

NVPS NEWSLETER

GREAT PEOPLE and GREAT IMAGES SINCE 1998



August 2025 Issue

This month's meeting

Theme: Using Photography and AI

Artist: Barbara Schwartz

August 25

The August presenter is website and graphic designer and advisor, Barbara Schwartz, owner of Zoom Design, who will discuss the many ways she uses photography in her design business, including how she uses AI and her iPhone.



Her love for photography and graphic design began when she was just seven years old, holding a Kodak Instamatic camera in her small

hands, she explained. As a youngster she would spend hours capturing the world around her then carefully arranging the photos on construction paper adding clippings from magazines and decorative touches to create one-of-a-kind scrapbooks. When her grandfather looked at one of her early creations and said, “You should work for Hallmark!” it lit a spark in her heart. His words stayed with her, filling her with a sense of pride and a quiet belief that her creativity was something special.

Her path took many turns. She studied Japanese, earned a Master’s degree in Foreign Service, and worked at the U.S. Trade Representative’s office, All Nippon Airways, and Geostar. It was at Geostar that she was introduced to the brand-new Apple Macintosh computer. The moment she saw what it could do, everything changed. She left her career behind to become a desktop publisher in 1986 diving headfirst into the world of digital design and mastering Adobe products and web development as they evolved.

Today, Barbara feels deeply grateful to be living in a time of such rapid technological change. In an age where everyone has a camera in their pocket, she believes the role of the artist is more vital than ever. While many hold tightly to tradition, she welcomes the creative possibilities that artificial intelligence brings to the table. Blending passion with profession, she considers herself lucky to do what she loves—so much so, it never feels like work.

Critique theme: Using AI or the Golden Hour

To see more of Barbara's work, visit:

<https://www.zoomonby.com>

NVPS meetings are on the fourth Monday of each month starting at 7:00 pm in the Oak Room at the Napa Senior Center, 1500 Jefferson, Napa.

For this meeting, members may submit two photos showing *Using AI*. If you don't use AI, the alternative theme is the *Golden Hour*. Submit according to the guidelines at the end of the newsletter.

Field trips, workshops, and resources

Napa-Sonoma Photographic Art Classes by Michael Seewald

Seewald is a top photographer in San Diego but gives classes in Napa and other places in Northern California.

https://www.seewald.com/San_diego_digital_photography_workshops_and_courses.htm

Lance Kuehne Workshops

Located in Petaluma, Kuehne an accomplished landscape photographer offers various reasonably priced workshops in the North Bay and Northern California.

<https://lancekuehne.com/collections/photography-workshops-california>

Events and exhibits



September 2025 on both Saturday and Sunday:
September 20 & 21 and September 27 & 28.

Visit artists' studios and see the art. Get inspired. Or participate and sell your photos.

<https://artnv.org/open-studios-home/>

20 Fabulous Fall Festivals and Events in Sonoma County

Pick and choose photo ops and have some fun. If you can't attend all 20, at least visit the VegFest, and eat your vegetables like a good boy or girl.

<https://www.sonomacounty.com/articles/20-fabulous-fall-festivals-and-events-sonoma-county/>

Matisse's Jazz Unbound at the de Young

Through September 28. A chance to get inspired by art that was inspired by music.

<https://www.famsf.org/exhibitions/matisse-jazz-unbound>

NorCal Events

If you can't find a photo op on this list, give up photography and take up bottle cap collecting.

<https://www.discoveringnortherncalifornia.com/events-and-festivals-july-through-september.html>

Member news

Newsletter archived

This newsletter is now archived on the NVPS website for your reference.

New consideration

This newsletter may perhaps be the last wherein we can publish a photo without full disclosure. Should an AI postprocessing notice be added to a photo in large and distinctive text? If we're going to get a Pulitzer Prize for the newsletter, we need to be completely honest.

For instance, in regard to this month's masthead photo:

a truck, a Pelgrin Falcon attacking an old lady's Pomeranian, a dempster with a big sign *přilep mi to*, and several piles of horse dung were all removed by AI.

It should have been disclosed:



On the other hand, postprocessing software is now rich in AI. Adding a proper notice may degrade the aesthetic appeal of a photo.

So, the question remains: “to should or not to should” include a disclosure in a photo?

Challenge for October

The challenge is a **still-life**. The photograph can be abstract, ancient, informative, or whatever the photographer intends. There are no limitations. A caption (optional) can comment, explain, or be an integral part (e.g., poetry) of the presentation. You need to submit one photo according to the normal guidelines.

Incredible photo op

This is your chance to photograph *stuff*. Gather up some stuff, put it on a table, and shoot. Normally no one would let you publish a photo like this. But your NVPS newsletter gives you a rare opportunity to publish *stuff* at no extra cost beyond the low low price of membership.



NVPS a le parking

Locked out! The July 28th meeting was truncated and relegated to the parking lot due to unforeseen circumstances (Senior Center staffing mix-up). Apologies to our scheduled presenter, Michael Depue.



Depue will be rescheduled for another meeting.

