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# The Pen & Press

May - June 2007

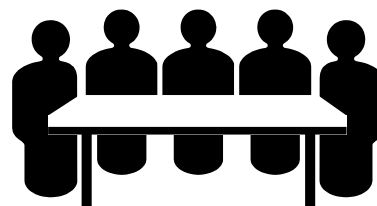
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## Whew!

Thanks to the combined efforts (read: arm-twisting) of several folks, for the first time in a while NCPA has a full board. This issue of the newsletter has a list of new and returning board members and brief statements from most, so all I will add here is that we have a very fine team for the coming year.

**Committees.** Please be receptive to requests to serve on committees. Many hands make light work, as the adage goes. NCPA nominally has several committees, but has not had actual committee *members* in practice. This year we should establish a new tradition of broader participation.



**Awards.** As anyone who attended the awards dinner or who has spent time with the entries knows, our members produce some fine books spanning a broad spectrum of design and subject matter. It is a worthwhile endeavor to share that fact more widely, as well as to encourage high professional standards among our members. "NCPA" should be a mark of quality that helps to promote members' books and that alerts readers to quality. *A word to the wise: invest in professional editing and proofreading before your book goes to press. 'Nuff said.*

**Ideas.** Please share with the board your ideas for how your organization can better serve members and inform the region. Do you have a suggestion? Let us hear it (but be ready to help make it into a reality). Is there a topic you want addressed at a meeting, through the 2008 conference, or in the newsletter?

The board is listening.

— Ken Umbach, editor

## May Meeting Speaker to be Announced

As of newsletter deadline, no speaker has been announced for the May meeting (or June meeting, for that matter).

Whether or not a specific speaker is scheduled, every meeting is well worthwhile, as members always have new projects, insights, and answers to questions asked by other members. With a new (and full!) board, and with plans under development for the coming year, there is much to discuss.

## Book Awards

Following are the results of the 2007 book awards competition, for books published in 2006. The judges exercised a good deal of discretion in categorizing entries to reflect specific merits and competitive considerations.

### BEST OVERALL

#### Best Book – Gold

William C. Teie

*Hubie and the Fire Service*

#### Best Book – Silver

Carolyn Singer

*Deer in My Garden, Volume 1*

#### Best Book – Bronze

Susan Maxwell Skinner

*Carmichael: Americana on the Move*

### BEST IN CLASS AWARDS

#### Best Children's Book

Maria Felicia Kelley

*Buz Words: Discovering Words in Pairs*

#### Best Juvenile Fiction

Michele Avanti

*GreeHee: The Journey of Five*

#### Best Business/Technical Book

Karl Palachuk

*Service Agreements for SMB Consultants*

#### Best Political Commentary

Bill Potts

*Bushopedia*

**Best First Book**  
Carolyn Singer  
*Deer in My Garden, Volume 1*

**Best Nonfiction Book**  
Mark McLaughlin  
*The Donner Party: Weathering the Storm*

## DESIGN AWARDS

**Best Interior – Text, Images, and Graphics**  
William C. Teie  
*Hubie and the Fire Service*

**Best Interior – Photos/Photo Layout**  
Susan Maxwell Skinner  
*Carmichael: Americana on the Move*

**Best Exterior – Hardcover**  
William C. Teie  
*Hubie and the Fire Service*

**Best Exterior – Soft cover  
(Two Awards)**  
Carolyn Singer  
*Deer in My Garden, Volume 1*

Susan Maxell Skinner  
*Carmichael: Americana on the Move*

## HONORABLE MENTIONS

**Honorable Mention – Essays**  
Moj Dehghan  
*Chatter to Flatter Your Platter*

**Honorable Mention – Humorous Essays**  
Tim Herrera  
*Dad, You Are NOT Going Out Wearing That!*

**Honorable Mention – General Fiction**  
Lew Osteen  
*Beloved Vagabond*

## MEDIA PACKAGE

### Best Media Package

Jennifer Martin

*The Huna Warrior: The Magic Begins*

## SPECIAL AWARD

### Special Innovation Award

Hector R. Barrera

*The High Rider y Otros Cuentos*

The awards were announced, and plaques presented, at the awards dinner at Coco's Restaurant and Bakery, Citrus Heights, Friday, April 27. The occasion was festive, even if a bit hectic, and an excellent time was had by all in attendance (38 members and guests).

Clearly, judging was not a simple task, as every entry had merit, and several were truly extraordinary. At the same time, some entries had, shall we say, issues (read: lapses in editing and proofing), that affected final decisions.

Some distinctions call for explanation. Tim Herrera's *Dad, You Are NOT Going Out Wearing That!* received honorable mention for "humorous essays," in view of the nature and purpose of the book: a humorous take on fatherhood. In slight contrast, Moj Dehghan's *Chatter to Flatter Your Platter* received honorable mention for "essays" in the light of the somewhat more serious underlying tone of some of Moj's essays in that anthology. Needless to emphasize, Moj also demonstrates much humor, so the distinction was finely drawn.

