

# Napa Valley Writers



## June 2018

### FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Kathleen Thomas



Six and a half years ago, before Napa Valley Writers, my dad and I set off together on Amtrak for what he was calling his last big hurrah. It turned out to be a tale of a different color. It was a last hurrah of many colors.

I'll soon be leaving, again, on a jet train across this country and to the north as well. It will be a few weeks of seeing new places, meeting new friends, and rekindling life-long relationships. In other words, a lot of fun. And fun is what I like. The last few months I've even found some fun in of all things, free-lance local sports photography.



This is my last column for President's piece in your newsletter. I'm more than pleased to be leaving this column in the capable hands of our new NWW President, Gary Orton.

A highly recommended guest speaker is coming up on the 13th. And "First Press: Collected Works from Napa Valley Writers" continues to sell in our local bookstores.

Thank you again for allowing me to be a part of your Napa Valley Writers. It's been an honor. Kudos to all of you who periodically or regularly take the time to contribute your poems, book reviews, excerpts, event notices, etc. to the newsletter editor. There is no newsletter without news!

With summer upon us again, enjoy yourselves, enjoy your writing. Or at least enjoy working at it.

### June 13, 7-9 pm Napa Valley Writers Presents *The Back Cover Copy*

David Colin Carr, who has been an editor and author for thirty years, will provide his insights to assist you in producing the best back cover ever for your new book.



Do you stumble when friends ask you what you're writing? Back Cover Copy, a lesson created by Carr, specifies your intention, makes a promise to your readers, and is a guard rail so your writing stays on course. It also serves as the foundation for all your marketing tasks: tagline, description, elevator pitch, Amazon page, query letter.

David values outlining to develop logical structure; models lively, precise language; and guides writers in developing their craft. He works in many genres but is especially dedicated to projects that reflect the beauty of this planet and the mystery of our hearts. [www.davidcolincarr.com](http://www.davidcolincarr.com)



**Nathaniel Robert "Bob" Winters** will be June's member reader, reciting an excerpt from his novel, "Past the Future", and a poem of his own imagination.

*In error, Bob was listed in last month's newsletter as May's member reader. Instead, we enjoyed hearing from Steve Villano.*



*This one's forK you!*

## **Please Welcome our Newly Elected Napa Valley Writers Board of Trustees 2018-2019**

The following slate of Officers for the coming year was presented to the NVW membership for their approval at the May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 general membership meeting.

There were no other nominations from the floor, and the slate was accepted by acclamation. Congratulations to the upcoming leaders of NVW.

They are counting on you to join with them in taking Napa Valley Writers into the next chapter of this amazing journey. Be sure to congratulate them and to let them know where you'd like to see NVW go in the future, and how you can help!



President  
Gary Orton



Vice President  
Sarita Lopez

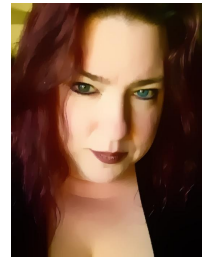
Napa Valley Writers, a branch of the California Writers Club, holds monthly meetings at Napa Valley Unitarian Universalists Church Sanctuary, 1625 Salvador Avenue, Napa. Cost at the door: \$8 for guests, \$5 for CWC members. Students with ID, free. For more information, contact [publicity\\_nvw@outlook.com](mailto:publicity_nvw@outlook.com) or see [napavalleywriters.net](http://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.*

## **COMING IN JULY**

### **Being You, But Better A Presentation by Kymberlee Ingalls**

For authors who wish to move their careers forward or to attract an audience, presentation takes as much practice as the craft of writing.



Cultivating an audience includes reading your work at open mic events, bookstore readings, and interviews, among other speaking opportunities.



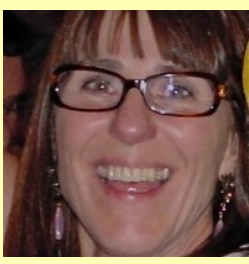
**July's NVW Member Reader Molly Detwiler** will read a new excerpt from *Satis House*, her novel in progress about the life of Miss Havisham before *Great Expectations*.

### **You Could Win a Free Year's NVW Dues**

During the last year, Napa Valley Writers has provided scholarships to two attendees at the upcoming Napa Valley Writers Conference, honored Vintage High School students for their writing, and through the state level of the California Writers Club, we contributed to a Napa Valley College scholarship. (See article elsewhere in this newsletter).