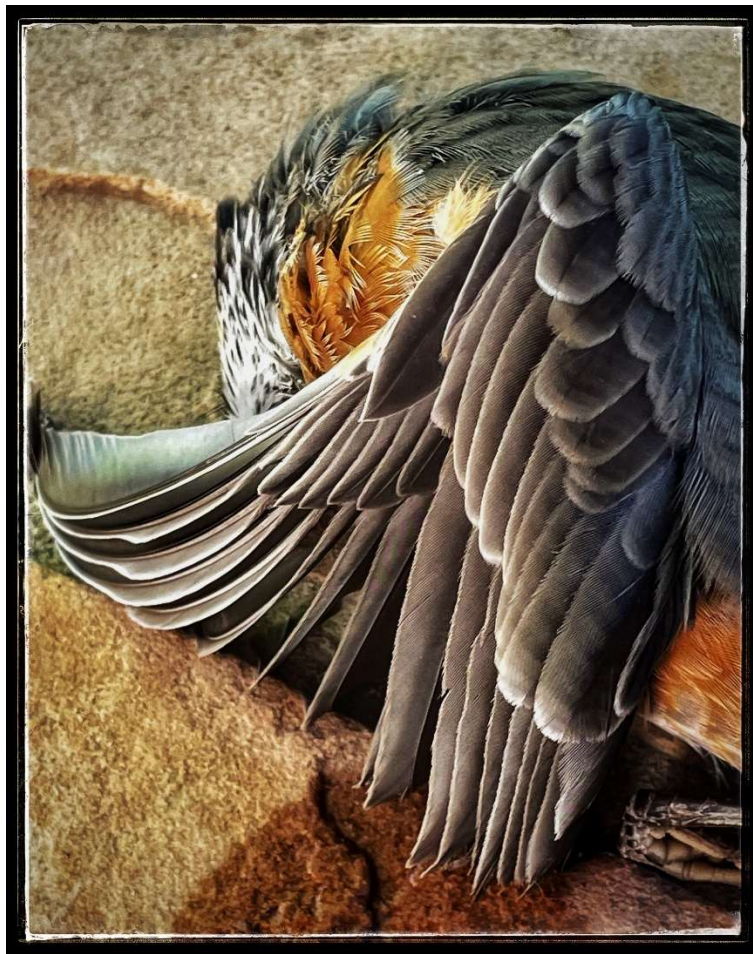
Award winner

Our treasurer Kim Marhan won second place in the Digital Art category at the Vacaville Juried Art Show. Her photo/art piece is titled *Flocking Together*.



Art in Benecia and Petaluma

Elizabeth Bush entered a photograph titled *Taos Bird – Beauty Remains* in the Art of a Community 2025 exhibit at Arts Benicia from May 31 – July 20, 2025. This photograph was one of 24 pieces of art selected from 181 in the full exhibit to be part of an Ekphrastic Poetry/Art Event on July 12.



She also responded to a juried call for art by Petaluma Art Center with the theme *My World In Blue*. Her photograph *Ol' Blue* was accepted. The exhibit runs from July 17 – August 23, 2025. This is her description of the photograph: Blue postal boxes are iconic Americana! Despite wear and tear, this Ol'Blue still continues to serve the American public.



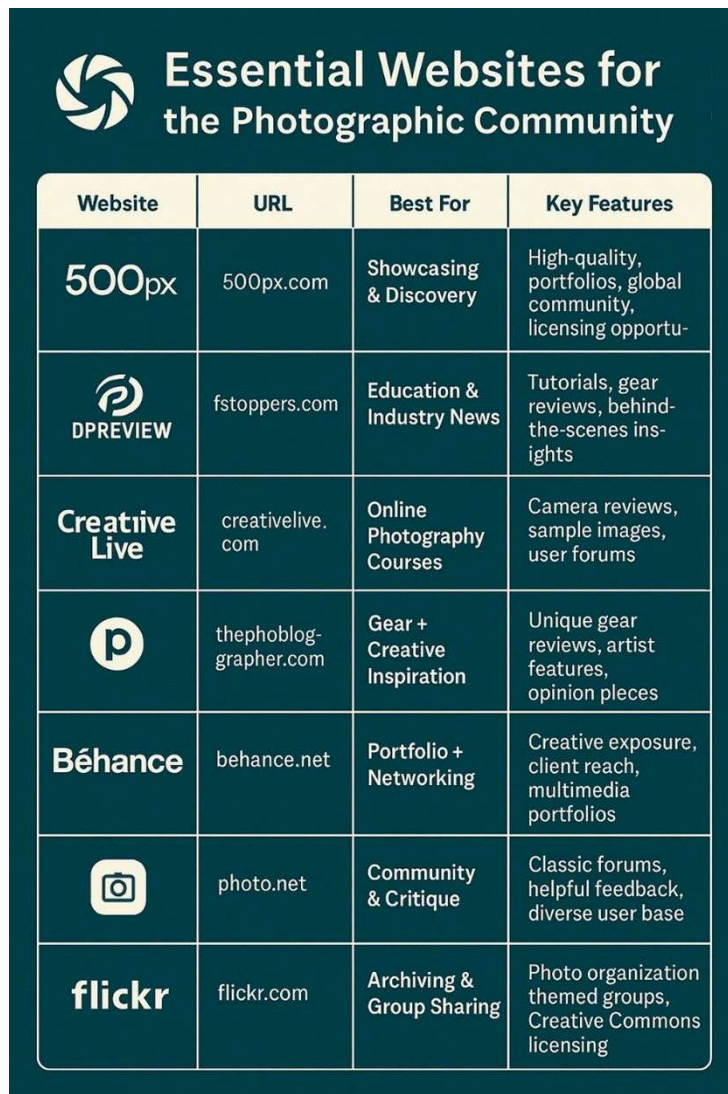
Articles




Photo websites that actually deliver ©2025 Jay Fellers

If you're anything like the rest of us in NVPS, you've probably spent countless hours clicking around the internet looking for photography tips, gear reviews, or just a little inspiration. Only you find sites filled with 60% fluffy stuff you don't need, 30% of it trying to sell you something, and extracting maybe 10% of any real value. That's why this article is all about websites that actually deliver. Whether you're new to photography or have years of shutter mileage, the online world is packed with resources but knowing where to start can save you a lot of time (and frustration).

To make things easier, I've pulled together a handy infographic that breaks down eight essential websites every photographer should know. From portfolio sites like *500px* and *Behance*, to learning hubs such as *CreativeLive* and *Fstoppers* (cool name). Each site brings

something different to the table. Some are geared toward inspiration, others are more technical, and a few like *The Phoblographer* (another awesome name) have a nice tactical balance. Think of this as your cheat sheet for exploring the best of what the web has to offer photo wise.

