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# The Pen & Press

November – December 2008

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The Chinese, I am told, have a saying: “May you live in interesting times.” It is not a blessing. It is a curse.

Well, we seem to be living in interesting times, for sure. Those

whose 401(k) accounts have become 201(k) accounts—or worse—are finding the times much *too* “interesting.”

So what does this have to do with independent publishing? This, for one thing: in times like these, it is even more critical that books—including independently published books—provide real value to readers. Beyond that, it is critical that that value be communicated to readers. *How is this book going to make your life better?* Will it inform in some useful way? Entertain in a positive manner? Improve your relationships, finances, diet, health, or understanding of the world? Provide some hours of diversion, and introduce you to compelling characters, places, and situations? And is the book priced reasonably, given that it must compete with all of the other books the reader could choose and with all of the other ways in which the reader could spend his or her money — or save it for a rainy day.

As photos in this issue show, some of our members are out in the world, at crafts fairs and other events, promoting their books, showing potential readers not only that the products (the books) are worthwhile but that the authors and publishers are engaging and interesting in their own right. That, too, is a selling point, as a book, especially one purchased directly from an author, reflects an entire package, of which the author himself or herself is one important part. Is this someone with whom you (figuratively, while you read) wish to spend some of your valuable time?

Book promotion, then, involves many aspects, both the mechanical (quality of production) and the financial (price), as well as intellectual (quality of content) and personal (qualities of the author).

It looks as though our “interesting times” will continue for a while. (*Oh, for uninteresting times of calm markets, secure employment, and confidence in the future!*) All the more reason to focus on quality of books and quality of interactions with the reading public.

— Ken Umbach, editor

## **November and December Meeting Announcements**

We have a pair of fine meetings planned for the last months of the year. Please plan on attending both! Thanks to Vicki Ward for her work in planning meeting speakers and topics, and to Pat Canterbury for publicizing our events. As always, our meetings are on the second Saturday of the month, 10 am to noon at Merrill Gardens Retirement Community, 7418 Stock Ranch Road (near Greenback & Sylvan), Citrus Heights, CA 95621.

### ***November 8: How to Leverage Your Inner Expert to Success***

Speaker: Mark Rafter, New Knowledge Press, [www.markrafter.com](http://www.markrafter.com).

NCPA vice president Mark Rafter will speak on How to Leverage Your Inner Expert to Success in Writing, Speaking, and Publishing (or Anything Else).

Mark, an author, trainer, and highly successful entrepreneur, will discuss how to identify, maximize, and monetize the inherent value each of us uniquely possess in order to create personal fulfillment and financial prosperity. He will also discuss the fundamental laws that govern wealth and abundance, the essential components of Your Inner Expert, and how to use the principles of entrepreneurship to deliver your unique products and services to a niche market willing to pay for your expertise.

There is no charge to attend meetings, and guests are always welcome. Join us!

### ***December 13: Holiday Book Display and Networking***

The December meeting will be NCPA's Annual Holiday Book Display and Get together. (Remember no books may be sold in Merrill Gardens, according to company policy.)

This is a once a year opportunity for you to mingle with members, exchange ideas, view samples of their books and enjoy each other. Once again the meeting room will be set up so that members can display their books on tables. Refreshments will be served.

Please consider donating copies of your books to Merrill Gardens for placement in its library, for the enjoyment of residents.

## **Want a Great Logo? Ask a Tattoo Artist.**

*Terena Scott*

I knew I wanted to name my publishing company “Medusa’s Muse” long before my company existed, because I liked the ring of the words and how creatively ominous they sounded together. However, I had not idea what kind logo could convey the meaning of Medusa’s Muse.

One day I was eating breakfast in the kitchen when my husband walked in, shirtless. As he stood at the counter, pouring himself a coffee, I stared at the tattoo on his back and suddenly I knew exactly where to find an artist who could help me.