We subsidized the cost of the holiday party to make



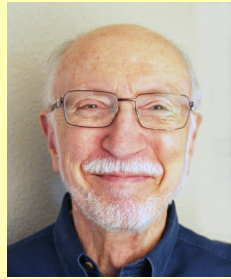
Treasurer  
Ana Manwaring

Membership Chair  
Roberta Wright



Secretary  
Geoffrey Leigh

Member at Large  
Stephen Bakalyar



Member at Large  
Lori Narlock

In conjunction with California Writers Club, Napa Valley Writers is pleased to announce this years CWC/NVW Napa Valley College Scholarship Award Winner.



Carmelo Ortiz has completed 89 units with a 3.1, is a Business Communications major, transferring to a University

in the fall. He volunteers time with the elderly, loves playing fútbol, is involved with the Puente Project at NVC, and is creating history in his family.

**Felicitaciones**

it affordable for members, hosted a culture-shattering bilingual poetry night, provided speakers on a wide range of topics of interest, co-hosted open mics throughout the community, and facilitated the critique groups that are a foundation of our writing practices.

We cannot do any of these things without your continued financial contribution in the form of annual dues. Your \$45 renewal (\$25 if your primary membership is in another branch) is due July 1, but we encourage you to send your check today made out to Napa Valley Writers to P.O. Box 5901, Napa 94581.

You can also go to our website, [www.napavalleywriters.net](http://www.napavalleywriters.net), click on "joining" then "renewing member" and pay via Paypal.

To encourage early payment of dues, we will do a drawing at our June 13 meeting of everyone who has paid their yearly dues up to that night. We have a variety of prizes to give out, including one free membership! So renew now and know that you are making a difference in the lives of writers young and old in Napa County.

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Congratulations to member **Rebecca Levy, DO**, Obstetrics & Gynecology, who is now a regular Health Writer on *Medium*, an online forum for writers to share what they know.

People can find her articles on topics such as Menopause, Peri-Menopause, Sexual Health, and Contraception at [Medium.com](http://Medium.com). In the search bar, insert Rebecca Levy-Gantt. All the articles she's written will pop up.



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### **CONGRATULATIONS to Mukund Gnanadesikan!**

A pair of his poems recently appeared in Adelaide Literary Magazine's April edition. Another is slated for publication soon in The Ibis Head Review (stay tuned)! Eventually, another is slated for publication in The Cape Rock Poetry Journal early 2019.

[http://adelaidemagazine.org/p\\_mgnanadesikan.html](http://adelaidemagazine.org/p_mgnanadesikan.html)

Progress continues to be slow on the fiction front, as "Errors of Omission" is finished but still languishing in search of an agent.

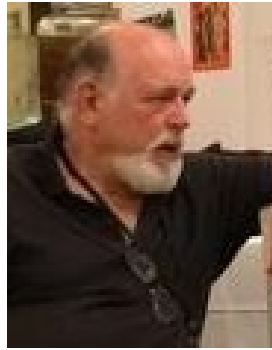
**Carmelo!**



(Muk and Kathleen Thomas participated in a successful Napa Valley Writers Conference workshop, summer 2017, with faculty member Peter Ho Davies.)

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This excerpt is from **Lance Burris'** book titled "*The Man in the Hat, the Poetic Spirit at Work in Poetry, Painting, and Prose.*"



Lance describes Francois Lanson of the Lanson Champagne family. Lance first met Francois in Cloverdale, California, when he was eleven and Francois was nineteen. Burris provides an insight into French character from an American

perspective.



In the nineteen sixties, my wife and I had an opportunity to have lunch with Francois in a small restaurant in Rheims. While he had become an American citizen, in later years he returned to France to rejoin the family business.

After we consumed at least two bottles of Lanson champagne in order to prove Francois' assertion that good French champagne does not give one a headache, I invited him to visit us in Germany where my wife and I were then living.

He responded by saying that it was impossible because "he didn't speak their abominable language, and if he did, he wouldn't have anything to say to them."

While Francois had become an American citizen, he remained French to his core, as illustrated by the following story: While on his way to American citizenship, he had briefly served in the U.S. Air Force and was stationed somewhere in Northern Africa. While living in an open barracks, he hung blankets around his cot for privacy and listened to classical music on his portable record player.

Clearly, Francois was not a team player. Over the years I have concluded that what the British and Americans find objectionable about the French are the very qualities which make them a great people. They have their standards and don't give a fig about what other people think.

As a French-speaking friend of mine once observed: "Americans mistake French indifference for hostility." It is an attitude which has produced some of the world's greatest food, wine, and art.

