

May 2017 Newsletter

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Kathleen Thomas



A helicopter was cruising over my neighborhood last night. My first reaction was to lock my door, wondering if a patient had let himself out of Napa State Hospital. I normally feel very safe in my little abode and rarely lock the door. I checked Napa's Nextdoor.com, my go-to local online neighborhood watch. No answers. It was my daughter who told me a hiker

was missing - last seen that afternoon in Skyline Park. I learned this morning, from one more nixle alert, that she'd been found. I'm still wondering where and when, and hoping she is well.

I live in a truly working class neighborhood, surrounded on the west side by vineyards, the south with Skyline Park and Napa State Hospital. Friends and acquaintances up and down the blocks include families made up of cooks, firemen, vineyard workers, paramedics, police officers, nursing students, a Harley motorcycle man, heavy equipment operators, a food bank supervisor, a few retirees, and an aging garage rock and roll band where we hold our annual block parties.

I chose this neighborhood when I was working at Napa State. I wanted to live where I worked. I still love the place -- it's easy access anywhere in town on my bike. It's where I started my 34-mile bike ride last week in support of Cycle for Sight. Woo Hoo!

It's where I plan, and write, follow-up, and dream about where I'm headed, and where Napa Valley Writers is headed. What a trip we are on! The energy is palpable. Spring is indeed in the air - carrying us into a new year of activities and events.

***In April, the NVW Board of Directors appointed a nomination committee to assist in our upcoming June 14 election.*** The committee, consisting of Gary Orton, Marilyn Campbell, Patsy Ann Taylor, and Roberta

## NEXT MEETING

Wednesday  
May 10  
7 - 9 p.m.

**Special Guest Speaker  
Lynda McDaniel**

Lynda McDaniel, award-winning writer and an Amazon Bestselling Author, has been writing professionally for 30 years, including more than 1,200 magazine articles and 16 books.



She will explore a variety of screenwriting techniques, such as:

1. Enter late: Draw your readers into the center of the action-fast.
2. Leave early: Make room for your audience's imagination.
3. Yearning: What do your characters long for?
4. Reversals: Keep turning the screw from good to bad to good.
5. Ticking clock: Add tension with time constraints.
6. Goals: Every scene (chapter) needs a goal.
7. Go to the movies!

McDaniel will also share some of her favorite writing tricks of the trade.

Visit her website: [www.lyndamcdaniel.com](http://www.lyndamcdaniel.com)

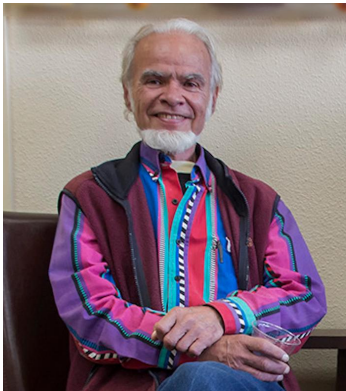
## MEMBER READER

Wright will present their nominations at the May 10 general meeting. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor, with the consent of the nominee (of course). Names of all nominees will be e-mailed to the NVW membership within a week after the May 10 meeting. Elections are held in June, with the term of office beginning July.

There is room for everyone in the NVW leadership team. There are so very many small and large responsibilities. If you'd like to help, please let us know. We need you to move our group ahead.

Enjoy May...and thank you for...well...for being you.

## LAST MEETING



Dr. Shepherd Bliss says inspiration for writers can come from anywhere

At a recent meeting of the Napa Valley Writers, guest speaker Dr. Shepherd Bliss mesmerized a large audience at the Unitarian Universalists Sanctuary in Napa.

Bliss, a full-time boysenberry farmer, ordained minister, college professor and nationally-known author of books and poetry, used many of his personal memorabilia and experiences to help explain how and where a writer can become inspired.

A resident of the Sebastopol area, he took special delight in pointing out that the boysenberry was first developed as a hybrid by Napa Valley farmer Rudolph Boysen in the 1920's, and later made famous by Knott's Berry Farm.