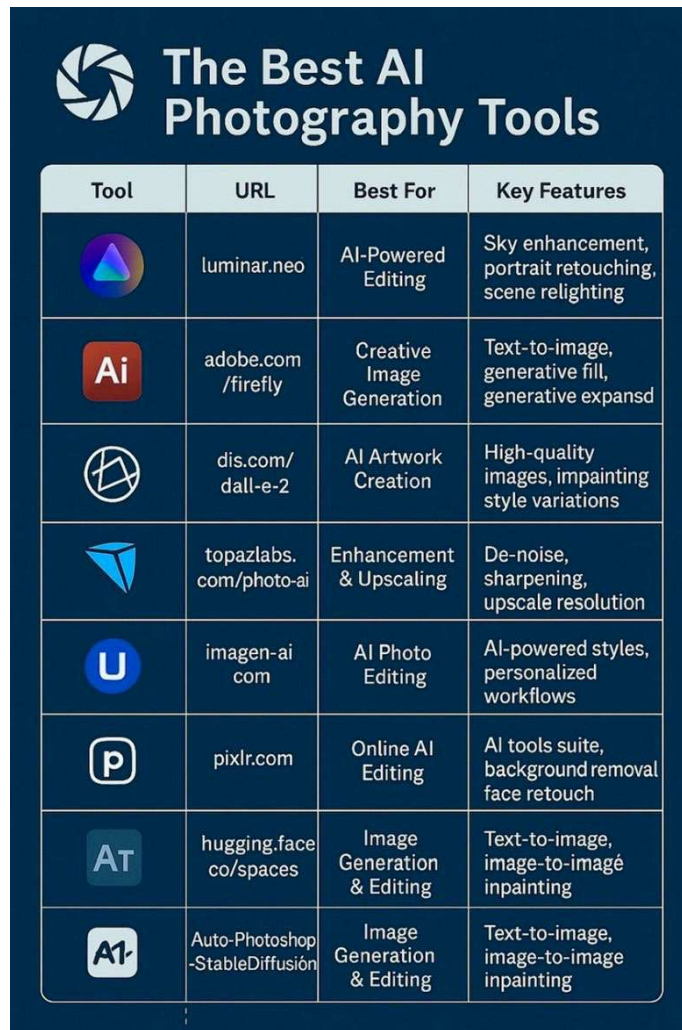


Website	URL	Best For	Key Features
500px	500px.com	Showcasing & Discovery	High-quality, portfolios, global community, licensing opportu-
 DPREVIEW	fstoppers.com	Education & Industry News	Tutorials, gear reviews, behind-the-scenes insights
Creative Live	creativelive.com	Online Photography Courses	Camera reviews, sample images, user forums
 p	thephoblographer.com	Gear + Creative Inspiration	Unique gear reviews, artist features, opinion pieces
Béhance	behance.net	Portfolio + Networking	Creative exposure, client reach, multimedia portfolios
	photo.net	Community & Critique	Classic forums, helpful feedback, diverse user base
flickr	flickr.com	Archiving & Group Sharing	Photo organization themed groups, Creative Commons licensing









One great thing about this list is that it doesn't matter where you are in your photography journey. If you're a beginner looking to sharpen your skills, you'll find tons of value in tutorial-driven sites like Fstoppers and CreativeLive. More experienced photographers might appreciate gear deep-dives on the archived *DPreview* or the supportive critiques on *Photo.net*. And let's not forget our old friend *Flickr*, which might be the internet's longest-running photo-sharing community and still a great place to organize, peek at others' efforts, or share your own work.

In addition to the Essential Websites infographic, here is a second one that highlights today's top *AI-powered* photography tools—because let's face it, artificial intelligence is quickly becoming just as essential to photographers as tripods and SD cards. These platforms offer everything from automatic sky replacement and facial retouching to full-blown image generation from text prompts. Whether you're editing portraits with *Luminar*, enhancing details with *Topaz Labs*, or

experimenting with creative compositions using tools like DALL·E or Adobe Firefly, AI is now a powerful ally in the photographer's toolkit.



The Best AI Photography Tools

Tool	URL	Best For	Key Features
	luminar.neo	AI-Powered Editing	Sky enhancement, portrait retouching, scene relighting
	adobe.com/firefly	Creative Image Generation	Text-to-image, generative fill, generative expansion
	dis.com/dall-e-2	AI Artwork Creation	High-quality images, inpainting style variations
	topazlabs.com/photo-ai	Enhancement & Upscaling	De-noise, sharpening, upscale resolution
	imagen-ai.com	AI Photo Editing	AI-powered styles, personalized workflows
	pixlr.com	Online AI Editing	AI tools suite, background removal, face retouch
	huggingface.co/spaces	Image Generation & Editing	Text-to-image, image-to-image inpainting
	Auto-Photoshop - Stable Diffusion	Image Generation & Editing	Text-to-image, image-to-image inpainting

So, next time you're stuck in a creative rut or wondering if that new lens is worth the investment, take a scroll through the infographics and check out a site or two. Who

knows? You might just discover a new favorite resource, or better yet, feel inspired to create your best photo ever!

Report from the past ©2025 Joseph T. Sinclair

These are my Florida bird shots taken over five days of sitting in a blind in the Everglades for 14 hours each day. Boooring.

But I *lie*.

I actually took these photos at the St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park just south of St. Augustine in 2003 with my trusty Sony V1 Zeiss 4X 5MP P&S camera. In fact, I shot all of these and many other photos in about an hour.



The alligator farm is kind of a dumpy site, not the kind of place one would classify as a state-

of-the-art zoo. But it has one acre of high bushes with an elevated wooden walkway going through it. And that's where the birds are in May and June. The birds are safe because of the alligators in the surrounding area under the walkway (keeps predators away). It serves as a nesting site for hundreds of birds including great egrets, wood storks, snowy egrets, roseate spoonbills, and several species of herons. There is no enclosure; it's wild.

Many of the birds have little apparent fear of humans. Some of the birds are as close as an arm's length away from the walkway. Wildlife photographers and naturalists from across the country come here to take photos. But the hour I was there, only one other photographer was present. Because I was visiting with my family, I was unable to spend much time taking photos. But were I to visit Florida again, I would definitely go out of my way to visit the birds for several hours of careful photography.

