
The Pen & Press

July – August 2011

Northern California
publishers & authors

Greetings! This is my first time as editor of *The Pen & Press*. Ken Umbach handed things over in impeccable order. I hope I can learn to at least partially fill his shoes over the next few issues.

My first experiences as a publisher involved Twitter and YouTube, so I tend to write in short segments. At first I was going to apologize for the inevitable brevity of this opening, but then decided it might be fun to introduce the major articles in this issue as they'd be promoted on Twitter—in 140 characters or less. Each.

- New NCPA President, Barry Schoenborn focuses on the positive aspects of independent publishing during unstable times.
- NCPA Book Awards 2011: Did Margie Yee Webb catch you there with her camera?
- Can you do for yourself and do for NCPA at the same time? Carol Ryan shares some online ways to multitask.
- Stephanie Chandler gets daily alerts from Google. Do you? Should you? Don't miss this how-to.
- Boo! It's Ken's Corner—with cats:-) Need I say more?
- Naida West and Alton Pryor made it into the shade at the State Fair. How'd they do it?

In addition to the regular announcements from our members and the California Writers Club, I've also experimented with a new feature called ONE/DOZEN. This idea was inspired by several online literary journals that I read. Essentially you may submit a one-line excerpt from your book or twelve words about your book. A few brave souls have tried it out already and their efforts have been included after the regular announcements. Why would you want to try such a thing? To capitalize on a situation like the one below (written in 138 characters including spaces):

- You're in an elevator, but are only going up one floor. The person next to you asks, "What's your book about?" Can you share in 12 words?



Thanks for this opportunity to serve NCPA.

— Jessi Graustein, editor

Exciting Times for Publishing and NCPA

By Barry Schoenborn

It's a great time to be in publishing and a great time to be an NCPA member! Our wet, cold spring has ended. Though it was written in a different context, the old song lyric applies: "The sky is sunny; Old Man Depression, you are through."

What we have in NCPA is a professional association and support group. We're open to both publishers and authors, and they can be at any stage of development. What binds us, I think, is a sincere desire to see our work in print. And that desire keeps long-time members coming and has encouraged a steady stream of new members.

As an NCPA member, you can be assured of both "professional" and "emotional" support.

Professional support means that our programs, online files, and information exchanges can help you solve your practical problems (most often about authoring, editing/design, manufacturing, or marketing). I've been helped numerous times through one-on-one talks with successful members.

Our emotional support includes encouragement (during struggles), commiseration (when things go wrong), and applause (when you finally succeed). On top of that, NCPA members come to book launches and actually buy books! That may not amount to giant sales figures, but every copy sold is a help.

So why is it a great time to be in publishing? Not because the industry is stable. The *stable* form of traditional publishing presented barriers to authors and publishers. Publishing is exciting now because everything is so *unstable*. The previously-notorious ebook has moved into the spotlight. Big name authors are self-publishing, often in eformats. Bloggers, for better or worse, provide the content for future books one post at a time; the New York Times called these bloggers "self-publishers." And we have books with new levels of interactivity (for example, links to videos on a website).

Delivery methods are always evolving. The big box bookstore has declined, while Amazon has grown. You can find best sellers at Target, and there are many online sources for e-books. Oh, and don't ignore micro-niche markets. There's money there.

These are exciting times, and that can be scary. That's all the more reason to be a member of NCPA right now, where we can panic (for a few seconds) and innovate together.

Barry Schoenborn, President
www.willowvalleypress.com

Future Meetings

Planning of meeting speakers and topics is a work in progress, subject to change. But as of deadline for this issue of *The Pen & Press*, here is a look ahead for the rest of 2011.

