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# The Pen & Press

January – February 2014

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Northern California  
publishers & authors

This month, your editor would like to highlight a message from long-time member and former NCPA treasurer Carol Ryan. Carol reminds us of why NCPA is important to our community.

We DO make a difference, and every meeting and other event is an opportunity for members to continue making that difference.

We DO make a difference, and every

## A message from Carol Ryan

Ten years ago my cane and I hobbled into a bookstore on Watt where an NCPA meeting was held. It was my first meeting and I'll never forget how Pat Canterbury made me feel welcome. I had a vague idea of writing a book someday; someone had pointed me to NCPA, but I was pushing myself in attending.

Over the years NCPA has provided me with links to everything and everyone I needed to know. My path from vaguely wanting to write a book, to published author, to knowledgeable online marketer, has been uncovered with NCPA members' influence.

I need a power chair and a lot of help to get around now, so it's hard to make the monthly NCPA meetings. I still learn a lot from the Newsletter produced by Ken Umbach, and the meeting minutes by Tom Kando. Thanks to all the NCPA family, especially the hard working volunteers! You've made a huge difference to me.

Thank you, Carol!

**Save the kittens!** Do you read the newsletter? If so, please *let the editor know*. Email him at [ken@umbachconsulting.com](mailto:ken@umbachconsulting.com) with subject line SAVE THE KITTENS, by midnight January 12, 2014. Better yet, contribute news, notices, and articles for the next issue. If there are more than 40 responses (one per person) with subject heading "SAVE THE KITTENS" by the deadline, the editor will contribute \$100 to a local animal shelter to help save kittens. If you neglect to send a simple email, kittens may unnecessarily suffer.

*For a bonus chance at a Starbucks, McDonald's, or Panera gift card for yourself (if there are more than 40 responses), answer the quiz on page 9 and include the answers in your email. Specify your preferred gift card.*



— Ken Umbach, interim editor

## January 2014 Meeting to Feature Dr. Amy Rogers, on Audiobooks

*By Norma Jean Thornton*

Local author and Harvard-educated scientist Dr. Amy Rogers is in a thrilling science-themed critique group with New York Times award-winning author, and previous guest speaker to NCPA, James Rollins.

Listen closely: Dr. Rogers has it down to a science which is so succinct her topic consists of only one word, and is totally self-explanatory: AUDIOBOOKS.

Amy Rogers writes science-themed thrillers that pose frightening “what if?” questions. Compelling characters and fictionalized science—not science fiction—make her books page-turners that seamlessly blend reality with imagination.

She is a member of International Thrillers Writers (debut class 2011-2012 for her novel *Petroplague*, in which bacteria turn all the gasoline in Los Angeles into vinegar) and is a former biology professor at California State University.

Learn more about Dr. Rogers and read her reviews of dozens of “scientific” novels at ScienceThrillers.com.

Website: <http://AmyRogers.com>

Follow her on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/pages/Amy-Rogers/202428959777274](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Amy-Rogers/202428959777274)) or on Twitter (@ScienceThriller).

***NOTE: because of other meeting activities and the need to be done with the room by 12:30 p.m., member and visitor self-introductions must be limited to 30 seconds per person. Please plan and practice your “elevator speech” accordingly.***

## Other Upcoming Meetings

Mark your calendars!

- February, March, and April 2014, to be announced. May 2014 will introduce the new NCPA board and include a brief annual business meeting.

*Thanks go to Norma Jean Thornton for her energetic, creative, and effective recruitment of speakers and selection of topics for our meetings.*

***Norma Jean adds: If you have any suggestions for guest speakers, and/or topics, please let me know ([normathornton@yahoo.com](mailto:normathornton@yahoo.com)). I'll do what I can to book 'em!***

## Save the Date: Sunday, April 27, 2014, Awards Dinner

*NCPA 2014 Awards Dinner Update by Rosa Umbach*

Happy New Year! Plans for the 2014 Annual Book Awards Dinner continue to make progress. We have a confirmed emcee, Tim Herrera, a well-known newspaper columnist, host of radio and TV programs and a book author. Tim's books include such humorous anthologies as *Dad, You are Not Going Out Wearing That!* and *From Wedgies to Feeding*

*Frenzies*, as well as *30 Things You Should Know About Media Relations: A Communications Survival Guide for Small Businesses*.