My digital photography capabilities were a little underwhelming in 2003. I would love to

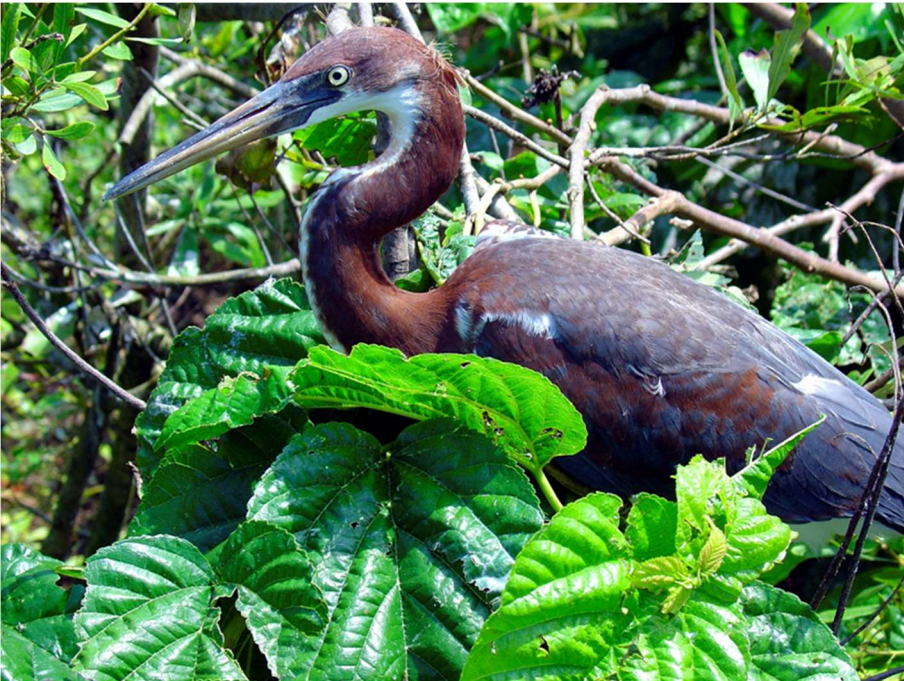
have another chance to shoot these birds, even though I'm not a wildlife photographer.

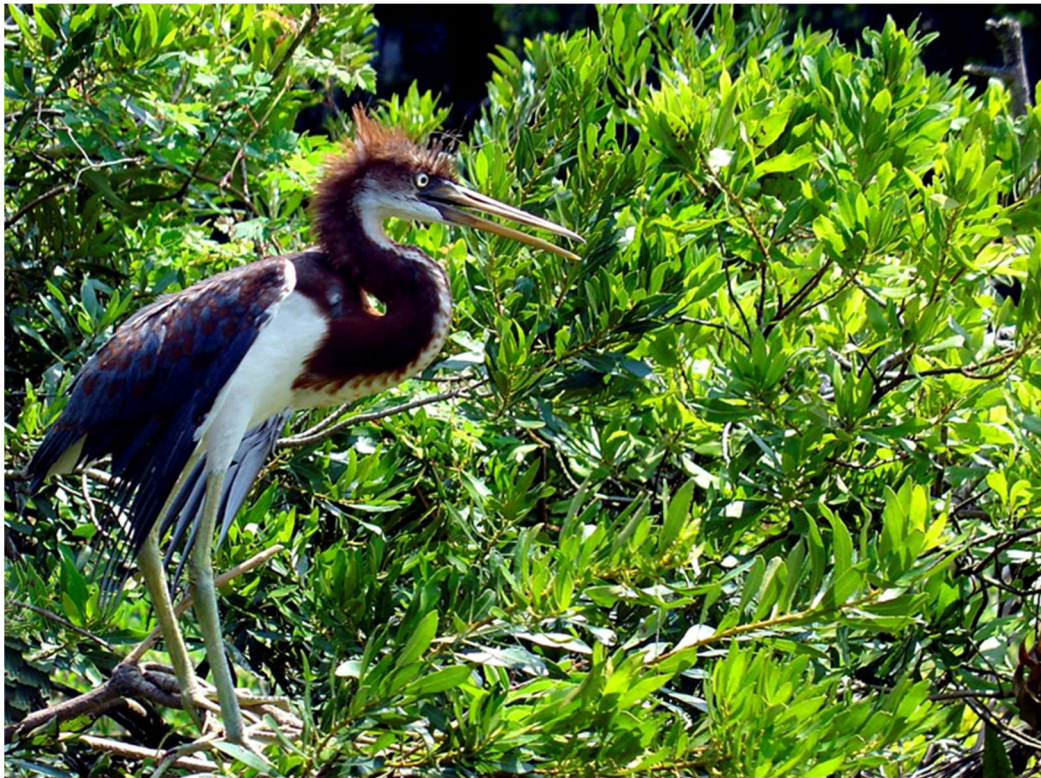
As for the alligators and crocodiles, it's tough to get photos that show them in a natural state at this place. Nonetheless, it's worth spending a little time to get some gator shots. Although the gators keep predators away from the birds, it's not wise for a bird to fly on down to thank them, as one photo below shows.













A nearby huge bonus for photographers is the 1672 Castillo de San Marcos historic fort at St. Augustine. It's a photographer's dream. But that's another story.





Think of what you can do with a day (or more) of shooting in the St. Augustine area!

And hey! For those with a taste for *le haut artificiel*, Disney World is only about 110 miles away.

Topaz

I do my usual routines in Photoshop Raw and then paste the resulting file into Topaz if I'm not satisfied with the sharpness.

Topaz has several enhancements including sharpening and noise reduction; the

enhancements in Topaz are easy to do. You can use automatic: Topaz decides what to do – what enhancements to use. Or you can choose from a list of several enhancements to customize the process; and you can adjust each enhancement should you desire to do so.

Assuming you've been careful in your postprocessing, the Topaz sharpening results are subtle but noticeable. Often the difference between average art and great art is subtleties. And Topaz provides the subtleties in one step that otherwise might take many steps to achieve in normal postprocessing.

Although Topaz sharpening does a great job of final sharpening and is worth the price just for that, it also has an enlargement capability that can be useful.

It's beyond my expertise to provide a complete evaluation of Topaz. But it's enough to say that Topaz is a valuable supplement to other postprocessing software. If you do your postprocessing in Photoshop Raw (or Lightroom), many of your photos may have

adequate sharpness. For those photos that aren't as sharp as you would like, however, Topaz may make a difference.

Alas, if a photo is out of focus, there's not much you can do to correct it with any sharpening software.

