't, and what's next. We wonder if you'd be interesting in being part of a second book - in 2018.

The first order of business is to identify an Editor-in-Chief. Whoever that turns out to be, they will have that title not only in the book, but on Amazon as well - a plus to have on any resume. We already have people who want to assist with the next book, we even have some interesting ideas, all we need now is someone who wants to take the lead - and a group of fine authors. Do you know anyone like that? Please let me know!

In the meantime, I'm trusting you are all doing well as we continue to move on from the October fires. I hope you enjoy the holidays with a grateful heart, as we finish off this last month of 2017.

This is the time of year I spend going back through my journal and my calendars - refreshing my memory to see just what was accomplished in the last twelve months. I always surprise myself! Then I cement in what's next.

With any luck, I'll be seeing you next!

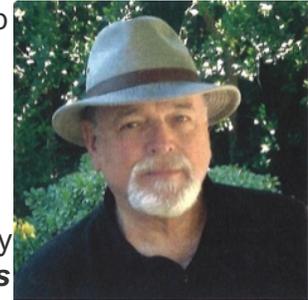


Don't Miss Tim Carl at the December 13th meeting. For more on Tim Carl, check out his [Napa Register column](#).



MEMBER READER

Lance Burris will be December's member reader. Burris is a fifth generation Californian with deep family roots in Napa and Sonoma Counties. For his December member reader presentation, he will read an essay entitled **Confessions of a Right-Brain**



Poet, on the art of poetry writing - a how-to essay for visually oriented people.



Napa Valley Writers meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Napa Valley Unitarian Universalists Church, 1625 Salvador Avenue in Napa.

Cost at the door: \$8 for guests, \$5 for CWC members. Students with ID, free.

NVW's "First Press: Collected Works by Napa Valley Writers 2017" available for purchase and review.

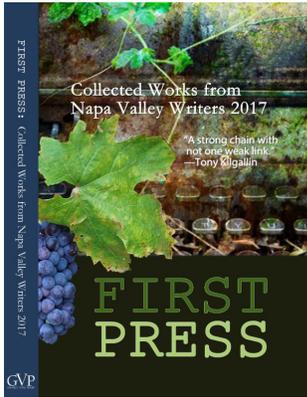
NVW events are open to the public. For more information about this upcoming meeting, or any other questions, please contact Publicity Chair [Sarita Lopez](#) or see [Napa Valley Writers](#).

NVW fosters professionalism in writing, promotes networking of writers within the Napa Valley writing community, mentors new writers, and provides literary support for writers and the writing community through education, networking, and leadership.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Do you have an idea for Arts in April? Let us know. We're currently working with the Napa Valley Museum and DiRosa to plan

The Perfect Holiday Gift



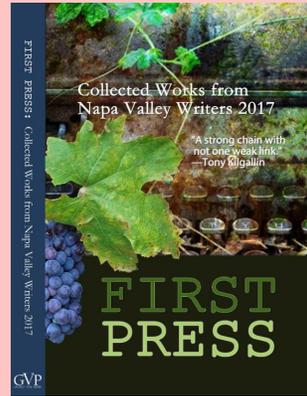
Are you looking for the perfect gift? Look no further.

Copies of *First Press* will be available for your gift giving needs.

Don't miss out on this great seasonal price.

\$12 for *First Press*!

Local Author Panel-Celebrate Creativity in the Napa Valley!



Join us for a free public event on Saturday December 2nd starting at 1 pm. The event will be held at Copperfield's Books in Calistoga, 1330 Lincoln Ave.

Members of Napa Valley Writers - all local authors - will be discussing their work in **First Press: Collected Works from Napa Valley Writers 2017.**

COMING SOON

December 3, 2017

Every writer needs a break, including you.



You won't want to miss our Holiday Gathering at [Compadres](#) on December 3, 2017.

Appetizers and a no-host bar. Cost: \$20.

This event is for members only and their special guest. Book now as space is limited!

REBIRTH

-by Jim McDonald

Surrounding hills embraced
 by crisp blue sky
 setting sun yellow not red
 breathe deeply
 fermentation replaces
 smoke.

I heard they lost their villa,
 Soda Canyon
 engulfed in racing flames
 dog and cat
 thrown into car for mad rush
 out.

