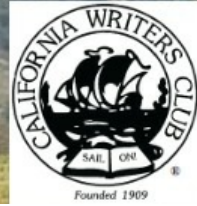


Napa Valley Writers



Happy New Year January 2018 Newsletter

FROM THE PRESIDENT by Kathleen Thomas



I made a big deal in my president's piece a month ago about the fact I'm going to walk the Pacific Crest Trail.

Except, as it turns out, I'm not. It's just not the right thing for me to be doing at this time. I'll admit I'm really embarrassed to have said I'm going to do something and then not go through with it. But there it is.

A myriad of opportunities are on the horizon, personally and professionally - and not just for me. Who knows what's next? What's in store for you?

I always enjoy this last week of the year, looking back on my calendar notes from the last twelve months, basking in the successes, mulling over the challenges. Then I take a few deep breaths, and do a bit of imagining about what's next. So many ideas on the horizon.

I confess I didn't do a lot of writing this past month. I did some. And I did a whole bunch of painting. Since I use WriterPaints as an email and blog name, I have to pick up those paint brushes once in a while. I had a fabulous time painting and I'm very grateful that I took time to live in the paints for a bit.

So, as one year ends and another begins, I want to say thank you - for being you, for standing up for what's important to you, for taking the time to do what's right. Thank you for being a writer in this world. And a reader.

Wednesday
January 10, 2018
7-9 pm

Next Meeting Speaker **SCOTT JAMES**



Napa Valley Writers will host Scott James, a current contributor and former weekly columnist for The New York Times. He also writes fiction under the pen name Kemble Scott, and is the author of two San Francisco Chronicle best sellers: *Soma* and *The Sower*. Scott has a background in television news, winning three

Emmy Awards, and is currently at work on a non-fiction book, under contract with St. Martin's. He's also the co-founder of the Castro Writers' Cooperative, a co-working space for writers in San Francisco.

Carving out a life as a writer can seem pretty daunting, but with the right insight you can increase your odds for success, both on the page and in the profession. Come and learn insider tips from a veteran journalist and novelist, and hear about the crucial role that writing communities can have these days.

Visit the Castro Writer's Cooperative at
<http://www.castrowriterscoop.com/>

From one writer to another, congratulations in advance on your next 500 words!

Happy New Year!



The Sun Will Shine on You



Special Guests

Winners of the Vintage High School writing contest will be at our January meeting. They will read their award winning stories. To learn more about the contest and the winners, scroll down to the article on the contest.



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 community arts partners to plan exciting opportunities for you to share your work with our community .

The Perfect Gift

Are you looking for the perfect gift any time of the year?

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

Don't miss out on this great seasonal price.

\$15 for *First Press*!

Celebration Photos

December 3, 2017

HOLIDAY PARTY A holiday gathering took place at [Compadres](#) on December 3, 2017.

Below are photos of the festive event. Thank you to all who attended.



WRITING PROMPT

January 9 - Theme: Seasons.
What is your favorite season? Why?

Lance Burris Reads at Library

Lance Burris will be reading *The Poetic Spirit at Work in Poetry, Painting, and Prose* at St. Helena Public Library on Thursday, January 18, 2018. The event begins at 7 p.m.



The Ghost Dancers of Little Switzerland

by Lance Burris

*It's always summer in El Verano,
if you believe its Spanish name.
But that is not the reason
for the town's enduring fame.
It is all about Little Switzerland
and its **schweizerdeutsche** band,
whose organist played the keyboards
with a three-fingered hand,
and the accordionist in red suspenders,
with white crosses up and down,
who rolled out another barrel
in that polka's familiar round,
while the red-faced tuba player
blurted out a flatulent sound,
and the clarinetist, swaying to and fro,
with ebony instrument in hand
which made that high-pitched squeal
heard in any high school band,
as women dressed in peasant skirts,
with lace kerchiefs on their heads,
danced with men in leather pants
and shoes with heavy treads,
while the gallery was full of diners,
flush-faced and of good cheer,
seated at red and white-checked tables,
set with golden pitchers of beer,*

VINTAGE HIGH WRITING CONTEST

Members
Peggy
Prescott,
Barbara
McDonnell,
and Lenore
Hirsch met
to develop a
writing
prompt,

"Transitions," to discuss possible rubrics



and to design the contest announcement and rules. Teachers Peter Oppenheim and Jennifer LaMonte were enthusiastic participants in the development of the contest and they encouraged their students to submit.