Bliss named his own organic boysenberry farm after Kokopelli, a fertility deity often portrayed as a flute player and venerated by Native peoples from the American southwest. Bliss shared a treasured poem in fluent Spanish, to demonstrate how words ending in vowels are more pleasing than the hard consonants found at the end of many English words.

A self-described military brat, he has lived in many places and served in the Army during the Vietnam area. He startled and amused the audience with an impression of how his father used to call his children to attention.

Very theatrical at times, Bliss demonstrated why he has been a guest on such well-known national shows as

## Sue Kesler

Sue Kesler will be the member speaker. She has two published novels and two more in progress. She will read an untitled piece of prose and solicit titles from the audience.



Napa Valley Writers, a branch of the California Writers Club, holds monthly meetings at Napa Valley Unitarian Universalists Church Sanctuary, 1625 Salvador Avenue, Napa.

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

For more information, contact Publicity Chair [Sarita Lopez](#) or see [Napa Valley Writers](#). Always open to the public.

**Coming June 14, 2017**

## DIDI BALLE



Didi's shows have been produced and performed by orchestras from the Baltimore Symphony and the New York City Opera to the Philadelphia Orchestra, in venues from the Lincoln Center and Verizon Symphony Hall to the Barbican Center for the Arts in London, and live performances broadcast by BBC and NPR.

In her talks, she enjoys sharing the historic aspect of her research, including those books and music that become the launching pad for creating characters, proposal concepts and other necessary pieces to the show puzzle.

Oprah, Bill Moyers, Phil Donahue and 60 Minutes.

Submitted by Kirk Kirkpatrick

Didi was Editor for The New York Times for 12 years. [didiballe.com](http://didiballe.com)

## COMING SOON



### NVW Presents a Workshop with IRIS DUNKLE

#### "Talking Back to History"

In this talk, Iris Jamahl Dunkle will discuss the tradition of talking back to history in poetry and her own process for writing poetry series from primary documents. She will also lead students in hands-on writing exercises.

**June 17, 2017**  
**9 am - noon**

Networking & refreshments, sign-in at 8:30 am

Synergy Fitness Center  
3421 Villa Lane  
Napa CA

Please contact Lenore Hirsch ([lenorehirsch@att.net](mailto:lenorehirsch@att.net))  
to register for the workshop.

#### What Would Napa Valley Writers Be Without Authors and Writers?

Members of Napa Valley Writers are invited to display their published books, talk with others, and offer books for sale at our monthly meetings.

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

BOOK EXCERPT OF THE MONTH

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

### FIVE THINGS ABOUT ME

#### Molly Detwiler

1) Each November I serve as a "ringmaster" or venue emcee for the Napa Valley Film Festival, most recently at the Uptown Theater.

Turns out coordinating everything backstage is nerve-wracking and being onstage is fun.

2) My husband David and I have been married for 38 years. We have no children, but between us we have 20 nieces and nephews and, so far, 27 great-nieces and great-nephews (I think--it's hard to keep track).

3) Because my husband is an airline captain, we have traveled extensively, but not nearly as much as we should. The more places we go, the longer our wish list grows.

4) I am a native of Northwest Indiana, and have lived in the Bay Area since 1979 and in Sonoma since 2002, so consider myself a born-again Californian.

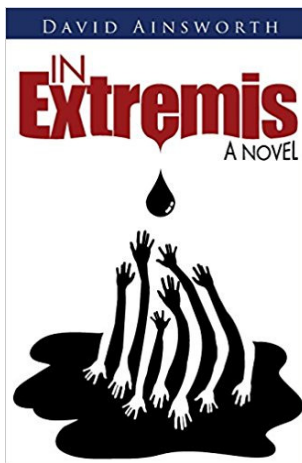
5) If you catch me eyeing my phone during baseball season, I'm probably checking the Giants score.



## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Congratulations to all the Napa Valley Writers, friends, and guests who participated in not one, but two open mics





The porter was a large, powerfully built black man with the hint of an accent Vincent guessed to be sub-Saharan African. His graying hair revealed that he was older than he looked. As he spoke to the assembled passengers, he displayed what Vincent recognized as "command presence."