Challenge

The challenge this month is: **a farm building.**



Friederike Heidger



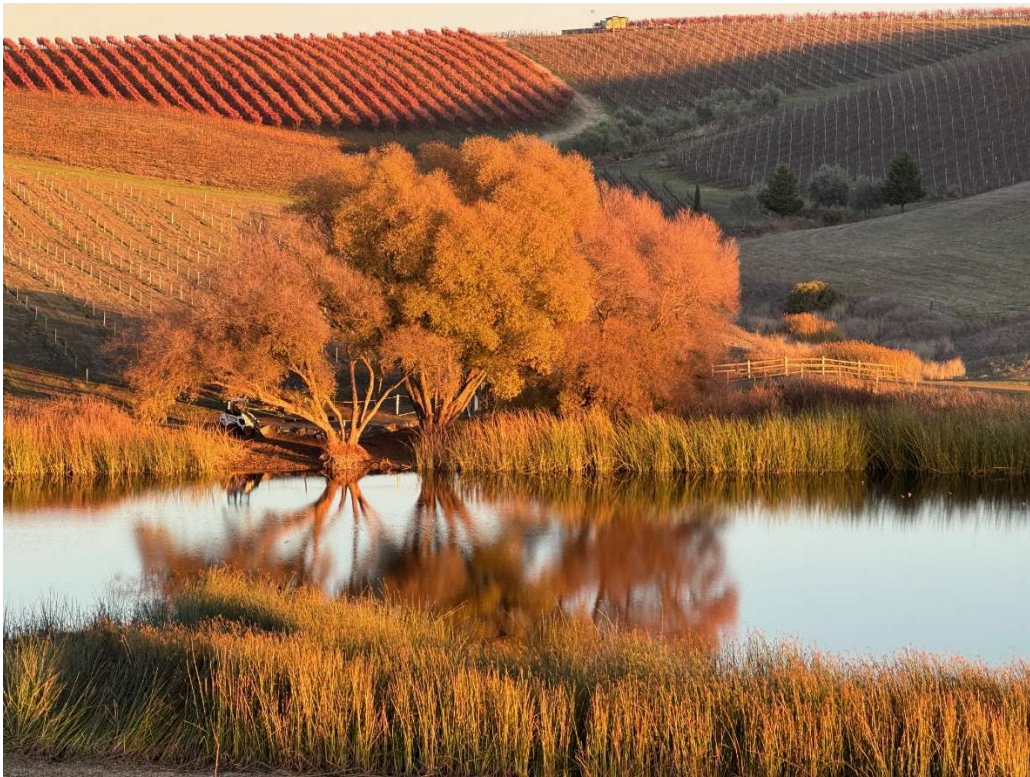
Karol Cummins



Garret Murphy



Judd Howell



Marissa Carlisle



Elizabeth Bush



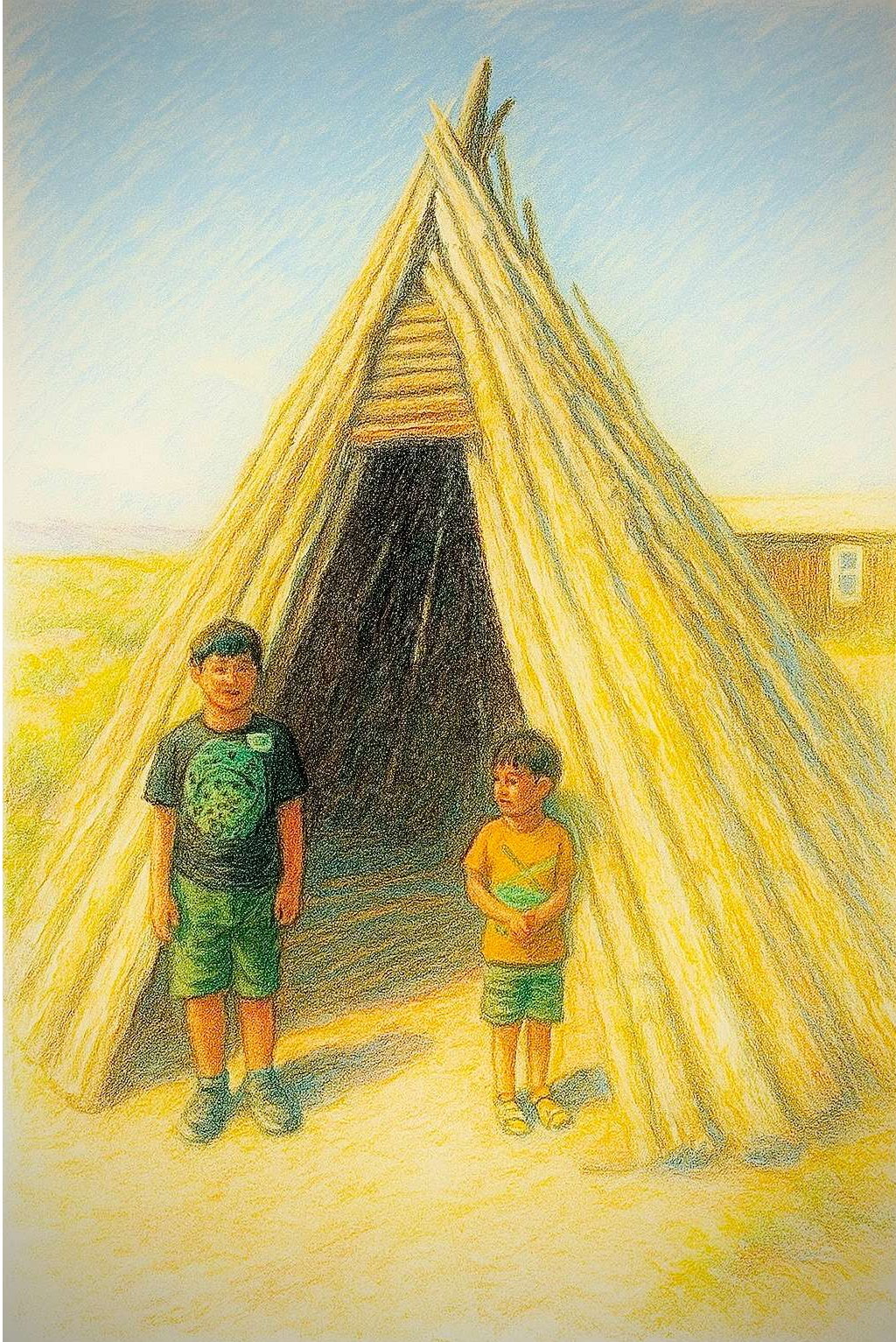
Betty Malmgren



Lindy Johnson



Nancy Hernandez



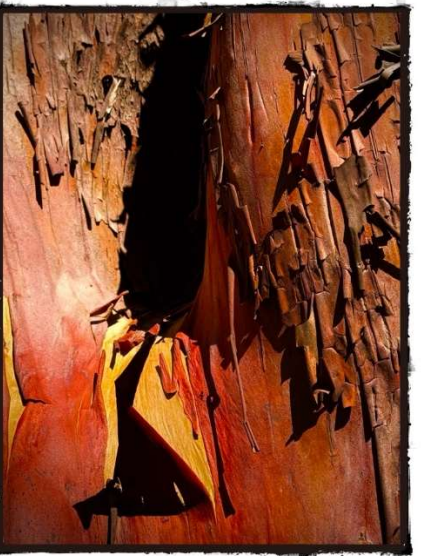
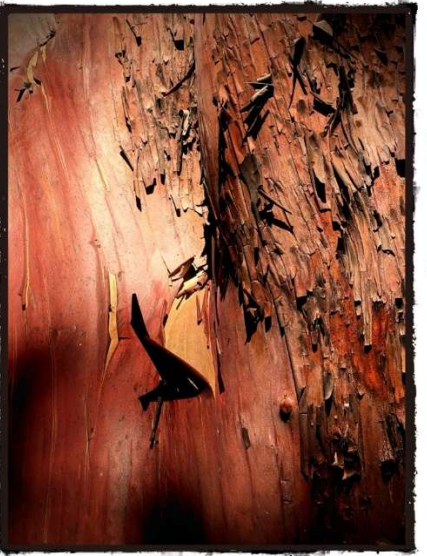
George Bartolome

Photo essay

All we have ©2025 Marissa Carlisle

The sense of awe, reverence, and wonder stand alone, as we can also stand quietly on our two feet, maybe a bit like that of a camera placed on a tripod. Spending time with what appears right before our eyes, reflection, discovery, a