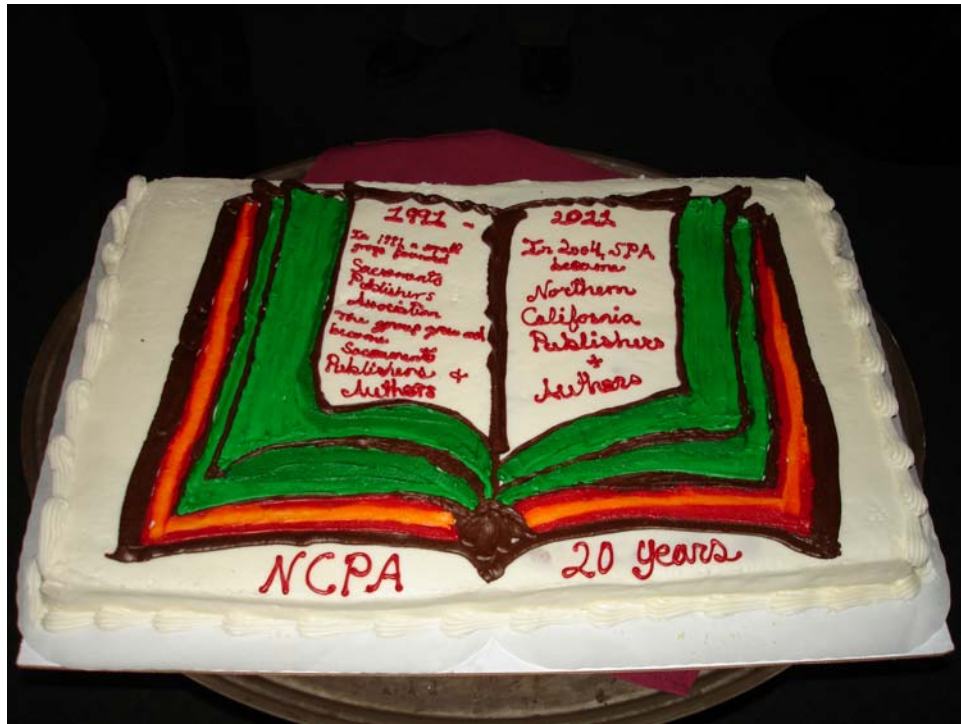
- July 9, Jeannie Ruesch (WillDesignForChocolate.com) will build on her well-received January 2011 presentation about marketing (remember the “little black dress”).
- Aug 13, topic is expected to be a presentation on the findings and recommendations of NCPA’s ad hoc committee/working group on e-book awards.
- September 10, Naida West, presenting her journey as a self-published novelist.
- October 8, Frances Kakugawa.
- November, to be announced.
- December 10, no speaker. The meeting will mark the return, after a one-year hiatus, of the popular “Book Display Meeting.” Members are invited to bring and display copies of their published books, and quietly to sell copies to other members. (Cannot sell to/solicit residents.) Remember that NCPA strongly encourages members to donate a copy of each of their published books to Merrill Gardens for use in the library it maintains for residents.

NCPA Book Awards 2011, for Books Published in 2010

Margie Yee Webb, along with a few accomplices, took photographs at the awards dinner. A few of them are posted below. If you would like to see more, an Awards Photo Supplement PDF will be added to the files section of the Yahoo group in September.



Frances Kakugawa holding her award, with Keynote Speaker Brenda Novak



The NCPA 20th Anniversary cake. Mmmmm.



All smiles at the head table☺

NCPA: What have I done for you lately?

By Carol Ryan

I know when you've recently published your first book, it's hard not to seem self-absorbed and narcissistic with all the marketing activities that are required. If that book, *Right Now Is Perfect* for example, is a memoir, it's almost impossible. In light of all the things I've learned from my association with NCPA over the years, here are some tips I can pass along that I learned since my book launched last November.

Even though you must identify who your audience is from the beginning of your writing project, don't be surprised if your book's fans turn out to be somewhat different than expected. I'm attempting to market my book primarily online and it is taking a while to find where my online audience might be, especially the book buying ones!