"The bad guys took a page from Willie Sutton I guess. They robbed us because that's where some money was. They put up a big pile of railroad ties on the tracks and set it on fire when the train came along. That forced the engine to stop rather than take a chance on derailing, and then the robbers moved in on us.

"The Sheriff has asked us to pull into the station in Dodge City where EMS people can check you out, and the Sheriff can put these sinners in jail. The station is right on Wyatt Earp Boulevard, a block from Gunsmoke Street and a couple of blocks from Boot Hill. Well, the museum anyway."

Vincent turned to Grace, wincing as the wounds on his back stretched.

"You couldn't make this stuff up."

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If you'd like an excerpt from YOUR book featured in this newsletter, please send your request with a short Word or text excerpt and a jpg of your book cover to [Sarita Lopez](#).

## NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH

**Joe Retherford**

### Five Things About Me

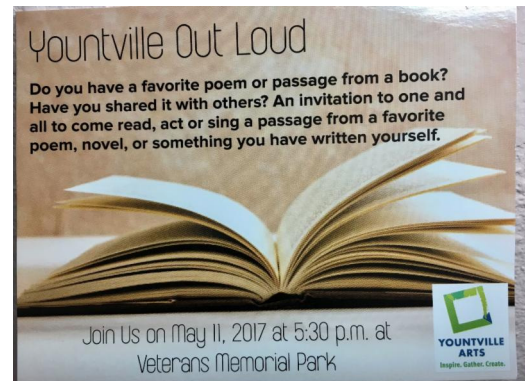
1. I was the pipe major in high school for a bagpipe performance while totally blind.

2. I have my bachelor's degree from UC Davis in mathematics and work as a mentor for blind college students across the country.



the last day of April. A nice crowd packed Capp Heritage on First Street and another different crowd enjoyed the afternoon at Napa Bookmine.

Thanks Sarita, Roberta, and Bernhold for putting together Napa Valley Writers' fine celebration of Arts in April.



## Why Attend BABF 2017?

"I couldn't believe the long lines of cheerful readers, the hugely appreciative crowds, the authors on offer (many of them heroes of mine since boyhood) and the ease and compactness of setting up a teeming Book Festival in the middle of a crowded city! The Bay Area Book Festival shows how a spirited, thoughtful and fun idea can come together with an engaged, deeply literate, alive community and make magic."

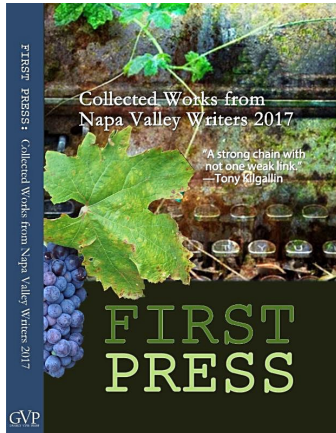
*...Pico Iyer, author*

For all the reasons to attend and be part of the Bay Area Book Fest, see their website: <https://www.baybookfest.org>

**June 3 & 4 - Downtown Berkeley...**



3. I am a loving uncle of three little ones and my family means more to me than anything.
4. Grilling and watching Giants baseball games are two of my favorite things to do.
5. I have received the help I needed in order to be a confident blind individual and it is my lifelong goal to give back to the blind community.



## "First Press" Book Launch Draws Enthusiastic Crowd

Although it was a gorgeous Earth Day in the Napa Valley, one of the more memorable celebrations of the day took place indoors at a book launch party hosted by the Napa

Valley Writers.

Over 50 enthusiastic authors, friends and interested guests gathered to celebrate the initial printing of "First Press," an anthology of non-fiction and poetry penned by amateur and professional local authors from nearly every walk of life.

Nearly the entire offering of "hot off the press" books on hand were sold, and many of the authors enjoyed their first moments of fame, if not fortune, by autographing books at several buyers' requests.



In addition, more than a dozen local writers enthusiastically and soulfully read passages from their stories or poems, providing an extra treat for the audience. Many of the authors contributing to the anthology were celebrating their first published works, a giant step forward and watershed moment in the career of any writer.