Hector Barrera's unique entry *The High Rider y Otros Cuentos* received a special innovation award in the light of the book's distinctive and innovative combination of fiction and crafts. Dr. Barrera's craftsmanship extends to his writing as well as to the projects described in his book and indeed the manufacture of the book itself.

Bill Potts's *Bushopedia* called for recognition for its primary purpose, political commentary, a more suitable classification than the default categories in the contest announcement. Likewise, Karl Palachuk's *Service Agreements for SMB Consultants* was recognized in a fitting category, business/technical book.

The other entries are more self-explanatory. Clearly, the gold, silver, and bronze "best book" award winners exemplify the value of independent publishing in our region.

Congratulations to the authors!



## NCPA Election Fills All Positions

For the first time in a few years, NCPA has a full slate of board members. One board member, Ken Umbach, is handling two tasks, newsletter and membership. One position, conference chair, is divided between co-chairs Karl Palachuk and Yolanda Cuesta. Past president Sandra Williams is also assuming website manager duties (resuming a role she has held previously). Here is the complete list (executive committee in **bold**):

**President: Barry Schoenborn**

**Vice President: Bill Potts**

**Secretary: Michele Avanti**

**Treasurer: Carol Ryan**

**Past President: Sandra Williams**

Public Relations: Marlys Norris

Newsletter: Ken Umbach

Speakers Bureau: Stephanie Chandler

Membership: Ken Umbach

Web Manager: Sandra Williams

Awards: Jennifer Martin

Conference co-chair: Yolanda Cuesta

Conference co-chair: Karl Palachuk

Most board members provided brief post-election statements for the newsletter. In alphabetical order:

**Michele Avanti.** I am honored to be secretary for NCPA. I will do my best to keep concise notes of each meeting, so that everyone may stay informed of the board's activities. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve a community of publishers and authors who unknowingly have been a support system for me living three hundred miles away. Thank you!

**Stephanie Chandler.** My goal is to generate more speaking engagements for all of us this year. Since our phones aren't exactly ringing off the hook with requests, I will proactively notify local organizations and let them know that we have a talented group of speakers available. You can help by sending me any direct contact information or leads for area organizations that could benefit from talks by members of NCPA. I look forward to serving another year on the NCPA board and hope to see more participation from all members in the upcoming year!

**Jennifer Martin.** I'm looking forward to working on the board and welcome any suggestions for next year's awards program. I thought this year's event was fun and spirited—a great get-together with some very talented people. With everyone's input, next year's will be even better.

**Marlys Norris.** What a pleasure it has been to meet several of our NCPA members since I joined in 2002. The past year getting to know Pres. Barry and Ken has been very encouraging. I consider it an honor to be working with them and the new board for the coming year. My goal is to write publicity to acquaint the public with the work NCPA does to help authors and publishers, and to invite the public to attend one of our meetings and hopefully join our membership.

**Karl Palachuk and Yolanda Cuesta** (co-chairs). We know we haven't had a conference for a couple of years. We plan to work together to put together something for Spring 2008 that will be both enjoyable and educational. But two people can't pull off a successful conference, so decide how you wish to contribute your time and talents, and contact us at [karlp@greatlittlebook.com](mailto:karlp@greatlittlebook.com) (Karl) or [yjcuesta@mindspring.com](mailto:yjcuesta@mindspring.com) (Yolanda).

**Carol Ryan.** As incoming treasurer, I hope to provide the members with clear, accurate, and timely information about the finances of the organization. I will be working with Barbara DesChamps, our current treasurer, to get up to speed as soon as possible.

**Barry Schoenborn.** Thanks very much for giving me the chance to serve as President for one more year! NCPA is on a solid footing and we have great new crew of officers and board members. In the upcoming administrative year (May 1 to April 30) you'll see more and better services for members, great programs, another fine book competition, and the return of our annual conference. First and foremost, however, you have my commitment to listen to you attentively so I can help take our organization in the direction *you* want it go.

**Ken Umbach.** As newsletter editor, I look forward to another year of informing members and others of the activities and accomplishments of people in NCPA. I expect to continue the bimonthly schedule for the newsletter, and invite articles and announcements from members. As membership chair, I plan to keep the records current, encourage timely renewals, and invite new members to join our ranks. This will be my last year in either position, so I invite potential candidates for the 2008 NCPA election to ask what the positions involve and explore the opportunities to serve the organization.