For a new and unknown author such as myself, finding where voracious readers look for books is important. I see my main retail outlet as Amazon.com so it is important for me to get reviews and build a presence there. I've reviewed several books by NCPA members and I've also included some of my favorite NCPA books (alongside best sellers) in Listmania lists I've created.

I've started doing reviews on Shelfari.com and Goodreads.com as well. Goodreads.com is currently my favorite site for connecting with other readers—both to discuss books and to get exposure for my book. In June, Goodreads.com conducted a contest to give away five copies of my book and 670 people entered. <http://www.goodreads.com/giveaway/show/11310-right-now-is-perfect>

I think as a result, more than 50 people have put my book on their 'to read' list—always a hopeful thing.

Finally, I have entered the Global E-Book Award contest (sponsored by Dan Poynter), in large part just to see what that e-book competition is all about—I'm volunteering on the NCPA committee considering if we should add e-books to our annual award event.



<http://awardsforebooks.com/book-writing-contest/non-fiction-autobiography-memoirs/right-now-is-perfect-a-romance-an-adventure-the-unexpected-thereafter/>.

A big benefit to entering this competition is the marketing potential. On the page about my book I included the 'NCPA Book Award 2011' label to astound the judges and publicize NCPA.

So, even if my activities are self serving, I am also working to publicize NCPA and possibly your book! See for yourself <http://rightnowisperfect.com/the-book/>



8 Ways Authors Can Use Google Alerts

By Stephanie Chandler

One of my favorite free services is Google Alerts, an internet monitoring service that sends e-mail notification when keywords or phrases you identify appear online. This service is a goldmine for authors because it allows you to track mentions of your work, mentions of your competitors, and more. Here are some Google Alerts you should create:

1. **Author Name** – Track your name so you see when it’s mentioned online.
2. **Website URLs** – Create alerts for your website(s) and/or blog(s). Note that you can leave off “www” or “http” and simply create the alert for “mywebsite.com.”
3. **Book Titles** – Whether you have one book or twenty, track mentions of your book online with an alert. This gives you the opportunity to thank reviewers and others who mention your book. You may also want to write a blog post for your own blog and link back to any major media mentions.
4. **Industry Statistics** – Depending on the subject matter of your book, create alerts to track what’s happening in the industry. For example, if your book is about small business financing, you might have alerts for “business loans statistics,” “angel investing,” etc. When you’re alerted to new statistics, you can use them to write a relevant blog post, share on social media, or as fodder to create a new PR campaign. Sharing statistics and then providing supporting data or tips can be a great way to capture media attention.
5. **Competing Titles/Authors** – If you’re serious about book promotion, it never hurts to keep an eye on the competition. If a competing author lands an interview with a major media outlet, see if you can follow up on that with a slightly different perspective.
6. **Article Titles** – If you distribute articles to sites like ezinearticles.com, ideamarketers.com, or any other content distribution service, create an alert for the title of each article to find out where it appears online.
7. **Speaking Opportunities** – If you speak on the topic of healthy living, create an alert for “call for speakers health” or “health conference” or “healthy living event.” Use Google Alerts to uncover new opportunities for speaking, contributing articles, etc. This takes some creative testing, but can bring you some fantastic opportunities.
8. **Blogs and News** – Staying on top of news for your industry is a great way to learn and get engaged with your target audience. Create alerts that lead you to news stories, whether from major media sites or blogs. Then, take time to comment on related stories. And don’t just say, “Nice article!” Instead, demonstrate your expertise and contribute to the conversation. Add a missing tip that the writer didn’t include. Make it interesting and valuable and readers will notice.

Stephanie Chandler is the author of several writing and business related books. She is also founder and CEO of <http://AuthorityPublishing.com>.

Ken Umbach Shares Life in “Ken’s Corner”

A Special to *The Pen & Press*

Whether the subject is the high jinks of local squirrels, worries about “bad banks,” zombies, or endless road construction, or ruminations on music, hot peppers, or the odd doings reported in century-old newspapers, Ken Umbach has a few words to say.