Dinner will be at the Blue Prynt restaurant again this year. Mark your calendar for Sunday, April 27, 2014, and watch for the registration package in early February. Hope to see you there!

This year we are soliciting sponsors, at \$100 each, to help pay for the administrative cost of hosting an awards dinner. This allows us to fully fund the dinner while keeping down the cost of the dinner for attendees. Sponsors will receive a half-page ad in the printed program for the evening and acknowledgement of their sponsorship in the newsletter. Only one sponsorship remains available as of January 1<sup>st</sup>. If you are interested in sponsoring the 2014 Award Dinner, contact me by email at [rlumbach@surewest.net](mailto:rlumbach@surewest.net) or by phone at (916) 342-7556.

Stay tuned for more information by email, on [norcalpa.org](http://norcalpa.org), via the newsletter, and more than likely, delivered right to your mailbox via the good old U.S. Postal Service. A “Hold the Date” postcard is in the mail.

*The awards dinner chair, please note, is responsible for planning and managing NCPA’s annual event unveiling winners of awards for books published the prior year — for the 2014 event, of course, published in 2013.*

## **Thea Holmdahl’s Memoir Now Available**

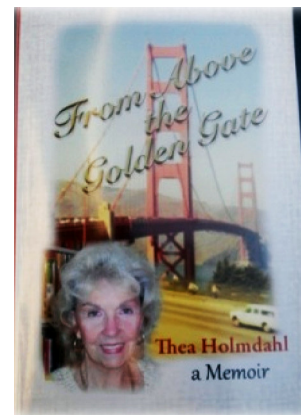
Special to *The Pen & Press*

NCPA member Thea Holmdahl has published *From Above The Golden Gate: a Memoir*, a 366-page trade paperback. List priced at \$21.95, the book was published via the Sacramento County Library’s I Street Press.

Mrs. Holmdahl advises, “This book tells about my journey from the cobblestones of Europe to the Western shores of the United States and places in between.

“I describe seldom revealed details of a harsh childhood environment at the time of the Hitler regime and the hardship of growing up during WWII. I report of experiencing a five-week ocean voyage through the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal and the Indian Ocean, as well as interesting narrative as an immigrant in Australia and how later I began to settle in California, raising my two daughters, and eventually experiencing the rare privilege of meeting and mingling with prominent politicians and celebrities as the wife of California State Senator John W. Holmdahl.”

The book is available through [ondemandbooks.com](http://ondemandbooks.com).



## Linda Bello-Ruiz Gains Recognition

*Special to The Pen & Press*

NCPA member, Linda Bello-Ruiz received wonderful news this month. To understand it, we must look back.

In October she and her partner, Hank, traveled to Ireland. One of their goals was to find any family members that share Linda's maiden name: Cassells. Her paternal grandfather had been born in Portadown, County Armagh, Ireland in 1880 and traveled to the United States in 1902. With a few ancestral notes in hand, they journeyed into County Armagh and then Portadown and started searching. Within minutes they found a possible relative and returning the following day they found Linda's grandfather's brother's descendants. Before leaving a very enjoyable reunion she gifted them an autographed copy of her memoir, *From Tears to Triumph, My Journey to The House of Hope*.

Her memoir was read by the Cassells Irish clan and then loaned to Reverend Hilliard of the Tartaraghan Parish church, the same church where Linda's grandfather was baptized in 1880 and the church where members of the Cassells family still attend. Linda had the opportunity to meet Reverend Hilliard during her short stay in Portadown.

On Sunday morning, Dec 16th, Reverend Hilliard preached about "hope" sharing Linda's story as the basis for his sermon.

"What a joy," Linda explains. "One hundred and thirty-three years after my grandfather was baptized in the Tartaraghan parish church, and two months after I found my cousins; the pastor shared my story. Never, in all the months and years of writing *From Tears to Triumph*, did I think it would reach across the world and be embraced by a whole community! What a blessing!"

*Autographed copies of From Tears to Triumph are available at [www.lindabelloruiz.com](http://www.lindabelloruiz.com). The book is also available at Amazon.com in print and Kindle formats, and on Barnes & Noble as a Nook Book.*

## William Blaylock Writes about PTSD

*Special to The Pen & Press*

Attention, motorists. The driver in front of you may be hearing gunshots.

The traffic light is red. You don't hear the loud bangs because you do not have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), but veteran Bill Blaylock does. He has written about what life is like living with the consequences of war.