At our local tattoo parlor I talked to Nate, the artist who created my own tattoo (a Raven on my left shoulder). He immediately started sketching and in one week created the Medusa's Muse logo for less than it would've cost to get a tattoo. When he showed me the final drawing I was ecstatic. The image was EXACTLY what I hoped for and was even more beautiful than I could have imagined.

If you want an artist who can take your ideas and create a single image with strong impact, talk to a tattoo artist. They work with people all day deciphering vague ideas for "ink" and they understand the potential power of an image. Peruse the portfolios at the tattoo parlor and when you find an artist with the kind of artistic sensibility that appeals to you, talk to him/her. Most will be happy for the work, whether it's a tattoo or not.

Whatever art you decide to use will need to be converted into a usable format via the computer, such as a .gif for a website, so keep the image simple, but eye-catching. You're looking for a LOGO, an image that will represent your press and one which can be enlarged or reduced in scale depending on whether it's a business card or a banner. Once you have the image from the artist, scan it into your computer and play with different sizes and resolutions to make sure the image retains its quality. If not, go back to the artist and ask him/her to revise it until you're happy with the results. Tattoo artists are used to making revisions because a tattoo is a permanent piece of artwork the client must be absolutely happy with; once it's on your body, it's permanent. A logo is also a permanent piece of artwork which brands your press like a tattoo. Yes, you can change it later, but doing so could disrupt the recognition of your company's brand name.

The Medusa logo Nate created for Medusa's Muse is now on my website, business cards, blog, banner for conferences, and all promotional materials. I also have a framed poster which hangs proudly in my hallway. And yes, eventually it will be a tattoo on my arm.

*Terena Scott lives in Ukiah and is the owner/publisher of Medusa's Muse Press. Her book What You Need To Know To Be A Pro: The Business Start-Up Guide for Publishers launches January, 2009.*

## **GreeHee Going Italian**

*Michele Avanti*

Last January, I received a flier in the Publishers Marketing Association vendor pack advertising International Titles. This is a company, that for a sum, will take your titles to the International Book Fairs in London, Korea, South Africa, and Frankfurt.

I had planned that once my paperback had been published, I would attempt to sell publishing rights to a foreign publisher. So timing seemed perfect since I had just released my softcover.

I immediately emailed our network to ask our members if anyone had experience with this vendor. I received a couple of replies, which gave me a green light to work with International Titles.

My next step was to call the company. I dialed, and the owner, Loris Essary personally answered the phone. This personal contact added another tick in the 'good choice column.'

Knowing full well that non-fiction is king, I asked Loris if he thought there would be much interest in a young adult fantasy at any of the book fairs he would be attending. He stated that in 2006, it would have been a waste of money, but that in 2007 something changed, and everyone in Korea was looking for young adult fiction. Here I marked a tick for honesty, as he recommended taking my book to the Korean Book Fair.

He went on to say, "Forget London, they don't like to translate American English into the Kings English. But you should show your title in Frankfurt."

I asked Loris to explain how he worked.

He indicated that he has been exhibiting and selling rights at international book fairs for more than 35 years. That, before he goes to a fair, he contacts publishers and agents to find out what they are looking for now, and to set up meetings with them. So I gave him another tick for professionalism. His company does not just show your books face out on a shelf, like IBPA or Andrew Parvel.

I felt confident that this Loris Essary could be trusted to sell me titles, and decided to work with him. We arranged a price to take book one, and a mock-up of book two to both the Korean Fair in June and the Frankfurt Fair in October.

I put together a full advertising package for the titles, and included two copies of book one and two mock-ups of book two. I sent them with a check and wondered where it all might lead.

In May, I received a note from Loris saying that after he and his staff had read my book, they liked it so well, that they took it to the London Fair. There he had several companies who expressed interest in the books. He sent me the contacts, and told me to email and send them whatever they wanted so they might make a purchase.

I did this. One of the companies was a literary agency in Italy.