Ken, NCPA’s former newsletter editor and membership chair, as well as current communications director, has written about life in “Ken’s Corner” in a column of that name in the Sacramento-area weekly paper *Senior Spectrum* since November 2008. He has compiled two and a half years of his weekly columns, plus a few other pieces, into a 400-plus page anthology titled *The Big Book of Ken’s Corner With a Cat Named Boo*, scheduled for publication on August 15, 2011.

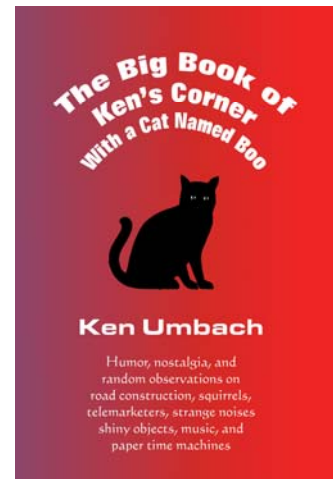
What is “Ken’s Corner” about? Ken replies that it is “about a thousand words . . . that’s pretty much all I can nail it down to.” Each installment collected in *The Big Book of Ken’s Corner* stands alone, but a few themes run through the compilation. Among them are the often curious events reported in newspapers of today and yesterday, memories stirred by those stories, and the role of family in daily life. For Ken, family includes his wife Rosa Umbach, an assortment of grandchildren, and his black cat, Boo.

The new book expands on and replaces two earlier anthologies, which are going out of print with the publication of *The Big Book*. Ken offers the new book as light entertainment for casual readers, especially of older generations, and as a source of inspiration for writers who might want to turn their efforts toward “slice of life” essays.

“As a policy analyst – basically a technical writer and researcher for the California Legislature and Governor’s Office – and as a former nuts-and-bolts bureaucrat, this kind of writing did not come naturally to me,” Umbach stated in announcing the new book. “But life happens to everyone, and a look around the house or the neighborhood or a local mall gives constant inspiration. A writer just needs to pick up what is out there and run with it.

Among the highlights of this collection is what Ken calls “the most famous piece I ever wrote,” his notorious satire on the hard times in California’s (mythical) “Velcro fields.” “That piece,” he reported, “has been reproduced in college textbooks and a Canadian provincial guide for teachers, and is recommended by thousands of teachers and school librarians in the U.S. and abroad.” Also included is the “story behind the story” of that famous satire.

Ken has published the book under his own imprint, Umbach Consulting & Publishing, with distribution through Ingram and printing by Lightning Source. (“The author published this book. Deal with it,” he said.)



The Big Book of Ken's Corner, ISBN 978-1-937123-0-00, is list-priced at \$15.99, but already available for preorder at a discount through BarnesAndNoble.com. Although the book is "print on demand," Umbach Consulting & Publishing will have copies available for local sale. Ken anticipates introducing the book slightly ahead of the formal publication date, at the August 5, 2011, meeting of the CWC-Sacramento Branch's "Writers' Network," at IHOP in Rancho Cordova (9 – 11 a.m.) and at the August 13, 2011 meeting of NCPA at Merrill Gardens in Citrus Heights (10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.). E-book versions (starting with Kindle) are planned, but not yet scheduled.

Authors Booth at State Fair Has Loyal Following, But is Not an NCPA Event

By Naida West

In 1998, Naida West and Alton Pryor wanted to sell their books at the State Fair, but hoped to avoid high advance payments (\$3-5000), hot outdoor locations, and locations jammed with products being hawked by aggressive salespeople. Naida drafted a contract, and she and Alton met top State Fair officials. The two authors succeeded in negotiating that contract with few changes. Since then, the contract has been renewed every year. The first section states the mission of the booth:

"To visit with and educate fairgoers about writing and publishing, and, if visitors show an interest, sign and sell books."