sigh, and a meeting with every image and moment we happen upon. It is truly all we have.





Featured photographer

Karol Cummins

These images trace a personal arc through time and medium — from film to pixels — exploring composition, light, and reinterpretation. Spanning sculptural floral studies to painterly landscapes, the work reflects an evolving aesthetic grounded in quiet observation, traditional techniques, and digital reimaginings.

**Folly in Reflection (Lilac/Green), Domaine Chantilly, France –
Digital image, Hue-tweaked, 2019/2024**

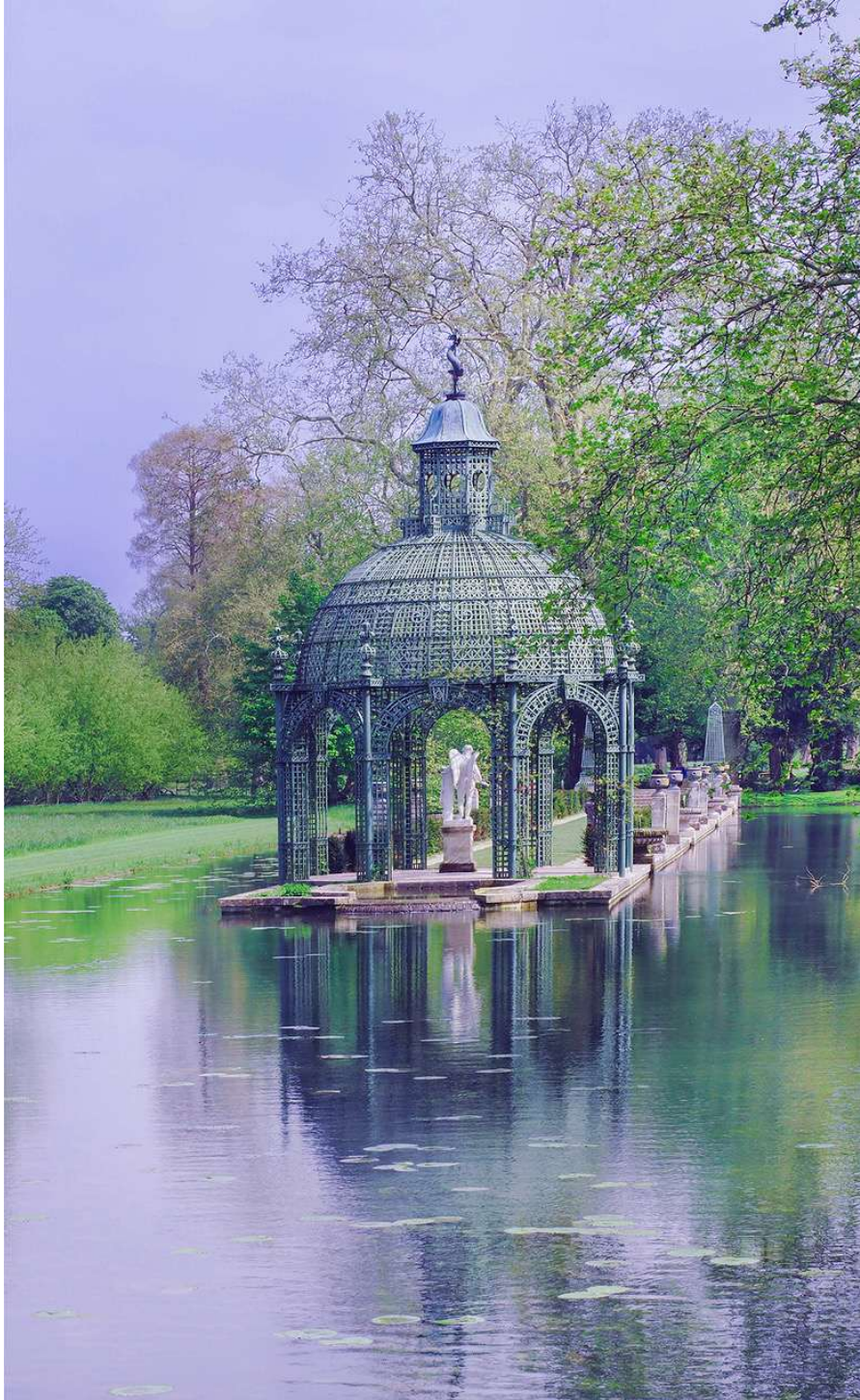
**L’Orangerie, Versailles, France – Infrared film/digital image,
1995/2025**