Other treats came in the form of select wines, gourmet cheeses, artisan breads, and decadent chocolate-covered strawberries provided by the NVW Launch Group and generous donations.

**"Invite the Muse" Writing Group**

**NO FEE- MONTHLY AND ONGOING THROUGH JULY**

Every 3rd Wednesday from 7-9 pm  
Repeats every 3rd Saturday, 1:30-3:30 pm

Facilitated by Emily Freiman & Roberta Wright

Interested in poetry and narrative? New to writing, like to write, been writing on your own, or writing for a long time -in secret? Ready to take the next steps-to listen, learn and share in a safe, comfortable environment with others? Emily Freiman-Art Therapist, artist, and writer- will present one new lesson a month, with specific ideas or themes to grab hold and fly with, sure to inspire you. She will incorporate an aspect of artistic expression at each session. One new lesson a month, held twice! Bring a pen and a journal/writing book/paper, and be sure to invite your Muse! Next groups held April 19 & 22.

*A collaborative project of the*

**Art Association Napa Valley**  
and **Napa Valley Writers**

RSVP required, to secure your spot.  
**707-224-5454** [emilyannbess@gmail.com](mailto:emilyannbess@gmail.com)  
Held at 1520 Behrens Street, Art Center, Napa



The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators -- San Francisco North and East Bay Region -- Napa & Solano Counties Meeting Series Presents

## Revise Like a Pro: Ten Tips to Keep You On Track, Motivated and Sane Through the Editorial Process with Bestselling Author VERONICA ROSSI

Saturday, May 13, 2017  
2 - 4 pm  
Covenant Presbyterian Church  
1226 Salvador Avenue, Napa

In this talk, ten easy tips will be offered to help writers make the most of this crucial stage in the process.

Learn more about Veronica here: [Veronica Rossi](#)

Napa Valley Writers and SCBWI members and friends are invited to attend. For more information about this and future events, and for registration information, please contact meeting coordinator: [Jenny](#)



A particularly poignant moment was the reading of our late friend Mike Layne's story, "Vittoria's Secret", which he very sadly did not live to see in print. The reading of this lovely little slice of life humor piece received a deserved and heartfelt ovation. We were all honored by the presence of his widow, Mariann Layne, who was acknowledged warmly by those in attendance.

Acting as master of ceremonies, club vice president, Doug Brozell, kept the afternoon moving along and provided a nice vibe for this special event.

Other club members who deserve mention for their contributions to the soirée include our Launch Team members led by Doug Brozell: Gary Orton, Madeline Rogers, Michael, Wycombe, Patsy Ann Taylor, Kathy Thomas, Bernhold Rankenburg, Roberta Wright, and Janie Reece.

Submitted by Kirk Kirkpatrick

[Pessereau](#)

## 2017 Napa County Arts & Culture Month of April



### *Proclaiming Arts in April*

Thank you to Arts Council Napa Valley for their ongoing work on behalf of the writers and artists in the Valley.

Napa Valley Writers is a proud member of ACNV.

## CALLING FOR NOMINATIONS



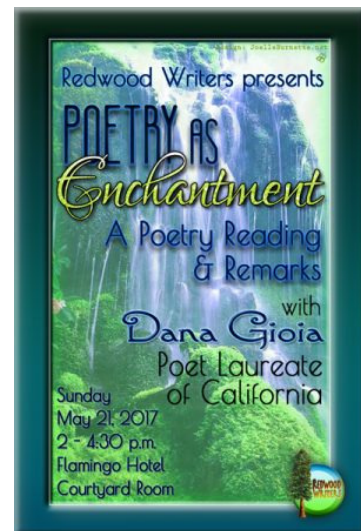
## NAPA COUNTY'S NEW AMBASSADOR FOR POETRY

**Deadline for applications  
midnight on May 5, 2017.**

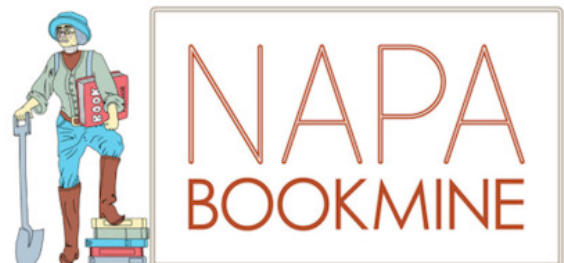
As an ambassador for poetry, the Napa County Poet Laureate is expected to promote citizens' awareness of poetry, including spoken word, as well as heighten their appreciation of the art form.