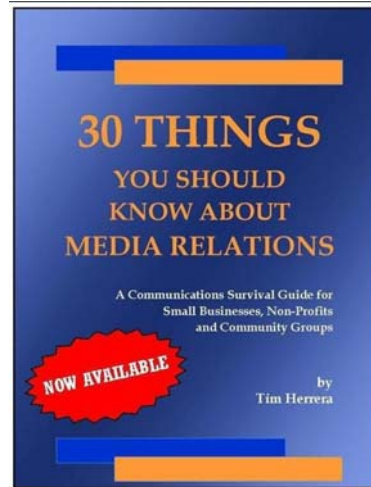
In August, I received a note from Loris indicating that the agency in Italy found an Italian publisher who wanted to publish my first book, and to buy first rights to the rest of the series. He added that this Italian publisher was a very good choice because they also owned a whole chain of bookstores across Italy.

So the good news is *GreeHee The Journey of Five - Tales of Tamoor Book One* will be published in Italian. And if you are interested in selling your titles at International Book Fairs, I highly recommend this honest, kind and intelligent man, Loris Essary of International Titles.

See [www.TalesofTamoor.com](http://www.TalesofTamoor.com) for more information about Michele and GreeHee.

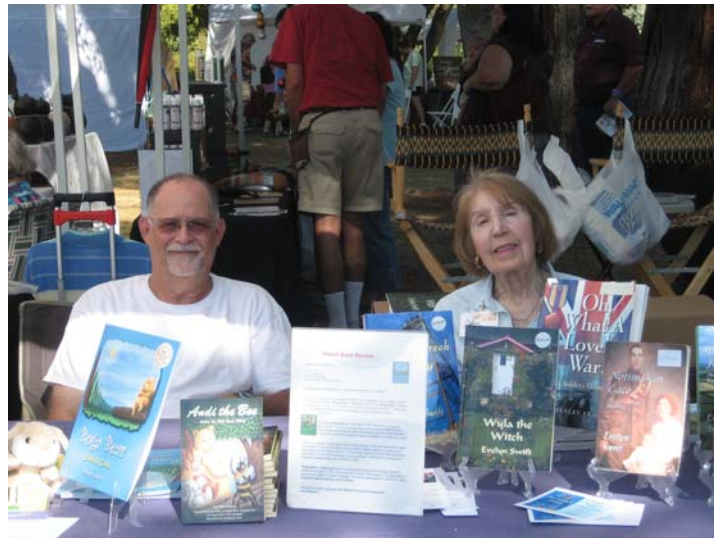
## New from Tim Herrera!

Tim Herrera is pleased to announce that his latest book – *30 Things You Should Know About Media Relations* – should be available by December 1st. The book is designed to assist small businesses, non-profit organizations and local community groups in getting key information across to the general public and to stakeholders. This book contains 30 simple “things” for better media relations covering the basics and serving as a guide to help readers reach out to the media. It will be available through CreateSpace.com and Amazon.com. This is a new writing venture for Tim. His four previous books are collections of humorous family essays.



## Members in Action

Below are a few photos of NCPA members at area book signings.



EVELYN LUSCHER AND PHIL SILVER HOST A CALIFORNIA AUTHORS BOOTH AT THE FOLSOM GOURD AND ARTS FESTIVAL ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH. PHOTO BY CINDY PENG.

