Salon for Creative Expression
Guest Artists
2026

Carol F. Buck graduated from Lenoir-Rhyne University with a B.A. in Music Education. She went on to earn an M.S. in Arts Administration. Carol worked at Shenandoah University for ten years, handling grant writing, donor relations, and event management. She also worked for the American Cancer Society and now practices Massage Therapy, focusing on oncology patients at a private facility. She is a board member and sings with Musica Viva in Winchester, Virginia and a past member of the Shenandoah Chorale. (May 2026)

Robert D. Buck, Sr. attended community college before becoming an IBM executive, managing government software contracts in multiple regions, including the South Pacific. After retirement he pursued restoring homes, dealing antiques, creating oriental rugs, and basketmaking. He developed a special interest in replicating Shenandoah Valley cabinet maker, Johannes Spitler's early 1800s designs. His interest in handwork drives him to study structures and teach himself new techniques, fueling his creativity with patience and continual refinement. (May 2026)

Irina Flowers was born in Chelyabinsk, Russia, but spent most of her childhood in a small town in Siberia. After returning to Chelyabinsk, she studied journalism, worked as a reporter, and eventually moved to the United States. Here, she worked as a multimedia designer while writing in her spare time. She released her second novel, The System in 2026. Flowers is also a poet and translates Russian poetry. She writes under the pen name Eva Boris. (Sep. 2026)

Middle grade author, ***Riley Kilmore*** holds a BA in Theatre Performance and an MFA in Writing Popular Fiction—both from Seton Hill University. Graduating valedictorian of her police academy, she became one of the first women officers in Lancaster County, PA, where she was born and raised. Kilmore was also the first women firefighter in Lititz, PA, among the first women wildland firefighters nationally, and first woman inducted into her regional Jaycee's. (June 2026)

Anya Kirshbaum is a bi/queer poet and somatic therapist living in Seattle, Washington. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in Swamp Pink, Mississippi Review, Whale Road Review, Crannóg, Solstice Literary Magazine, and elsewhere. She was a finalist for the Orison Spiritual Literature Prize and the Patricia Dobler Poetry Award, was nominated for a 2024 Forward Prize, and was the recipient of the 2023 Banyan Poetry Prize. Her work recently appeared in Best New Poets 2025. (Apr. 2026)

Carl Korfmacher started playing bass in the praise band at his church about 15 years ago. He co-founded The Straight 8's in 2019 along with Jim Gallagher. The band played bars and festivals up until 2022 when Carl moved to Minnesota. In 2022, the band played at the Monroe, Wisconsin Cheese days for a crowd of over 1,000. Admittedly, they weren't there just to see The Straight 8s. Gene Simmons, formerly of KISS, was there to introduce a signature vodka at the local distillery. The last song ended on an extended guitar solo and Jim took it to the last note as Gene walked on stage. (Jan. 2026)

Owin Korfmacher attends Northwestern Ohio University for high performance automotive. He has many interests including gardening, cooking, weight lifting and music. In high school he played a mean bari sax and had the distinction of being the only person in his school to play football and sing in the choir. He found the bari was not that popular among his generation so took up guitar a few years ago. He loves country music but can't stand some of the new stuff that sounds like pop. His favorite artists include Luke Bryan, Cody Johnson and Hardy. (Jan. 2026)

Hiram Larew's poetry appears widely. His most recent collection, *This Much Very,* was published in 2025 (Alien Buddha). After a career guiding international food programs at the US Agency for International Development and the US Department of Agriculture, Larew founded Poetry X Hunger, connecting poets with the anti-hunger cause. (Jul.-Aug. 2026)

Bob Larson is a jazz pianist, composer, and educator. He recently retired from Shenandoah University, where he served for thirty-nine years teaching jazz piano, various jazz courses and directed ensembles. He can be heard performing on his own CD, Popular Delusions, and he performs and records throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. He is also a published author of jazz arranging and piano textbooks, and has published several articles on jazz improvisation and popular music. (Nov.-Dec. 2026)

Beverly Price Melby is a semi-retired teacher, avid reader, and long-time sewist. Family lore has it that she stole a needle from her grandmother when she was 5, and proceeded to making doll clothes. She has constructed slipcovers, boat covers, military reenactment uniforms, and of course, clothing. She also knits, crochets, and embroiders. She cannot quilt to save her life. For the foreseeable future she will be concentrating her efforts on baby clothes. (Mar. 2026)

Octavio Quintanilla is the 2025 Texas Poet Laureate and the author of the poetry collections, *If I Go Missing* (Slough Press, 2014), *The Book of Wounded Sparrows* (Texas Review Press, 2024), which was longlisted for the National Book Award, and *Las Horas Imposibles* / *The Impossible Hours*, winner of the 2024 Ambroggio Prize of the Academy of American Poets (University of Arizona Press, 2025). His Frontextos (visual poems) have been published and exhibited widely, including in the Mexican Cultural Institute in San Antonio. He is the founder and director of the literature & arts festival, VersoFrontera, publisher of Alabrava Press, and former Poet Laureate of San Antonio, TX. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of North Texas and teaches at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas. He was recently inducted into the Texas Institute of Letters. (Feb. 2026)

John R. Yost was born in Charleston, West Virginia, and has lived there most of his life. His poetry has been published in a handful of magazines and collections. In 2023 his poem "Williamson, WV" won 2nd place for short poetry in the West Virginia Writers contest. A graduate of Fairmont State College (now Fairmont University), the University of Kentucky, and Wesley Theological Seminary. John was a college librarian before serving as an ordained minister. John also leads T'ai Chi classes in Martinsburg and Shepherdstown. (Oct. 2026)