**Sandra K. Williams.** After a two-year break, I'm refreshed and ready to work again on the NCPA Web site. I have several ideas for improvements, and they'll be implemented as I find time between other projects. Probably the first change will be creating the Self-Publishing Wiki. The name wiki comes from the Hawaiian word for "quick," which is exactly the purpose of a wiki: a fast and easy means of creating and updating a Web page. Wikis provide a way for community members to share information: just click the "edit" button and start typing. If you have suggestions regarding the NCPA site, send them to me at [skw@williamswriting.com](mailto:skw@williamswriting.com).

## **From the President In the Middle of the Internet Age**

*By Barry Schoenborn, President*

Not very long ago, tools like e-mail and the Internet were novelties. Then they became “nice to have” conveniences. Now, they are the inescapable essentials of our work. It’s obvious that even before these online tools came along, the PC had evolved into an outstanding tool for writing, drawing, and page layout.

Now (and irretrievably), success for publishers and authors is linked to their mastery of all things electronic. Yes, you can still try to “do it the old way” (with a yellow pad, an electric typewriter, and conventional mail), but it is hard to be competitive using the old methods.

As independents, we have to be able to do many things and do them fast. True, many services can be hired out, but really, how much money can we afford to spend on things we can do ourselves?

That’s why over the upcoming year, you will see NCPA doing all it can to make your full immersion in “modern day” publishing as productive and pain-free as possible. My hope is that we’ll have new and better ways to communicate (for example, please see Sandra Williams’ statement in this newsletter). We’ll bring to you new awareness of tools that will make publishing faster and easier.

We’ll also use the computer better for NCPA matters—that is, it will be easier and faster for you to see NCPA information. Look for improvements in e-mail, forums, access to minutes, access to financials, access to resources, selling opportunities, etc.

All this is made possible courtesy of the machine we love to hate, our personal computer.

Stay tuned. I think we’ll have an excellent year.

## **Feature Article Online Marketing for Authors**

*By Stephanie Chandler*

Authors have a tremendous opportunity for to reach millions of potential readers by marketing books online. Even better, you don’t have to be a technology guru or spend a lot of money to launch your online marketing campaign.

First and foremost, every author should have a website. You can use your website to not only market to readers, but to communicate with editors, agents and publishers. Your website is essentially an online brochure that can include as much or as little information as you’re willing to share.

Website hosting is also surprisingly affordable, with rates ranging from \$5.00 to \$20.00 per month depending on the provider you choose and the services you need. Some providers to consider are Yahoo (<http://smallbusiness.yahoo.com>), Network Solutions ([www.networksolutions.com](http://www.networksolutions.com)) or Go Daddy ([www.godaddy.com](http://www.godaddy.com)).

Once your website is up and running, there is plenty you can do to get the word out. Following are strategies you can use to market your books around the globe with your own online marketing campaign.

### **Host a Newsletter**

Sending an electronic newsletter, also known as an ezine, is one of the most effective and affordable marketing tools available. This is your opportunity to communicate with your readers, announce events, tell them about new books and products and build loyalty.

Make sure to send your newsletter on or around the same time each month or week. Ideally it should be loaded with interesting information so that your subscribers are eager to read each edition. Check out [www.constantcontact.com](http://www.constantcontact.com) for email management solutions.

### **Form Strategic Alliances**

Contact authors and business owners in your field and inquire about partnership opportunities. You can swap links to each other's websites, promote each other in your ezines, refer each other to media opportunities and speaking engagements, and find other mutually beneficial partnership opportunities.

### **Maximize Exposure on Amazon**

Amazon has a variety of programs that can boost an author's book sales. Check out Amazon Connect, where you can post messages to readers and on your book's main page. You can also create Listmania lists, post reviews for other people's books, and submit search terms relevant to your book. Also, make sure your book's description on Amazon is accurate. If not, contact Amazon and request appropriate changes.

### **Participate in Forums and Message Boards**

Online forums are a place where visitors can exchange information. Whenever you post a message, you can include a brief signature line with details about your book and your website address. Locate forums related to your book's topic and become a regular visitor. You might be surprised by how many new readers you will find here. One great resource is Yahoo! Groups: <http://groups.yahoo.com>. Also search the Internet for industry-appropriate forums. If you're really ambitious, you might consider hosting your own forum.

### **Host a Blog**

A blog, also known as a web log, is essentially an online diary where you can post brief bits of information for your readers. Most bloggers post messages two or three times per

week. Well-read blogs provide information on controversial topics or offer how-to advice and useful statistics. You can start a free blog by visiting [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com). Make sure you promote your blog everywhere by including a link from your website in your email signature and mentioning it in your author bio. You might also want to read some existing blogs to get some ideas on how to format yours.

## **Publish Articles**

Many of the millions of websites on the Internet are in need of quality content and articles. You can write articles related to the topic of your book and submit them for consideration to industry-related websites. Make sure to include an author bio with a link to your website.