The Poet Laureate will strive to forge a meaningful connection with the community, undertaking projects that make poetry more available and more accessible to

**Redwood Writers**  
Sunday, May 21, 2017, 2 - 4:30 p.m.  
Flamingo Hotel, Courtyard Room



<http://redwoodwriters.org>



**Congratulations to Napa Bookmine's**

people in their everyday lives.

During the Poet Laureate's two-year appointment, they will be expected to present at selected public gatherings, initiate a dialogue between poets and the community, and inspire others in their writing, performance, and personal expression.

No time to dawdle. If you have a poet in mind, perhaps yourself, get to work!

For more information, please see:

<http://www.artscouncilnapavalley.org/posts/call-for-2017-napa-county-poet-laureate>

## MEMBER NEWS

### Napa Valley "Place Settings"

**NVW member Lance Burris** will make a presentation on June 1 at the St. Helena Public Library, 7 pm. He will exhibit twelve of his paintings with accompanying original narratives. Lance's innovative exhibition will continue through the month of June.

These two paintings are just a hint of what you'll see at the exhibition.

Congratulations, Lance!



View from the Battlements



Window Table at  
Ristorante Allegria

## POETRY CORNER

### After a Line by Heaney

...a shiver of beaded gossamers when you took the children  
out to play in the morning dew, and the light motes  
streamed in the haw of the pasture, and the oaks  
surrounded you strong as iron bedsteads, for you wanted  
your brood to know the soil, to be like running harts,  
their bare feet rising soft and slippery over the earth's

## Independent Bookstore Celebration this past Saturday!

Be sure to check their calendar of events.

[Bookmine Calendar May 2017](#)



...Our thanks to the leadership & 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 everyone 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**

## 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.

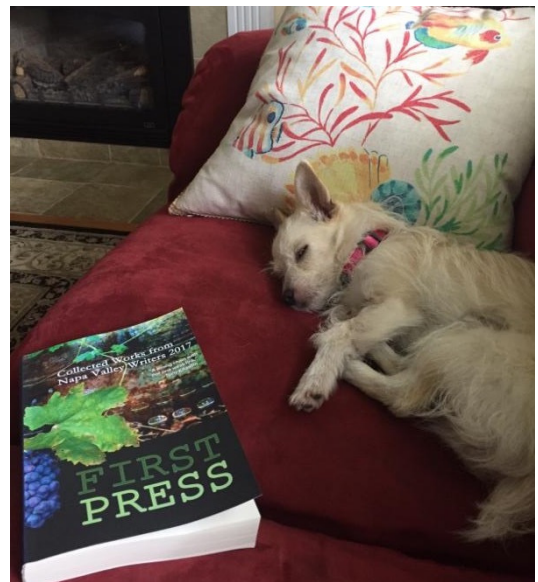
Send us your photos, current events, news of interest to writers, new publications, conferences, etc., no later than the 15th of each month to be included in the next month's newsletter.

Thank you.

[Kathleen Thomas](#)  
Interim newsletter editor

cocked  
face as the bats flew like flags from the roof's scaffolding  
and the quail scattered into the blackberries overgrowth;  
o tethered mother, did you teach them enough in your  
restlessness  
for as their father built the house, you imagined the chop  
of his trowel echoing down the canyon, you who fled  
from the one room trailer into the winter air smelling the  
scent  
of lilac faint as a fox's breath while your brood stepped  
in puddles of muck, picked toadstools, their young  
thoughts  
frozen as sap, how you wanted to go with him but you  
stayed  
kenneled and faithful in the mizzling rain, your back to  
cattle  
as the small yolk of December's lambency broke new  
upon the meadows.

*Submitted by -- Leonore Wilson*



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**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)

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