The independent Folsom publisher Pretty Road Press inked a book deal with Blaylock to publish the book revealing his stormy history in dealing with the common disorder that affects up to 20 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and 30 percent of Vietnam veterans.

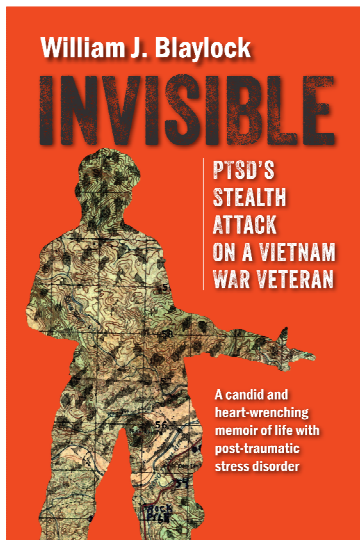
"I hear a sudden, loud crack," Blaylock writes. "I can hear and feel the wind of the bullet pass by my left ear. I know without a doubt that one was meant for me. Someone is actually trying to kill me. 'Snipers in the trees! Fire.' "

But then the traffic light turns green. The car behind honks. It was a flashback. Blaylock returns his attention to traffic and moves, but he feels stress the remainder of the day.

His disorder was initially invisible, even to Blaylock himself, but looking back, the Vietnam veteran now realizes how the trauma of war invaded his life. The anxieties contributed to the failure of a marriage. The malady permeated all his relationships. He went through 36 different jobs, but finally he got help.

“Bill shares his struggles through much of his post-Vietnam adult life without ever realizing that he had been injured by his experience in Vietnam,” says retired Maj. Gen. James W. Hopp in a foreword to the book. “He reveals how it took a friend, who also had PTSD, to convince him that he, too, was injured and that he needed to seek medical help if he was ever going to recover.”

Blaylock’s working title is “Invisible: Living with PTSD’s Unseen Wound.” The book starts with his role in a 1968 gun battle in Rockpile, Vietnam, when troops are taking fire. Blaylock is in the thick of it. The thick never thinned. Decades later, anxiety was still forcing the veteran to regularly check the perimeter of his home to ward off his anxiety.



He did not write the book as therapy, Blaylock said, but he did find that his writing turned out to be therapeutic.

“I hope this story helps others,” he said. “No one else should have to wait decades for help, and the families of people with PTSD need to understand how the perils of war affect everyday relationships with their loved ones.”

Blaylock, 65, is a resident of EL Dorado Hills, enjoys membership of the American Legion, and serves with Dusters, Quads and Searchlights Association, a charity for disabled military personnel and their families.

Pretty Road Press released the book to coincide with Veterans Day in November of 2013.

## Nuts & Bolts of NCPA, Part 3

This is the third in a series about the mechanics of Northern California Publishers & Authors. The board would like to “demystify” the workings of the organization — which, to tell you the truth, really are not all that mysterious — to help encourage members who might be on the fence about volunteering to step forward and take an active role.

This issue’s topic is the **NCPA Website**. Webmaster Jim Collins provided the following summary for the newsletter:

### **NCPA Webmaster responsibilities**

The webmaster job has a lot of different responsibilities, but really only requires a few hours of work each month. It is the only position that currently receives a stipend from the board.

Obviously the job requires working on and maintaining the website [www.norcalpa.org](http://www.norcalpa.org) but what exactly does this comprise? Well, there are a number of actions needed. Many are done monthly, some annually, and others on an as-needed basis. Here's a pretty comprehensive list of everything currently being accomplished:

- Update the information and dates for coming meetings (information is supplied by Programs/PR Director, currently Norma Thornton who does a terrific job).
- Upload and update access to the latest newsletter when supplied by the newsletter editor (home page notice, right column button, and newsletter page) and send email notification to the group. Also upload to Yahoo groups Files section.
- Create a PDF from the meeting minutes and board meeting minutes when supplied by the secretary (and I also edit them though that's not necessarily a webmaster responsibility), upload to the website and to the Yahoo group Files section, update the meeting minutes page, provide links on various pages, and send email notification to the group.
- Maintain the shopping cart section (sitestorepro program) by adding/updating items (membership renewal, awards entry, and awards banquet) as required.
- Update home page announcements with appropriate information provided by President and other board members.
- Update the public directory, member websites, member blogs, and speaker bureau pages with information supplied by the Membership Director.
- Manage the balloting through ballotbin.com for each year's election.
- Update the website with new board information after each election.
- Update the website with awards information for each award cycle.
- Manage email forwarding for board members.
- Monitor Webmaster Tools and Google Analytics for any problems and traffic information.
- Assist the Communications Director as needed.

