

Napa Valley Writers



March 2018

FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Kathleen Thomas



I went bowling this past weekend with a group of family and friends together for a bowling birthday party. Not original, perhaps. But really fun, with non-stop laughter, clapping, grins and frowns. When the birthday boy got a strike, we all stopped in our tracks and belted out Happy Birthday! Later that night,

in the quiet after-party, rarely used muscles derided me. I eased my pain with another piece of birthday cake.

I aimed with perfect intention each time I stepped to the line. I tossed with surety that pink three-holed ball, unaccustomed to its weight and its drag on my right hand. Sometimes I got nothing. Most of the time I did okay. A spare here, a strike there. At one point I traded in my first pair of stylish bowling shoes for a second pair. The first pair was too tight and the soles too slippery. I was afraid I'd fly down the lane with the ball.

In bowling and in life, we don't get all ten pins every time, do we? How often do we laugh at our best efforts just to get back up and try again? If I've learned anything in this short life of mine, if I've taught my own kids anything, it's to never give up. Take aim, stand up straight, stretch and throw that ball to the other end of the lane. Carry through. Watch your style. Bumpers help. Most of the time, though, we're on our own, cheered by those around

March 14
7 - 9 p.m.

Jeremy Benson
Poet Laureate, Napa County

Please join us as we welcome Jeremy Benson, who will speak to the idea that reading and writing poetry informs and improves all the writing a writer does, in poetry and prose alike.

As a free-lance writer, Jeremy has profiled entrepreneurs, sculptors, novelists, taxidermists, brewers, musicians, and carvers, contributing frequently to Great Lakes Bay Regional Lifestyle Magazine, and acting as Editor-in-chief of <http://www.360mainstreet.com>

Jeremy endeavors to cultivate a rich community of writers, readers, and artists, participants, patrons, and planners. He writes a regular blog for Arts Council Napa Valley on what it means to be a citizen of the arts in Napa County. As Benson says, "A poem creates community."

www.artscouncilnapavalley.org.



NVW Member Reader for March is Sarita Lopez, NVW's publicity chair, who will read a short story titled "The Night Before."

Napa Valley Writers, a branch of the California

us.

I'm ready for another game or two. Another birthday, or twenty, won't stop that.



Last Meeting of Napa Valley Writers: Microfóno Abierto Bilingüe con Chocolate

Shortly before the start of our monthly meeting, there were only a handful of attendees present. Fifteen minutes later, the place was packed! Performers (40% of the audience) shared poetry, prose, and song from their hearts in many flavors of love - for the land, for the people, for a lover. Xulio Soreano was emcee for the reading portion of the meeting and informed the gathering that every piece was not going to be translated, no matter the language. We would hear with our hearts the understanding that was there for us. At one point, being an English speaker, I had no idea what I was hearing, picking out a few words like madre and amore, and thinking of how others feel every day in the English language world of this America. My heart caught in my throat. This gathering was something very special. Everyone was impressed with the compassion, togetherness, and honesty, with a desire to move this one evening forward into something more in our community. Many touched their heart with gratitude and eyes were moist with appreciation and awe. The high school girls whose Spanish/English spoken word brought down the house when they told of the prejudices our neighbors live with on a daily basis - and what they are doing to stop it. All the way from Santa Rosa, a very special poet read to a pin-drop quiet audience. From one of our members, Jan Flynn: *Valentine's Day meeting was the highlight of the year...a FANTASTIC experience! Huge kudos for*

Writers Club, holds monthly meetings at Napa Valley Unitarian Universalists Church Sanctuary, 1625 Salvador Avenue, Napa. Cost at the door is \$5 for CWC members. Guests, \$8. Students with ID, free. For more information, contact publicity_nvw@outlook.com or see napavalleywriters.net. Always open to the public.

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



July 29 - Aug. 3, 2018

Applications are now being accepted for the 37th Napa Valley Writers' Conference, Napa Valley Writers' Conference. The admissions deadline for all applications, including requests for financial assistance, is April 2.