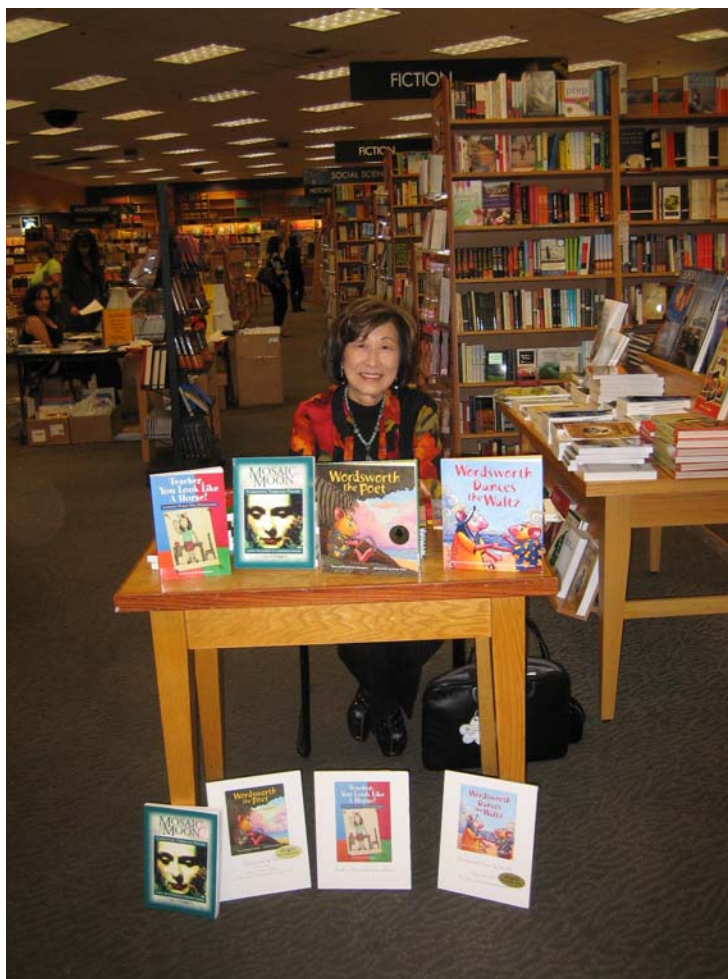


TEDI GRAVES HOSTS A BOOTH AT THE FOLSOM GOURD AND ARTS FESTIVAL ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28. PHOTO BY CINDY PENG.



MARGIE YEE WEBB, EVELYN LUSCHER, A SURPRISE GUEST (PORTAYED BY KIYO SATO), AND KEN UMBACH, AT BOOK LOVERS BOOKSTORE, SACRAMENTO, OCT. 25, FOR EVELYN SIGNING OF *WYLA THE WITCH* AND *THE LOSTCREEK LEGACY*. PHOTO BY PAUL LUSCHER.





FRANCES KAKUGAWA WITH HER BOOK DISPLAY  
AT A “TEACHER APPRECIATION DAY” EVENT ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, AT  
BORDERS ON FAIR OAKS BLVD., SACRAMENTO. PHOTO BY CINDY PENG.

## 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.

✓ New NCPA member Suzy Hopkins has a story in an anthology titled *Horse Tales for the Soul* (not part of the “chicken soup” series). The publisher had each author read his or her story, and the result has just come out—five DVDs for \$24.95 for the horse lovers in your life. Contact Ms. Hopkins 916-334-3269 or via [horssns8543@comcast.net](mailto:horssns8543@comcast.net) to purchase either the book or the DVD.

✓ See [www.norcalpa.org](http://www.norcalpa.org) for updates on 2009 conference and book awards, and other breaking news and organizational information.

✓ The Stanford University Libraries and the William Saroyan Foundation jointly awarded the 2008 William Saroyan International Prize for Writing, nonfiction, to NCPA member Kiyoko Sato for her 2007 memoir *Dandelion Through the Crack*, published by Willow Valley Press, Nevada City, California, under the direction of Barry Schoenborn. *Dandelion*, retitled *Kiyoko's Story*, is to be republished in the spring of 2009 by Soho Press of New York. A new hardbound edition is already available for preorder, and a trade paperback is to follow.

✓ **Renewal time!** NCPA membership renewal notices (for those whose memberships expire on Dec. 31 of this year) will go in the mail to members in November. Please be sure to respond promptly, as this will be your ONLY mailed notice. We would like to complete the renewal process before the end of the year. Members who have joined recently are not due for renewal at this time.

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

## 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. Exactly that and only that to help 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 (January - February 2009) is close of business December 19, 2008.

— Ken Umbach, editor





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**Meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month, 10 am to noon, 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.**