Because of this educational role, the booth is located on the ground floor of Building A/B, which is frequently called the Counties Building or California Building. It is near the Channel 10 booth and the ever popular Cinnamon Buns booth.

Over the years, Naida and Alton refused to change two key provisions of the contract, despite gentle pressure from the Fair officials. 1) Individual authors handle their own sales instead of using a single cash register for the entire booth. 2) Each author calculates 15% of his/her sales income and writes a check for that amount to the California State Fair—on the "honor system" and after participation in the booth. The large amount of revenue generated for the Fair partly explains why the Authors Booth has been invited back each year. In addition, the booth managers see to it that the mission statement and rules of the booth are not violated. One rule is that the 30+ individual authors do not ask the overburdened Fair Officials for help or special privilege, which would drive them crazy.



From the first, a rumor has floated among NCPA members that the Authors Booth is a function of NCPA (or its predecessor), thereby misleading members to believe that they are automatically eligible to participate. While it is true that many NCPA members have been invited to participate, many non-member authors are also invited. For the first several years, Alton Pryor was not a member. Often, Fair officials have dictated that

certain authors previously unknown to the booth managers participate. This year, Naida was informed that Peace Corps authors would be honored, this being the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps, and room must be made for them to participate. In reality, the Authors Booth is a function of the State Fair and not any other organization.



Additionally, Naida has her own mission in managing the Authors Booth:

"I have always wanted a level playing field for good books regardless of the size of publisher, and books that appeal to a large segment of the population but which probably wouldn't be published by the major publishers. This is a sales venue where self published authors sit next to New York Times best selling authors—one that cannot be viewed by the media as a ghetto for self publishers. Another of my missions is to keep this venue small enough that eyes don't glaze over at a vast number of authors (50+ authors at a single long table at some fairs). Six or seven authors are the maximum at the CA State Fair."

Naida has also resisted pressure from long-time booth participants who want to restrict the subject matter of books. In 1998, the 150th anniversary of the Gold Rush, the booth was restricted to books about California history. In subsequent years Fair officials insisted on broadening that to include all genres appropriate for a family venue. Naida is in full agreement.

The California State Fair runs July 14 - 31. For a complete schedule of authors and links to their websites, see www.bridgehousebooks.com/events/statefair2011.

NCPA Treasurer's Report

June 18, 2011

NCPA Treasurer Laurie Hoirup reports that NCPA's bank balance is currently at \$7521.21. More information is available in the File section of the NCPA Yahoo group, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NCPA>. You need your Yahoo ID and password to access the group's message archive and other files.

California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch Activities

CWC-Sacramento, a Silver Sponsor of the 2010 NCPA conference, has overlapping membership and some shared interests with NCPA. Margie Yee Webb, an NCPA member who is immediate past-president of the Sacramento Branch of CWC, provided the following information for the newsletter.

The Sacramento Branch of the California Writers Club is one of 18 branches throughout California. The Sacramento Branch has monthly luncheon meetings at 11:00 a.m. on the 3rd Saturday of every month except July, August, and December. Luncheon meetings are held at Luau Garden Chinese Buffet, 1890 Arden Way, Sacramento 95815. Meeting fee is \$12 for members and \$14 for non-members, and includes a buffet lunch. (**Note:** Luncheon meeting location may change. Please check website <http://www.cwcsacramentowriters.org/> for info. Also, notice will be provided via e-mail.)

Upcoming California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch, Luncheon Meetings

July and August 2011

No meetings.

September 17, 2011

TBA.

The CWC-Sacramento Branch Writers Network

The CWC-Sacramento Branch Writers Network, meets the first Friday morning of every month, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., at IHOP, 2216 Sunrise Blvd., Rancho Cordova (west side of Sunrise, north of Zinfandel). Participants include book, newspaper, magazine, and trade journal writers. **Contact:** Bob Quinlan, bobquinlan1@comcast.net.