Père Lachaise, France – Infrared film/digital image, 1995/2023

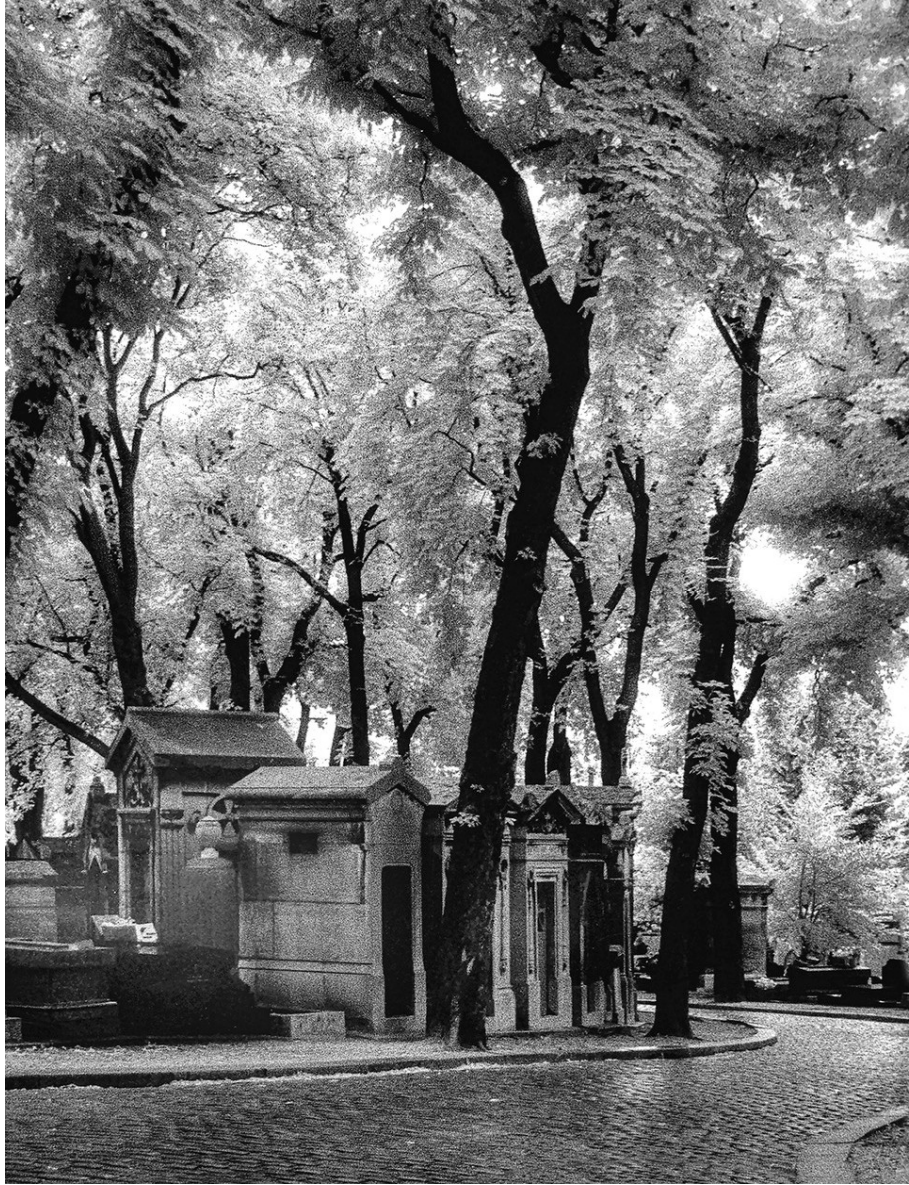
Study in White Roses, No. 1 – Digital image, 2025

Study in White Roses, No. 5 – Digital image, 2025

**Tuileries au printemps, France – Digital image, AI Fauvist oil
painting effect, 2016/2024**













Officers & staff

Elected Board members

President - Phil Venable

Vice president – Judd Howell

Secretary - George Bartolome

Membership Secretary – Nancy Hernandez

Treasurer – Kim Marhan

Appointed board members & chairs

Member at Large – Fred Goldman

Master Communicator – open

Development – Jay Fellers

Programs - Mitchell Glotzer

Website manager - Carolyn Younger

Newsletter - Joe Sinclair

Exhibits - open

Ongoing-exhibits - George Bartolome

Hospitality coordinator - open

Field trips - Irena Miles (Karen Noyes, Geoff Hansen)

Workshops - Phil Venable

Publicity - Zach Berkowitz

Zoom coordinator - Phil Venable

Digital projectionist - Peter Guenther, Phil Venable

Facebook posting - Karen Noyes

Fundraising – open



Head photo: Bruits de sabots sur les pavés ©2025 Joseph T. Sinclair. All rights reserved.

All photographs herein ©2025 by the photographer.

Newsletter ©2025 Napa Valley Photographic Society. All rights reserved.

Newsletter Submittal Guidelines

Submittal deadline

The submittal deadline for newsletter text + photos (content) is the third Monday of the month.

Members' photos for the meeting

Members may submit images for the meeting and should be prepared to make a brief verbal explanation. To submit your photos for a meeting, send your images to the regular critique site in the usual format (no more than 4000 pixels on the longest side) no later than the Saturday prior to the monthly meeting. The file name for an image should be:

members first&last name_title or theme_order
number

Examples: John Everest_Harvest Time_01 and
John Everest_After the Harvest_02

Send the files to:

NVPS.Photo.Critique@gmail.com. Only photos
taken by members accepted.