Poetry workshops focus on the production and critique of new work. The poetry faculty: Camille Dungy, Brenda Hillman, Jane Mead, and Carl Phillips. Fiction workshops will be led by Lan Samantha Chang, Lauren Groff, Mat Johnson, and Howard Norman.

A reading fee of \$25 is due with your application. Tuition is \$1,025. Financial assistance is available. Thanks to the Napa Valley Writers, two half-scholarships, one in poetry and one in fiction, will be offered exclusively to residents of Napa County.

For faculty profiles and application information, visit Napa Valley Writers' Conference. To join the conference community online, "like" the conference at [Facebook Napa Writers' Conference](https://www.facebook.com/NapaWritersConference) or follow [NVWC Twitter](https://twitter.com/NVWC).

Napa Valley Writers is a non-profit

reaching out to a vibrant community we've been missing. That room absolutely pulsed with energy!



Submitted by Kathleen Thomas

organization, a branch of the California Writers Club, founded in 1909. The NVW Bylaws dictate an annual election of officers.

Please consider joining the leadership team. Job descriptions for each Board position will be posted in this Newsletter during March, April and May. Take a look and see where you can bring your own skillset to the fore. It's a lot of fun, a little bit of work, and you can make such a difference.

Publicity Chair

Notes on being NVW's Publicity Chair, by Sarita Lopez.

Being a part of Napa Valley Writers opened my world to critique groups, author networking and an endless stream of amazing guest speakers. I knew I wanted to be a part of the group from my first meeting, and within a year of joining was asked to be Publicity Chair. I have held this position for two years (going on my third) and while I know there will be a day when someone else will need to take over, I'm already preparing myself because of how much I'll miss being involved. In the last two years I have started a business, written my second novel, kept an active social and volunteer life. I became a Napa County Commissioner and still very much managed to be an involved Publicity Chair. The commitment is approximately four hours a month, if not less, and there is always a timeline of when to receive information and when to send it out. There is little guesswork involved. If you enjoy getting to know people from all over the art and writing community while promoting a club that is growing by the year, then perhaps one day you'll consider running for Publicity Chair. It was one of the best decisions I've made and if you decide to run, you might just say the same.

Secretary

Currently held by Michael Wycombe, reports to the President and to the Board of Directors. The Secretary is responsible for recording and publishing the minutes of all regular Board meetings, any extraordinary Board meetings, and any General Membership meeting where Official business or voting is conducted.

Responsibilities and Duties

- Attend Board meetings, record and publish Minutes of the meeting.
- Attend General Meetings, record and publish any decisions or votes of the membership.
- Publish minutes and make corrections as

Napa Library Presents:

**Saturday, March 10, 2018
2:00 p.m.**

**Napa Main Library
580 Coombs St
Napa, CA 94559**

**Napa at Last Light: America's Eden
in an Age of Calamity**

JAMES CONAWAY

NAPA AT LAST LIGHT reveals how the beautiful, isolated Napa Valley wine region of California exploded into an extraordinary outsized version of the American dream and whose vineyards sparked an unbelievable power struggle between old family stewardship and multinational corporations.

NAPA AT LAST LIGHT is the third in James Conaway's critically acclaimed Napa trilogy, and contains prescient warnings of the destruction done to the land as a result of the rapid growth of the industry, giving a grim timeliness to this book's



publication.

"For decades, James Conaway has kept a keen eye on this unusually fecund-and fraught-piece of ground, and has meticulously charted its long,

sad decline toward some sort of thematic caricature of itself, a Disney World of the Grape. In this fine book, we see how that decline happened. It's all here: The titanic egos, the real estate wrangling, the corporate high jinks that, little by little, brought this sun-kissed paradise firmly under the spell of Mammon." -Hampton Sides, bestselling author of *Blood and Thunder* and *In the Kingdom of Ice*.

"This is a stunning and sad look at how an idyllic community became a victim of its own success... fascinating and well-researched." - Publishers Weekly, Starred Review

"In the third volume of his trilogy about Napa, California, Conaway (Nose, 2013, etc.) continues his investigation of the consequences of the wine industry on the region's culture and environment... A strong plea for responsible stewardship of the land." -Kirkus Reviews

MEMBER REQUEST!