Vibrant artwork left stacked
 against their walls
 years of creative output
 lost forever
 in rubble and ash filled
 glade.

The Poetic Spirit at Work in Poetry, Painting, and Prose

-by Lance Burris

Definition: The poetic spirit is a romantic way of looking at the world which gives coherence to life's experiences in a memorable way. One might think of the poet as a watchmaker who designs and makes unique gears which he carefully installs to create a precision, synchronous movement which drives the hands on the face of the watch in order to tell time; however, the poet's "watch" tells a deeply felt personal story.

George Orwell said words to the effect that all art is propaganda. By that statement he meant true art has a point of view and a message-that is to say, it is not merely decorative. While the focus of Orwell's prose was largely political in nature, I do not believe he was referring to political propaganda as such. Rather, he was suggesting it is the function of the artist to establish a personal line of communication with each member of his or her audience in order to deliver a message which resonates and elicits an emotional response which then becomes memorable.

I manifest my poetic spirit in poetry, painting, and prose which I often present in combination to create as a form of

Cool autumn blankets valley
as seasons change
artists resurrect themselves
from black ground
fertile for their creative
dreams.

What Would Napa Valley Writers Be Without You?

As a member of Napa Valley Writers you are invited to display your published books, talk with others, and offer books for sale at our monthly meetings.

If you're interested in this opportunity to showcase your books, please contact [Sarita Lopez](#), NVW Publicity Chair. Doors open at 6:30. Browse, network, and gather with other local writers.



A Fine Example of Creative Writing

SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH

performance art. In creating these works, I infuse each piece with a kind of the binding energy which draws upon my personal experience of past events brought forward to the present in an act of shared remembrance. In that regard, I am reminded of the old-fashioned barber shop in which opposing mirrors reveal a series of images which look back in time-that is to say, as you look more deeply into the mirror, the images becomes progressively younger. This means my works are inherently four-dimensional in nature.

Six Word Challenge

Members are invited to submit a six-word caption for the photograph. What do you think of our submissions?



Greg Fuller:

"I'm really torqued by this guy!"

Cheryl Velasquez:

If you're Santa's replacement, you're fired!

~~~~~  
It's YOUR turn. What will you submit for next month's photo?



Submit your six-word caption to: [Six Word Story](#)

---

### MEMBER EXCERPT

*This month's member excerpt is from a work in progress titled **Paper Dolls** by Catherine Dolcezza.*

-Manhattan1937



### Five Things About...

#### Ana Manwaring

1. I drove to Mexico in a 1970 VW bus with a computer, printer, Honda generator and a 10 year old dog to write a book about a Maya stone carver. I was 41. (I never wrote the book, but I've written three thrillers set in Mexico.)
2. I love nature, especially trees and dogs, animals, birds, reptiles, (well, not snakes so much, but I respect and protect the gopher snakes in my gopher infested yard), and I gently remove insects from my house to the yard. My Chocolate Lab lived to be 17 1/4 years old.
3. I'm addicted to TV series. Netflix, HBO, Showtime, Prime—hard to pry me away from whatever it is I'm watching. I favor European suspense and crime shows or period pieces with interesting costumes.
4. My favorite activity is to see art exhibits, especially the Impressionists and anything to do with the Belle Epoch. Live theater is my second favorite activity.
5. If I had money to blow, I'd have an enviable wardrobe that would include, yep, period costumes for when I'm feeling a little like Elizabeth I or the Lady and the Unicorn. I must over that little Spanish foredo number by Oscar de la Renta.

### MEET OUR NEW MEMBER

#### Aethia Morden

#### Five Facts



1. At fifteen, I was a store detective at my Saturday job at Woolworth's.
2. I once lived on the Santa Monica Pier above the merry-go-round.

3. I watched the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on the family's new TV for seven hours when I was seven years old.



Sergeant Miles O'Malley smoothed an imaginary wrinkle from the typed page and pointed to my name, circled in red. "Is this you?"

I nodded, wondering why he felt it important to rehash a court case from two years ago. Without a quiet place to sort out my thoughts, I mulled over several questions of my own. Why did I betray the Brothers, and my friends, for that matter? Should I tell this man why I became involved with a woman who is now dead? Or why the memory of her death still hurt my insides? Does Detective Sergeant Miles O'Malley care about any of it? I wish someone cared enough to explain dying to me, and why it happens, unnecessarily. Explain why death hurts the people left behind and why one cannot forget.

The door to the interrogation room opened. A woman in her late forties entered with a tray holding two paper cups and a metal urn filled of stale coffee. She pushed the door close with her foot and nodded to the Sergeant. Puffy rings under her dark eyes marked the weariness of a lady who had spent too many hours in the dreariness of this place. And, no thanks to me, her day wasn't soon to end.

She set the tray in front of me and silently released her own *whys* into the universe. *Why did you do it? Why did you behave so badly? Why are you causing me to stay here?*

Why? Why? Why, indeed.

The woman's exaggerated sigh filled the silence I had yet to address. All eyes were upon me, much like the eyes of my earlier audience. I brushed a tear from my cheek and asked the dutiful sergeant what he wanted to know. He leaned back into his chair; his aged face brighter than before. He straightened his shoulders and said, *tell me everything.*

4. I am one of a small group of volunteers who care for the City of Vallejo's rare & unique book collection (includes incunabula) [The McCune Collection](#)

5. When I am laying on the couch I am still writing - even if it looks like I'm daydreaming.

## Holiday Writing Prompts

During the holidays, our writing time can be pushed to the bottom of the 'to-do' list.

Here are seven fun writing prompts that may help you

keep your writing time at the top of the list:



1. You are Santa's elf-describe your day
2. You're in charge of Christmas dinner. You can only use items from the forest. What's on your menu?
3. Write a story about *dashing in the snow*.
4. You may only purchase one present this year. Who is the recipient, what will it be and why?
5. Santa has a cold. You must select his replacement. Who will take his place?
6. Off in the distance you hear "Ho, ho, ho...help!"
7. Convince Santa he needs to shed a few pounds.

Let us know what you wrote. Send your holiday writing masterpiece to [Newsletter Editor](#) by January 10th and we'll publish your work. (limit 300 words)

**IMPORTANT  
NOTICE**

Jessel Miller of Jessel Gallery is asking authors who have books for sale at the Jessel Gallery to pick up their books as soon as possible. If you haven't picked up a check for your sold books, please do so ASAP.

### Circle of Excellence Winner

Cheryl Velasquez, member of NVW, was recently presented the 2017 Circle of Excellence Award from Hilton Worldwide.

This award recognizes exceptional efforts and



We wish to extend a special 'thank you' to the leadership and

members of [Arts Council Napa Valley](#), [Arts Association Napa Valley](#), and [Napa Valley Writers Conference](#) for your continued collaboration in our arts partnerships.

Thank you to the owners and staff at [Napa Bookmine](#) for your support of our writers and readers.

Our thanks to the [Boys and Girls Club of Napa Valley](#) for their monthly donation of NVW Board meeting space.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF NAPA VALLEY

*From Pen to Published*

*Redwood Writers Conference*

**Save the Date!**  
**April 21**  
**2018**  
Finley Center  
Santa Rosa

## NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

We are eager to receive your newsletter submissions. Please keep poetry to 24 lines or less. Other articles of interest, including short prose, should be approximately 300 words or less.

Send us your photos, current events, news of interest to writers, new publications, conferences, etc., no later than the 15th of each month to be included in the next month's newsletter.

Thank you.

[Cheryl Velasquez](#)  
Newsletter Editor

Join Our Mailing List!



ongoing commitment to local, regional and corporate social responsibility initiatives designed and/or led at the property level by a Human Resources

Director. Hilton presented the award to Cheryl for her involvement with Harvest Middle School, Napa Hospitality Industry Partnership

and Wine  
Bay, CA  
Resource



**NAPA VALLEY WRITERS**  
A Branch of the California Writers Club



Home of accomplished and aspiring  
writers in the Napa Valley.  
[www.napavalleywriters.net](http://www.napavalleywriters.net)

## LINKS

[Contact Us](#)

[Join Us](#)

[NVW Website](#)

[California Writers Club](#)

[Speakers](#)

[Events](#)

[Blog](#)

[MeetUp](#)