Upcoming Writers Network Meetings

July 2011: No meeting.

August 5, 2011: Bill Walker, "Resources for Independent Authors and Musicians"

September 2, 2011: Carmel Mooney, "Writing about Travel"

Open Mic for Writers ("10 Minutes of Fame")

Join the Sacramento branch of the California Writers Club on the second Friday of each month for opportunities to read your written work. Sign-up begins at 6:45 p.m. Listeners are also welcome. Location: Barnes & Noble, Birdcage, Citrus Heights (Sunrise just south of Greenback). **Contact:** Julie Bauer, joolieb@aol.com.

Upcoming dates: **July 8, 2011; August 12, 2011; September 9, 2011**

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.

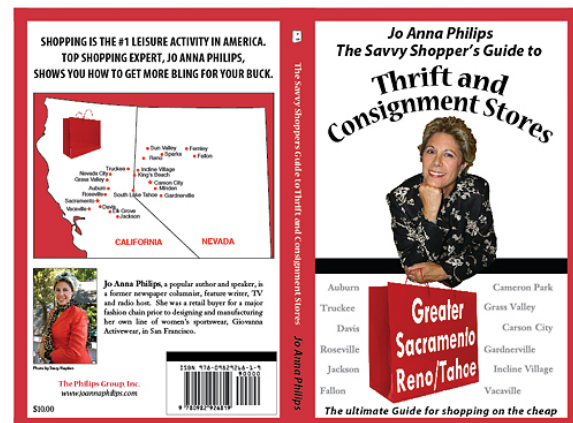
✓ Donna Del Oro's latest ebook will be released July 15, 2011. The theme of BORN TO SING 2: SCHEMING AND DREAMING IN LOS ANGELES is that love happens when you're busy trying to avoid it. The heart of the story is Tess MacIntosh's dilemma: Love or money? For more information, please visit www.devinedestines.com.

✓ Umbach Consulting & Publishing, Citrus Heights, California, has signed Laurie Hoirup's memoir titled *I Can Dance: My Life with a Disability* for publication, planned for approximately February 2012. The book is to be released as a trade paperback with distribution through Ingram. E-book formats and timing are to be determined. The audiences for the book include friends, family members, and co-workers of individuals with a disability, health care professionals, and students in programs related to disabilities or who are preparing for careers in health care. Promotion and marketing will focus on those audiences. Price, ISBN, LCCN, page count, and other details will be announced in the fall of 2011. Author Laurie Hoirup is Treasurer of NCPA, and publisher Ken Umbach is a long-time board member of NCPA, currently serving as Communications Director. Both are also active members of California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch. According to the author:

"I want my story to stand for something, to teach something, to enable readers to understand we are all human beings with unique qualities and differences, and yet we all have similar needs, desires, and goals. May this memoir be the tool to accomplish these things for many."

✓ Newly released: *The Savvy Shopper's Guide to Thrift & Consignment Stores: Greater Sacramento, Reno/Tahoe*, the first-ever guide to all those secret shopping spots previously known only to savvy shoppers. The guide covers 37 cities and 158 stores from Davis and Vacaville to Northern Nevada – and everything in between! Please visit <http://www.joannaphilips.com/> for more details.

✓ Many local authors' books are available for purchase at Book Lovers Book Store, 5800 Madison Avenue (near Manzanita), in Sacramento (adjacent to Carmichael). The store also features a wide variety of bargain used books and a selection of popular new books, some of them autographed by the author. See

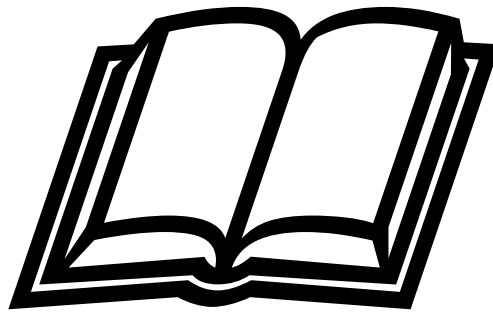


<http://bookloverscafe.com> for more information.