You can also post articles to content sites such as [www.ezinearticles.com](http://www.ezinearticles.com) and [www.ideamarketers.com](http://www.ideamarketers.com). Visitors to these sites look for articles to publish on their websites and in their ezines. When your article is selected for publication, the publisher must include your author bio. This is one of my favorite book marketing strategies. Even if you publish just one article per month, over time you should see your website traffic grow dramatically. Don't forget to run an Internet search periodically on your article's title so you can see where it is featured.

The more time you spend online looking for opportunities to market your book, the more chances you will find to increase sales. Commit to spending an hour every day to marketing online and you will surely see your sales improve.

***About the Author:** Stephanie Chandler is the author of several business books and the founder of [www.BusinessInfoGuide.com](http://www.BusinessInfoGuide.com), a directory of resources for entrepreneurs. She also recently released a workbook and eBook called "Online Marketing for Authors." For details visit <http://businessinfoguide.com/products.htm>.*

## **Coming Attractions**

By Pat Canterbury

The Third Annual **CSUS Summer Writers' Conference** will be held on Friday, August 10 through Sunday, August 12, 2007, at Napa and Modoc Halls on the CSUS campus. Keynote speakers: Raymond Obstfeld on Friday and Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston on Sunday. "Save the Date" postcards will be arriving soon.

The Sixth Annual **Authors on the Move** fundraiser for the Sacramento Library Foundation will be held on Saturday, March 1, 2008, at the Hyatt Hotel. Those with novels published in 2006 or 2007 please contact Pat Canterbury at [patmyst@aol.com](mailto:patmyst@aol.com), as she is a member of the larger Authors' Committee. Many NCPA members have already been featured during the past five years.

For fans of the mystery genre (authors and readers) members of the Sacramento mystery community have submitted Sacramento's name to *host* the 2010 or 2012 **Left Coast Crime** Convention. More information coming soon.

## Other News, Announcements, and Comments

Your editor invites submissions for this section of *The Pen & Press*. Short items about NCPA members or otherwise of interest to writers, editors, and publishers (and allied folks) are welcome here.

✓ From **Ben Gay III**: “Thanks to displaying our books/CDs, etc. in the PMA booth at the Frankfurt Book Show, we sold the worldwide rights to ‘*The Closers*’ series in the Korean language and the same rights in India (‘in all languages named in the Indian Constitution’), and several surrounding countries (Singapore, etc., etc., etc.)” —Ben Gay III, *The Closers*, 800-248-3555, Bfg3@directcon.net, www.bfg3.com.

✓ From **Alton Pryor**: “I have just made arrangements with the ‘recovering’ *Sacramento Union*, which will publish weekly beginning April 6, 2007, to run a series of historical columns on California and the west. They will run a different story each week. I have just transmitted the first eight, but have probably another year-and-a-half worth in the can.” —Alton Pryor, www.stagecoachpublishing.com.

✓ **Ken Umbach** will be speaking on the topic of Internet research for business people, at the May 8 luncheon meeting of the Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce. Ken's latest column for *Knowledge Quest*, the journal of the American Association of School Librarians, is scheduled for the Web edition of the May-June issue.

✓ From **Chuck Giarratana**: “Greetings all. Time to brag a tiny bit. My poem, ‘East Gallatin River’, won second place in the poetry division of the recent Stockton Arts Commission writing contest. It will be published in a locally produced chap book and read at a reception on April 7 in Stockton. And for frosting on the cake, they're paying me \$50.00. Yahoo!”

✓ **Moj Dehghan**'s book signing event for his book *Chatter to Flatter Your Platter* took place on Monday, March 12, at 7:00 pm at Fair Oaks Library. More than a dozen people showed up and enjoyed Moj's humorous talk. Four people from the audience bought a copy. Moj told the audience about his background and about the horrific accident in which he was seriously injured many years ago. Writing, a supportive family, and a fine sense of humor helped him to recover. The presentation was much appreciated by the audience. Among the attendees were your NCPA newsletter editor Ken Umbach and his wife, Rosa Umbach.

## A Note from the Editor

Send your articles and announcements to [ken@umbachconsulting.com](mailto:ken@umbachconsulting.com).

Use **NCPA NEWSLETTER** as the email subject heading. That helps me to find newsletter submissions in the avalanche of incoming email.

Please provide submissions in Microsoft Word (or compatible) format, or in plain text. If you would like to discuss an article idea or have any other questions or comments about the newsletter, feel free to email or phone.

What fits best into *The Pen & Press* is news of members' books, activities, marketing, speaking engagements, and accomplishments. Also of value: members' insights into the challenges and opportunities of writing publishing and information on regional resources for authors and publishers. Cover illustrations and other photos are welcome in jpeg or other standard format. Please keep file sizes reasonable for receipt on a dialup account. When in doubt, call or email me in advance.

The deadline for submissions for the next issue (July-August 2007) is June 15<sup>th</sup>.

— Ken Umbach, editor



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