Those are all the current responsibilities. In addition, the webmaster may be required to create and maintain other websites as directed by the Board. For example, the 2010 convention website. Also, new features need adding periodically. The shopping cart for memberships and the awards program entry and banquet was a new project last year.

Next year, 2014, I hope to carve out some time for a project I've been meaning to get done for a while. It is to add a page to list people's books with links to Amazon (assuming they are available there). The problem, of course, is coming up with some sort of template or form. People would need to complete it and, obviously, it needs to be simple and require not a lot of work by either the author/publisher or me to just plug the info into the site. It's a goal, anyway.

—Jim Collins

*In all of this, keep in mind that NCPA is just a small, independent organization made up of folks with an interest in writing and in independent publishing. The purpose of NCPA is to support and encourage independent publishing in our region, and it does that through meetings, an email list, a newsletter, annual book awards, and occasional special events. People join to learn and to share their knowledge.*

## **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.

✓ See [www.cwcsacramentowriters.org](http://www.cwcsacramentowriters.org) for information on the California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch, and its monthly luncheon meetings, monthly “Writers Network” breakfast meetings, monthly “Open Mic” sessions, and special events.

✓ Joyce Mason, *The Crystal Ball*, Author Presentation and Book Signing, Planet Earth Rising, 625 Sutter St., Folsom, California, Saturday, January 18, 2014, 1:00 – 4:00 pm

It’s an intuitive fair day at Planet Earth Rising! You’ve got three crystal ball options:

1. Hear Joyce Mason talk about her book called *The Crystal Ball* and/or buy one;
2. Browse the actual crystal balls sold at Planet Earth; and/or
3. Get your own “crystal ball” outlook on 2014 from one of the Planet’s talented intuitive readers.

Arrive by 1:00 to hear Joyce speak about how everyone will learn more about metaphysics and astrology by weaving them into the arts, as does *The Crystal Ball*, her humorous mystery.

✓ 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.

✓ Teen author Jo Chandler posted two blogs about Laurie Hoirup’s presentation to the California Writers Club earlier this month and about her memoir, *I can Dance: My Life with a Disability*. Laurie’s presentation and her work inspired Jo to include future blogs on her site, [www.jochandler.com](http://www.jochandler.com) on the theme of Writers Changing the World. She invites visitors to share their thoughts on the pieces posted or to leave the name of a book or person’s writing that you think is changing the world.

✓ Laurie Hoirup has been keeping busy just doing small presentations throughout the month of November and into December; she did a presentation for the Disability Advisory Council (DAC) for the State Department of Developmental Services, selling several books, talked about advocacy with seniors in a Las Vegas Senior Park while visiting relatives and sold a couple of books, did a presentation to third-year med students at UC Davis around healthcare and disability, was the guest speaker for the CWC Writers Network sharing her experience with orchestrating a book tour and was very well received and then, while she was at the San Francisco 49er/Seahawks game, she managed to promote and sell a couple of books there, making it not only a fun filled day, but also a

productive one. She had one other presentation in mid-December, around children and advocacy, with plans to discuss disability and promote her book. Things quieted down after that for a while, until she gets a few more presentations set up.

*Laurie also offers this to our readers:*

As the 2013 year comes to a close, I am happy to share my memoir news; my promotional display has grown to include T-shirts, both short and long sleeved with the cover of my book on the front, sparkly, purple pens with my business name and website in white lettering printed on the barrel, I have pink plastic baggies the size of the book with purple lettering, again, my business name & website and I have several different speeches/talking points prepared for various venues; disability employment groups, medical students, doctor's groups, individuals with disabilities, business leaders, author's groups, and many conference topics, along with support groups. Of course, I also do book signings with no presentations and that's where the display becomes very important. Last week, my author's group held a display contest, and I am ever so proud to report that I won "overall best display." In other words, I have really transitioned from a newbie to a pro. The best part, however, is that I am really enjoying this whole promotional thing and having a delightful time! If anyone wants some ideas, please don't hesitate to ask. I enjoy promoting the promotional thing, as much as I enjoy promoting my book.