I have undertaken an ambitious project which I call *Bradbury's Mars, the Musical*. It is a three-act light opera based upon Ray Bradbury's book entitled *The Martian Chronicles* and my related book entitled *Paint with a Typewriter/Type with a Brush, Exploring the Imaginary Worlds of Ray Bradbury through the Art of Illustration*. I am nearing completion of the libretto. As a writer of poetry and prose, and a painter, I am equipped to write the text and lyrics and handle the visual art aspects of the project. I am looking for a member of NVW who has a musical or theater background to critique my work, since I am not trained in either. I have a specific musical composer in mind. However, I am open to suggestions in that regard

Thank you.

Lance Burris (707) 812-8308

The decision to self-publish your book is a bold move. It can take an unfathomable amount of time, research and money-maybe even a few sleepless nights. If you've self-published your book, you deserve recognition. You deserve to be rewarded for your dedication.

necessary.

Qualifications

- Competency at using Word or equivalent software to prepare and publish minutes
- Availability to attend monthly board meetings and membership meetings.
- Good writing, spelling, and punctuation.

Time Commitment: 10 - 12 hours per month.

President

Currently held by Kathleen Thomas

The best qualification is wanting to help others see their writing dreams come true, and to see NVW grow and thrive. We're almost six years old. Knowing how and when to delegate is helpful. As a Board member, you have plenty of people to lean on. As I see it, the president is the face of Napa Valley Writers. As such, I attend various (and not all) community arts meetings, conferences and events to learn about and collaborate with them. As writers, our "art" is often not as well represented as music, sculpting and painting. In the past few years, we've been working to change that. I represent our branch at one statewide CWC meeting annually. I chose to appoint another member to attend the regional meeting. In the general realm of presidency. The president prepares agendas, attends and presides over Board meetings and NVW's monthly club meeting. The president assigns tasks as needed, and appoints committee chairs as necessary, including members of the nominating committee. That committee is charged with helping NVW members take leadership roles in the annual election of Board members - coming up in June, by the way. I write a President's piece for the newsletter. If you've headed up any other group or organization, if you work well with others, if you're a good listener, this is the job for you. Time commitment depends on how many times you step out in the community for NVW, generally, for me, not more than 10-15 hours, and that includes writing for the newsletter, helping with publicity and so on. I choose to do those things, but they are not required of the president. My leadership role in NVW started in publicity and newsletter editor, and they are still my soft spot. Benefits of being president include getting to know our members and other club leaders on the statewide level. The use of your NVW president title in your bio or publication is a plus. The president networks within and outside of the club. If you have a creative streak to help develop new ideas, that's a plus. The term of president is one year. I've done two because it's so

DEADLINE: April 2, 2018



Writer's Digest's Self-Published Book Awards has been recognizing self-published excellence for more than 25 years, and

this time around, your book could win big.

Here's what you could win:
\$8,000 in cash

A feature article about you and your book in the March/April 2019 issue of Writer's Digest
A press release from Writer's Digest, to be sent, along with a copy of your book, to 10 different major publishing review houses
A paid trip to the ever-popular Writer's Digest Conference
AND more!

For the chance to earn the prestige you deserve and watch your career soar to new heights, enter Writer's Digest's Self-Published Book Awards.

<https://app.wizehive.com/apps/WDSelfPub2018>



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



The Perfect Gift: First Press

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

Copies of *First Press: Collected Works from Napa Valley Writers 2017* is now available for

much fun. Really it is! You'll learn so much about this awesome club and how it fits into the wider community.

Hello Writers and Artmakers! Invite the Muse

Monthly class for writers - beginners or seasoned - who want to enhance and approach writing from a creative direction using art-making to loosen and open up the creative juices, as well as using your personal experiences to pique your muse.

- RSVP to secure your spot at the table.
- \$3 per person at the door for cost of art supplies.

**March 17
and
April 21**

1 to 3 p.m.
Art Center Napa Valley
1520 Behrens Street in Napa

A collaboration between Art Association Napa Valley and Napa Valley Writers.