Newsletter masthead photo

If you desire to provide a head photo for one issue, submit a JPG 2000 pixels horizontal. The vertical can be between 450 and 1100 pixels. Anything outside these parameters cannot be used. The file name should be your name plus the title of your photo, the word *head*, and the date:

name_title_head_date

Send the file to jt@sinclair3.com with the subject-line: NEWSLETTER (in all caps). Only photos taken by members accepted. And photos that have been published before on the NVPS website or in the NVPS newsletter are not eligible.

This month's meeting

Follow the guide for *Articles*.

Field trips, workshops, and resources

Announcements of field trips, workshops, and resources of interest to members should include all information such as leader + contact info, date, time, meeting place, miles to

location, cost, and nature of the photography as well as a general description. Except for resources, these are *participation* events. Announcements can run in one issues *before* the event.

Events and exhibits

This is an announcement of a photo exhibit, contest, or photo op of interest to members or one that includes a member or multiple members. It can run in one issues *before* the exhibit.

This category also includes a call for member participants in future photo exhibits or contests with complete information on applying and participating.

If an event is a duplicate of full information elsewhere, it should be a brief announcement with a hyperlink to the information online elsewhere.

Member news

This is a one-time *brief* announcement of a member's *past* achievement, such as an exhibit,

a photo experience, a photo learning experience, and the like. Use a hyperlink to indicate where full information is available.

If this is the sole information on a substantial achievement, it can be written like an article with full information; but it shouldn't be a duplicate of full information published elsewhere (use a hyperlink instead).

NVPS administrative news or other news is also appropriate for this category.

Articles

Articles (e.g., magazine-like articles) written by members can be posted in the newsletter for one issue. They will be assumed to be published by permission. They must be relevant to photography, of course.

Articles published by non-members are likely to be copyrighted. See *Copyrights* for the treatment of non-member articles.

Generally, only one or two articles per issue will be published with member-written articles given preference.

For sale, give away, or wanted

Photographic equipment for sale, giveaway, or wanted can be listed here for one newsletter issue. Provide full information about item and full contact information.

Equipment

New and unique equipment of interest to members.

Features photographer

Featured Photographer is a scheduled display of your photos (no theme necessary) to acquaint NVPS members with your best photographic work. Text is optional. [4 to 8+ photos].

Photo essay

A Photo Essay is a presentation with a theme that sets the unified relevance for the photos. In other words, there must be a theme, and all photos must be relevant to the theme. The theme can be stated in a block of text,

intermittent text, or a title [2 to 20 photos].
(The newsletter has a limit of one per month)

Examples:

- Birds of winter
- Barns of the Sonoma countryside
- Who lurks along the Napa River?
- The life of the banana slug
- Winery architecture
- The beauty of North Bay reptiles

Each photo must work to create a coherent presentation.

Travelogue

This is a collection of photos about a place that helps define a place or gives the flavor of a place. Consequently, it's best if the place is limited.

Examples:

- Montmartre, Paris

- Creede, Colorado
- Mackinac Island , Michigan
- Point Reyes National Seashore
- The Embarcadero, San Francisco
- Austin, Nevada
- Hilton Head, South Carolina

Each photo must be high-quality and work to elucidate the place or the place-theme.

Text to explain the presentation is appropriate.
[10 to 20 photos]

What's the difference between a photo essay and a travelogue? A travelogue is a specialized essay about *place*, typically a place far away to which a reader will be enticed to travel. A photo essay is about anything.

Challenge

One photograph per member based on the stated Challenge theme. Published every two months.

Photos for newsletter

Photos submitted for the newsletter should be: no more than 4000 pixels on the long side, and no less than 2000 pixels, on the short side. Logos can be a smaller size. File names should be:

author_title of photo_date

Photos taken by members will be assumed to be published by permission. Photos taken by non-members are likely to be copyright protected. See *Copyrights* for the treatment of non-member photos.

Send the photo file *attached* (not *embedded*) to an email to jt@sinclair3.com with the subject-line: NEWSLETTER (in all caps). Photos must have an extension that indicates their protocol (e.g., *.jpg*); that is, Windows compatible. Due to incompatibilities between Apple and Windows, photos that don't conform may be unusable.

Photo captions

Captions are not required. But if you want captions for your photos, include them in the

photo file name and inform the newsletter editor that you desire them.

Submissions

For all information (text) submitted, use a file name that identifies the subject matter and author. Send the file to jt@sinclair3.com with the subject-line: NEWSLETTER (in all caps).

Subject-line email

Unless you use the subject-line words (NEWSLETTER) requested for text or photos, your submission might be lost in the 450 junk emails received each day.

In the email, explain your submission. Example: *This photo goes with my article on shooting wildlife.*

Copyrights

For articles and photos by non-members, NVPS must have written permission for publication. The exception is articles or photos in the public domain; for such articles or photos, the author and source of the public domain archive should be stated.

One exception to copyright protection is the use of copyrighted text or images in teaching, such as an article on photography.

One way to circumvent copyright problems is to use a hyperlink to the article or photo published elsewhere.

Typography

Use *italics* for emphasis. Use emphasis sparingly. Don't use bold or all-caps. Bold and all-caps are difficult to read. Nonetheless, all-caps are acceptable for acronyms and designations.

Calophon

Crimson Pro, a heavy-bodied typeface, is used for text in size 23 pts for easy reading on all digital devices. Franklin Gothic Medium is used for headings.

Suggestions

Suggestions for the newsletter format or otherwise should be sent to jt@sinclair3.com with the subject-line NEWSLETTER in all caps.

Your editor

Your current newsletter editor is heavily overworked, gratitude-starved, sinfully-underpaid, half-deaf, and with a short-term memory (25 seconds on a good day and getting shorter each month).



He lives in Vallejo (doesn't know Napa very well). He receives about 450 emails every day thus requiring NEWSLETTER (all caps) to be in the subject line of your emails in order to be noticed. Although the newsletter editor reserves the right to edit or reject submissions, the newsletter editor's job is to *receive* content

(information + photos) for the newsletter, not necessarily to create it. So, your *publish-ready* content according to these guidelines will be welcome.