—Laurie Hoirup

✓ Notes and insights from Frances Kakugawa

- *Beware: Your book may get you an outhouse! A complete stranger from Florida sent me a framed cross-stitched picture of an outhouse. She read my book, Kapoho: Memoirs of a Modern Pompeii and my outhouse poem that appeared in another publication. After all these years, she wrote, she finally figured out why she had bought this art piece many years ago . . . it was meant for me. She had this tucked away in her NYC apartment and had her housekeeper send it to me. I will post a photo of this on my blog.*
- *Mr. King and Mr. Mandela, please move an inch for me. A woman in my memoir writing group paid me the most honorable compliment: She has a wall of photos of people who have made a difference in her life. Next to Mr. King's and Mr. Mandela's photos is a photo of me. All this because she came to my memoir writing group feeling scared, believing she was dumb and couldn't write. Her stories from segregation years are powerful and I keep telling her, "Don't let anyone edit your grammatical errors. This is part of the power of your voice."*

—Frances Kakugawa

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



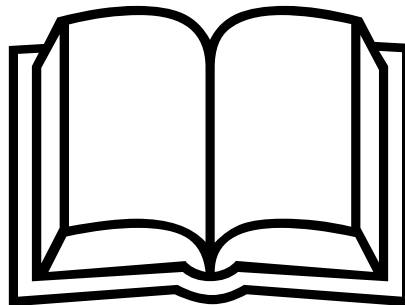
✓ The time for nominations for NCPA's elected offices is approaching (March nominations, April election). Some officers are termed out and we MUST have new leadership (elected roles as well as appointed committee chairs).

✓ **Special quiz!** Some, but not all, of the questions can be answered by reading this issue of *The Pen & Press*. Some will take more effort.

1. How many elected officers does NCPA have?
2. Where will the 2014 NCPA Awards Dinner be held?
3. What is Dr. Amy Rogers' novel about?
4. In what state is Frances Kakugawa especially popular?
5. In what year was the last NCPA Conference held?
6. What is the current price for three-year NCPA membership renewal?
7. What is the color of Laurie Hoirup's book baggies?
8. In what town is Joyce Mason to be appearing to promote her book in January?
9. What is the topic of Bill Blaylock's book?
10. Who is NCPA's webmaster?
11. Special bonus question: What is keeping you from running for an office or taking an appointed NCPA board position?

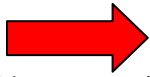

Send your answers in your "Save the Kittens" email (see page 1).

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



### A Note from the Editor

Send your articles and announcements for the newsletter to Ken Umbach, [ken@umbachconsulting.com](mailto:ken@umbachconsulting.com).

 Use “NCPA NEWSLETTER” as the email subject heading! 

Please provide submissions in Microsoft Word (or compatible) format or in plain text (preferably *not* in pdf and definitely not in jpeg or other image format for 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 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 close of business, Monday, February 24, 2014. **Please submit material, especially anything longer than a brief notice, well before the deadline if possible!** 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 [ken@umbachconsulting.com](mailto:ken@umbachconsulting.com).

— Ken Umbach, interim editor

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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.

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### **President**

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tedwitt@prettyroadpress.com  
916-934-8434

### **Vice President**

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dennispotter56@aol.com  
916-208-8334 (work)  
916-253-758 (home)

### **Secretary**

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

### **Treasurer**

Laurie Hoirup  
Laurie@LauriesLegacy.com  
916-469-7695

### **Communications Director**

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

*NCPA's elected executive committee includes president, VP, secretary, treasurer, and communications director.*

### **Publicity**

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

### **Website**

Jim Collins  
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209-566-0935

### **Programs (monthly meeting)**

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916-991-5751

### **Newsletter (interim)**

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

### **Membership**

Sharon Darrow  
Sharon@SharonS.Darrow.com  
800-462-2328

### **Awards**

Margo King Lenson (tuicom@att.net) is assisting with the process, in lieu of a formal awards committee chair. See [www.norcalpa.org](http://www.norcalpa.org) for more information.

### **Past President**

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

### **Awards Dinner Coordinator**

Rosa Umbach  
rlumbach@surewest.net  
916-342-7556

### **Conference Chair**

Position is open! (Could coordinate workshops or seminars instead of full conference.)

### **Speakers Bureau**

Position is open!

Meetings are on the second Saturday of each month, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at Emeritus at Citrus Gardens (formerly called 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.