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## **Astrophysics for People in a Hurry Neil deGrasse Tyson Norton, 2017**

Neil deGrasse Tyson's little book about a big thing is a delight. The universe in 222 small pages.

The title's first word will turn many away. But those who have read or listened to the thoughts of this erudite, accessible scientist will know that pleasure awaits. Tyson explains our modern understanding of the universe with clarity and humor, proclaiming for the layman the remarkable story of cosmic evolution. It is a story about people-their genius as well as their foibles. It is history. He is unflinching in pointing out our ignorance: "Most of the universe is made of stuff about which we are clueless."

Tyson's colloquial style is sprinkled with humor. As he discusses light, he posits that highway signs for future interstellar travelers will read, "The Speed of Light: It's Not Just a Good Idea. It's the Law."

He notes how science has imbedded itself into popular culture. The *Voyager* spacecraft included a record with works of Beethoven and Chuck Berry. A skit on NBC's *Saturday Night Live* showed a written reply from aliens: "Send more Chuck Berry."

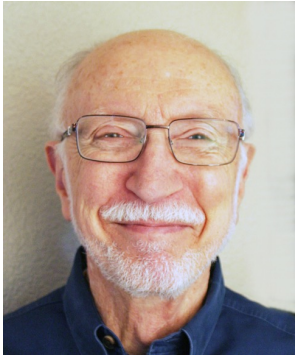
Readers who know the history of science will often find stories forgotten or never learned. One of those for me was William Herschel's discovery of infrared light. Tyson quotes Herschel's notebook entries, wherein he used the expression invisible light. Then Tyson says, "Holy s#%t!"

We writers don't need fluency in cosmology. However, an acquaintance with dark matter, dark energy, and the cosmic microwave

background might just find its way into our writing, albeit indirectly, as we ponder our place in this space and time.

A couple of sections were a little tedious for me: the discourse on the periodic table, and the eleven-page discussion of the first seconds of the Big Bang. Others might find these among the best ones.

This reviewer agrees with many others that Tyson is today's preeminent explainer of science.



**Book Review submitted by Steve Bakalyar, one of NVW's newly elected Board members.**

*Just when the newsletter was on deadline, this exciting news crossed my desk!*



**The City of Napa has an exciting new opportunity in our Public Art Program as a part-time Public Art Coordinator!**

[Arts Council Public Art Coordinator](#)

## **Lowell Herrero Origins of an Original**

Napa Valley Museum invites to you join them for a celebration of two exhibits featuring the work of two extraordinary artists who were contemporaries and friends: Lowell Herrero & Nathan Oliveira.

Meet Special Guests Joe Oliveira and Janet Herrero.

Opening Celebration June 2 from 5 to 7; FREE for Museum members; \$20 for Non-Members.

[Napa Valley Museum Exhibits](#)

A perfect reason to go check out the newly opened Goodman Library!



From the Napa Valley Register:

Napa County Historical Society will host a book launch celebrating the publication of a new book, "A Rumbling of Women: Napa Feminists 1970-1990," written by 26 women who were instrumental in shaping Napa's future.

The event is at the Goodman Library, 1219 First St., Napa, at 4 p.m. on June 10.

[Napa Feminists 1970-1990](#)

### **POETRY CORNER**

#### **They Think--Therefore They Are-- I Think**

Remember the Jetson's TV show with flying cars and robots everywhere? That future's much closer than you know in some ways we are almost there.

It's true our autos don't fly around be it Ford, Honda, BMW, or Chevy gravity keeps them all stuck on the ground. Yet if you're going to mountains or river levy,

a driver soon won't be needed artificial intelligence will drive your car. It seems that we have succeeded creating robots that can decide near or far.

I don't know how comfortable I feel about machines that believe they can think. What if they tried to deal with politics and take us to the brink,

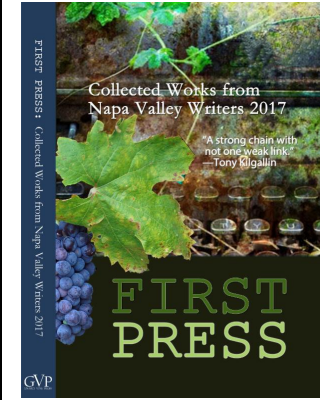
of nuclear destruction and total annihilation? Did the robot creators remember the sci-fi Asimov rule and put "do no harm to humans" in the equation? Maybe we need to program them to not be cruel.

submitted by NW member Bob Winters.

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



Amazon.

\$15 for *First Press!*



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.

### 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



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