✓ Searching for a special used book, or looking for bargains on reading? Check out 2010 NCPA Conference sponsor Time-Tested Books, 1114 21st Street, Sacramento, CA 95811. See <http://timetestedbooks.net/> for more information.

✓ Know someone who is looking for quality assisted living? Be sure to ask for a tour of our monthly meeting host, Merrill Gardens, Citrus Heights.

✓ **Your notice or announcement could go here!**



ONE/DOZEN

A new and compact way to introduce members' books by sharing ONE line *from* them or a DOZEN words *about* them.

One line:

When I was younger I found lots of things, and one thing I found was Sarah.

Freight by Mel Bosworth

<http://www.foldedword.com/buy/bosworth.html>

A dozen words:

The overlooked second crime victim of familial child sexual abuse: the mother.

The Crucible of Silence by Suzanne Milliesdottir

www.thecrucibleofsilence.com

Would you sacrifice your life's dream for love? A troubling question in...

Born to Sing by Donna Del Oro

www.devinedestinies.com

A Note from the Editor

Send your articles and announcements to Jessi Graustein, editors@foldedword.com.

Use **NCPA NEWSLETTER** (exactly and only that) as the email subject heading. That helps in finding newsletter submissions in the avalanche of incoming email.

Please provide submissions in Microsoft Word (or compatible) format or in plain text (preferably *not* in pdf). 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 916.624.4988.

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 and 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 and illustration dimensions reasonable. When in doubt, call or email me in advance.

The deadline for submissions for the next issue is 11:59 p.m., Monday, August 22, 2011. If you do not want your article or announcement to be lost in hundreds of accumulated email messages, use **NCPA NEWSLETTER** (exactly and only that) as your email subject heading. Send to editors@foldedword.com.

— Jessi Graustein, editor

The Pen & Press is published by Northern California Publishers & Authors, a coalition of authors, small presses, and independent publishers. All newsletter content, unless otherwise attributed, is copyrighted by NCPA. Material from the newsletter may not be reproduced in any way without written consent of the copyright holder. The editor reserves the right to accept or reject submissions and to edit submissions for length, clarity, or style.

Readers are of course free to print copies for noncommercial personal use, and NCPA members are welcome to print copies of the newsletter to share with friends, colleagues, and prospective members.

Northern California Publishers & Authors
3104 O Street, #270
Sacramento, California 95816
916-733-1655 (voice mail)
www.norcalpa.org

Board of Directors of NCPA

The following list is updated for 2011-12

President

Barry Schoenborn
barry@wvswrite.com
530-265-4705

Vice President

Matthias Mendezona
matthias.mendezona@gmail.com
916-344-5724

Secretary

Tom Kando
Kandotom@csus.edu
916-852-0253

Treasurer

Laurie Hoirup
lauries.legacy@yahoo.com
916-469-7695

Communications Director

Ken Umbach
ken@umbachconsulting.com
916-722-6897
916-812-9178 (cell)

Note: NCPA's executive committee includes president, VP, secretary, treasurer, and communications director.

Publicity and Programs

Norma Jean Thornton
normathornton@yahoo.com
916-991-5751

Website

Jim Collins
jim@jcwwrite.com
209-566-0935

Membership

Jim Collins
jim@jcwwrite.com
209-566-0935

Newsletter

Jessi Graustein
editors@foldedword.com
916-624-5088

Past President

Elva Anson
elvawriter@emidrapublishing.com
916-961-7182

Awards

Position is open!

Speakers Bureau

Position is open!

Annual Conference

Position is open!

Meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Merrill Gardens Retirement Community, 7418 Stock Ranch Road (just west of Sylvan Road about a quarter mile north of Greenback Lane), Citrus Heights
Visitors are welcome.