The timeline was extended due to the cancellation of school after the October fires. Thirty-one submissions were collected at the beginning of December. These were first read by Peggy, Lenore, and member Kathy Chance. They selected six semi-finalists. Kathleen Thomas and Kirk Kirkpatrick read the six essays to determine the winners.

We identified three winners and three honorable mentions. The top three will receive \$100, \$75 and \$50 respectively. They have been invited to read their essays at our January meeting and will have their pieces published in the Napa Valley Register in January.

This contest was easy to do and everyone involved hopes we will do this again next year. Please join us on January 10 in congratulating the winners and their families.

First Place

Fernando Cisneros, "*Trust*"

Second Place

Shaylynn Sublett "*Transition of 1979*"

Third Place

Olivia Ilsley "*Light Within*"

Honorable Mention

Paola Machuca, Dariya Stuter, Ally Peterson

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.

and the air was heavy with the sweetness of grilled sausages and kraut.

That's what Little Switzerland

once was all about!

But that was long ago,

and the tavern has since changed hands,

Under a new name it's now played

by more contemporary bands.

Gone are the European immigrants,

who danced on Sunday afternoons

to the German-Swiss band's rendition

of nostalgic Old World tunes,

Gone are the fragrant platters,

piled high with sausages and kraut.

Little Switzerland has changed.

Of that there is no doubt!

During a recent visit to that tavern,

late one Sunday afternoon,

*I nursed a bottle of **Trumer Pils**,*

while surveying the empty room.

Suddenly, I heard the faint playing

of a familiar Old World tune

as ghostly figures stepped from the wall

*to dance the **Schottische***

in that impromptu, afternoon ball.

The women wore peasant skirts,

flared above the knee,

laced bodices and plush velvet jackets

with buttons of silver fil-i-gree,

and the men wore jaunty Alpine hats,

woolen knee socks, and suspenders

holding up their baggy, leather pants.

As the ghostly couples turned about,

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.



2018 Resolution Writing



WRITING PROMPT

January 13 - Theme: Make Your Dreams Come True Day

What is a dream that you have for your future? Describe this dream and explain the steps you can take right away to help make this dream come true.

SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH



Five Things About...

Lori Narlock

1. I am a patented inventor. I had a friend who formed a company that developed new

*with arms locked shoulder high,
they let out a joyful, ethnic shout,
followed by a Highland kick,
a tap of the toe, and a scuff of the heel
as they rotated with the mechanical precision
of a Swiss **Glockenspiel**.
When the dancers were done,
they returned to the wall from which they'd come,
and, there, they shall remain
until the atmospherics are right the hour late,
when the ghost dancers of Little Switzerland
again dance the **Schottische**,
like music replayed on an old seventy-eight.*

Six Word Challenge

Have you ever looked at a photograph and thought 'there's a story'? Now's your chance to sharpen your creative skill. You are invited to submit a six-word caption for a photograph. Below are this month's submissions. What do you think? What would you have written?



Nancy Welty:

Cracking ice LOUD! Covers baby's ears

Nancy Welty:

Last ride on melting ice floe

Cheryl Velasquez:

Banished? It was only one cookie!

~~~~~

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

Take a look at the photo to your right. What story line comes to mind? Submit your six-word story to: [Six Word Story](#)





products, which inspired me to stop just saying, "what if," and start turning those ideas into actual items.

2. Writing was my first passion. Then I discovered food and cooking and blended the two together, first by working at Bon Appetit magazine and then co-authoring, authoring and ghost-writing more than a dozen cookbooks. The first was Smoothies, which ironically doesn't really include directions for anything "cooked," yet it was a best-selling book that cleared a path for *Wraps*, *Cocktail Food*, *The If Fornaiio Pasta Book*, the *Cakebread Cellars Cookbook*, and so many more.

3. Practically a luddite, I surprised my tech-loving husband when I walked in the door one Sunday afternoon in 2011 and told him I wanted to start an ebook publishing company. We published a dozen books about food and drink as well as a novel. Six years later, Hang Time Press is still tiny, but we have plans for it in the future.

4. Launching the Napa Valley Book Fest was a dream come true for me this fall. I love talking to fiction writers about the stories they write because it strikes me as funny and wonderful to discuss what feels real but is still the product of imagination.

5. In 2013 I won the pitch contest at the Napa Valley Film Festival. In the moment it was incredibly exciting. Later, the true value was what I learned about pitching a story: it must be told from the heart and the heart of the story must remain true from start to finish.



### WRITING PROMPT

**January 24 - Theme: California Gold Rush**

If you lived in the 1840s when gold was first found in California, who would you have been?



**ENGL: 203  
POETRY WORKSHOP I**

## Curse You Computer

-by Barbara Toboni

Curse you computer  
and your microchips too  
May they turn into nachos  
dripping with goo

Curse you computer  
with your cursor a-blinking  
May your data dissolve  
as the hard drive stops thinking

Curse you computer  
and your email box too  
May you develop a virus  
most voracious to you

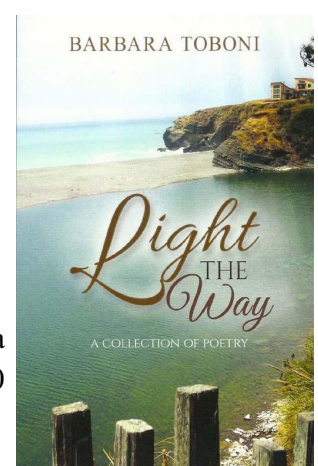
Curse you computer  
and your functioning keys  
I shall soak them in soda  
and clog them with grease

Curse you computer  
and your foul clicking mouse  
May he move from the mouse pad  
right into your house

Curse you computer  
You inhuman freak  
You stole my husband  
and gave me a geek.

~~~~~  
"The poems in Barbara Toboni's *Light the Way* are lovely in their colors, imagery, and sounds, and also treat, clearly and elegantly, a range of universal topics. This book will delight and move the hearts of its readers many times over. Enjoy!!"

— Gary Silva Poet Laureate, Napa County 2008-2010



Spring Quarter 6:00p-8:00p

Want to take your writing to the next level? Sign up for English 203: Poetry Workshop One taught by Iris Jamahl Dunkle.

Learn the fine craft of reading and writing poetry. Become inspired by reading contemporary poems. Meet in a workshop and develop a community of writers.

For more information contact [Iris Dunkle](#).

The Struggle of Writing



There are three people who live inside my head; the person I am, the person I want to be and my mother. Before you judge me as crazy, you should know one important thing about me; *I am a writer*.

Creating characters is easy. The difficult part is getting the to stick to the stark white page. I have a love-hate relationship with the blinking curser. Today the damn thing mocks me. Write. Write. Write. Tomorrow it will screams; wrong, wrong. Wrong!

Despite an ever present internal doubt judging my ability, I wake up every morning with a burning desire to tell a story. I listen to my deepening desire to unleash creativity on the world around me. And, when the person I am battles the person I want to be, I often side with my mother who says "you have the desire to be great, now have the courage to take the first step."

What about you? Do you have writing struggles? We'd love to hear from you. What motivates you to write? [Tell Us](#).

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




We wish to extend a special 'thank you' to the leadership and members of [Arts Council Napa Valley](#), [Arts Associaton 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.

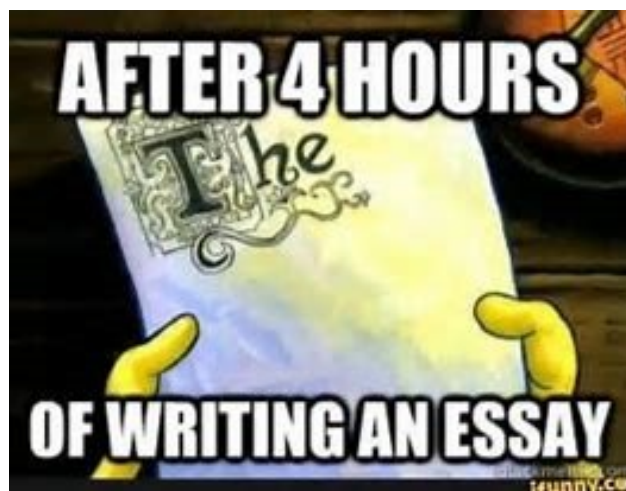


From Pen to Published



Redwood Writers Conference

Save the Date!
April 21
2018
Finley Center
Santa Rosa



each month to be included in the next month's newsletter.

Thank you.

[Cheryl Velasquez](#)
Newsletter Editor

NAPA VALLEY WRITERS

A Branch of the California Writers Club



Home of accomplished and aspiring
writers in the Napa Valley.
www.napavalleywriters.net

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