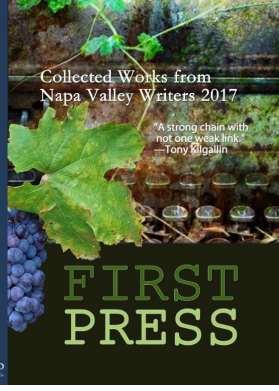
For more information, and to RSVP, please contact Emily Freiman, [Emily Freiman](#) or 707-224-5454.



**Redwood Writers
Our Neighbor to the West**

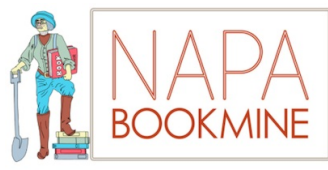
**April Conference on the Horizon!
Pen to Published 2018**

all this and more... [Redwood Writers-CWC](#)



your gift giving needs. Find yours at Napa Bookmine, Calistoga's in Napa and Calistoga, and online at Amazon.

\$15 for *First Press!*

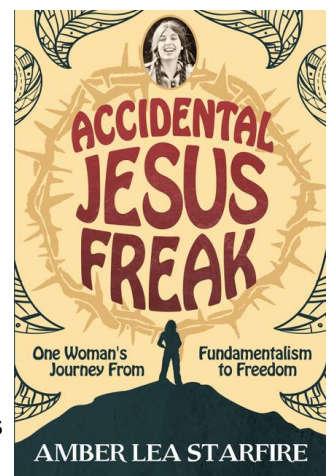


Meet the Author
Sunday, March 18
3:00 pm
964 Pearl Street, Napa

In 1973, Amber Starfire was a flute player and music major at a California community college, until she met and fell madly in love with a charismatic piano player, plunging into his world of music-making and drug-fueled parties. When, just three weeks after their wedding, he reveals that he's been "born again," Amber makes the decision to follow him into his new religion and, unwittingly, into a life of communal living, male domination, and magical thinking.

Accidental Jesus Freak is the story of one woman, one marriage, and one kind of fundamentalism, but it is also the story of the healing that is possible when we are true to ourselves. Both a cautionary tale and celebration of personal empowerment, Accidental Jesus Freak is a powerful reminder for anyone who seeks to live a life authentic to who they truly are.

Amber is an author, editor, and writing coach in Napa, California. She has published six books of nonfiction and memoir, and her work has appeared in numerous anthologies and editorial publications. She holds an MFA in Creative Nonfiction from the University of San Francisco and an MA in Education from Stanford University. Her passion is to help others tell their stories, make meaning of life, and access their inner wisdom and creativity through the act of writing. <http://writingthroughlife.com>



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.



ARTS IN APRIL

Inspiration Beyond the Vine



Sunday, April 29, Open Mic at the Napa Bookmine, 3-5 pm.

Open to all genres, 5 minute max reading time each reader.

Please arrive early to sign up to read. Always a great time!

Watch your favorite cultural, arts and news

ARTS IN APRIL EVENT!

Hill Family Estate Tasting Room
6512 Washington Street
Yountville

sources for news of other upcoming Aprts in April Events.

<https://www.visitnapavalley.com/events/arts-in-april/>

HELP WANTED!

Napa Valley Writers' Newsletter needs a new volunteer Newsletter Editor. Due to challenges in her personal life, our current newsletter editor tendered her resignation.

Responsibilities: Keep an eye out for events of interest to our members and readers and post them in the newsletter. You will get much of this information from community members.

Coordinate with other NVW members and leadership to gather items of interest for newsletter content.

Create, edit and publish newsletter once a month, using Constant Contact as the publishing platform.

Time commitment: 2-5 hours a month.

Mentoring partner available to get you started.

If you're interested in learning more, please contact [Kathleen Thomas](#).

Thank your for your willingness to serve!

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



Poetry Month
Arts in April

A Poetry/Prose Salon
Sunday, April 29, 2018
12:00pm - 2:00pm

Water and snacks will be served
Wine: \$10 for two tastings

Bring a favorite poem or two
or a short prose selection

3 minute limit for each reading

RSVP to reserve a spot
(walk-ins welcome as time allows)
jlyon@comcast.net





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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