
The Pen & Press

November – December, 2015



Meet Ted Witt



Ted Witt is a past-president and active member of NCPA. He currently is our Webmaster. Ted joined our organization in 2010, a few months after establishing his publishing company, Pretty Road Press.

Ted says he joined NCPA because, “I had been studying publishing and the industry for a long time in my preparation toward starting a publishing company. In that process, I ran across the NCPA website. I had a fondness for associations since I had worked for two professional associations for more than ten years, once as a communications manager, and later as an executive director. I thought attending an NCPA meeting would give me a better idea of what was happening on the publishing scene locally and allow me to pick up some tips from speakers and networking. Plus, I wanted to assess my local competition and find authors who might have some potential material to be published.”

Ted had a head start in his chosen profession. He says he knew in elementary school that he wanted to be a writer. “I went to the library in my hometown of Escondido, California, and learned from a book that authors don't make much money, and few are published. The book suggested newspapering as a viable vocation with a regular paycheck. So starting in seventh grade, I took my first journalism course and continued all through high

school and college, ultimately graduating from Cal Poly, San Louis Obispo, with a degree in news-editorial journalism.”

Impressive!

At age 16, Ted received an offer from a daily newspaper for an unpaid internship. That gave him experience working in every office of the enterprise, which led to a paid position in the retail advertising department during the rest of his high school career.

Ted shares, “I designed advertisements and wrote copy for a twice-weekly editorial feature of local businesses. Simultaneously, I gave up after-school sports to get an ROP-certification in printing and the graphic arts—good experience for a youngster on typesetting, paste-ups, camera work, platemaking, offset printing and binding.

“The newspaper ended up giving me a scholarship to start my college career in journalism. During college, I wrote for the *Morro Bay Sun-Bulletin*. After graduating, I returned to San Diego County to write full time for the daily newspaper.”

Newspapering led Ted to public relations, which led to school business, which led to association management, which led to a dot-com venture where he still works today as vice president of the Epylon Corporation in Danville, California. With his kids gone and a longing to see stories in freshly printed books, he started Pretty Road Press in 2010 as a small avocational, profit-making business. Ted say it keeps him busy nights and weekends and many lunch hours.

Interestingly, when asked about the type of books he chooses to publish, he says, “It may be unorthodox, but I do not choose books based on genre, but by marketing niche. I try to find books for which I can find a distinctive, identifiable audience. That means I have to be able to find potential readers with e-mail addresses, social media connections, conventions, and common interests. For example, the military is a niche. Veterans and military families are easy to find. They have their own culture. They self-sort. That means I am not wasting marketing dollars on reaching people outside the niche who are not likely to buy.”

Some of Ted’s favorite titles, published by Pretty Road Press, include *Gardening with My Sisters*; *Hatless*; *Acquire & Dispose*, the *California School Facilities Guide to Real Property*; *Invisible, PTSD’S Stealth Attack on a Vietnam War Veteran*, *No One Ever Told Me That*, *The Red Chair*, *The Grey Door*, and *Rumination*.

Here’s what Ted looks for in choosing a manuscript to publish:

- 1) On the first page, does it have a hook?
- 2) Within five pages is his curiosity aroused so much that he wants to keep reading?
- 3) On page 50 or another random page of the manuscript, how is the mechanics:
How’s the grammar? Does the writer know how to use commas?
- 4) Is the dialog realistic?

- 5) If it's not fiction, how well organized is the material for learning?
- 6) Then he looks at the end. He goes for the spoiler.

After all that, he decides if he's still interested, and only then will he read the full manuscript.

Ted says, "But if the topic does not fit within an easily identifiable and marketable niche, I probably will not be interested. I get so many requests now that I have become picky. I am too busy to have to fix a book. I have twenty proposals on my desk; assessment takes forever because active projects take so much time."

Here's Ted's advice on starting a publishing company: "I have a seven-part formula that I think people need to consider to be successful at self-publishing or small-press publishing. Each part of the formula is a craft or discipline that must be mastered and perfected, but I have yet to master all these disciplines myself. The parts are:

- 1) Time management,
- 2) Writing craft,
- 3) Creativity,
- 4) Integrity of voice, message, and purpose,
- 5) Engagement in the reading-writing community,
- 6) Marketing savvy,
- 7) Use of technology."

At the end of our interview, I asked Ted to share something we might not know about him. His answer? "I have a hobby making ice cream, experimenting with new ingredients and flavors. I have a nifty ice cream maker that can go to work instantly. All this experimentation will turn into a recipe book some day."

What a blessing it is to know you, Ted Witt.

—Linda Bello-Ruiz, Editor

Upcoming NCPA Meetings. Mark Your Calendars!

November 14, 2015 ~ Dr. Amy Rogers, Publisher at Sacramento-based specialty press ScienceThrillers Media. Dr. Rogers will talk about how "print on demand" (POD) technology has changed a lot in recent years. Quality is up, price is down, and POD is no longer a barrier to getting your books stocked in bookstores. Amy will discuss how you can use POD to publish and distribute paper books, with a specific emphasis on IngramSpark and amazon's CreateSpace.



About the speaker: Amy Rogers, MD, PhD, is a scientist, writer, journalist, educator, critic, and publisher who specializes in all things science-y. She is a member of International Thrillers Writers and is currently serving as Treasurer for NCPA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION visit Amy's websites:

ScienceThrillersMedia.com (publishing company)

AmyRogers.com (author Amy Rogers)

ScienceThrillers.com (genre-specific book reviews)

December 12, 2015 ~ HOLIDAY Potluck & Book Exchange / Network & schmooze

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

Norma Jean says: "If you have any suggestions for guest speakers, and/or topics, please let me know (normathornton@yahoo.com). I'll do what I can to make it happen."

Self-Publishing Has Its Plusses But...

You're a writer at the right time. Your world is rich with options, and you're standing at the gate, deciding which path to take. Should you self-publish? Try for an agent and go traditional? Submit to a small, indie press? The publishing industry has changed, and so have your choices. No segment of the industry has matured and evolved more than self-publishing.

There was a time when self-publishing came with a thorny stigma, but today there are self-published New York Times bestsellers—both fiction and non-fiction—who have successfully walked the road. But there's also an ocean of unknown authors who only managed to sell books to a small stable of family and friends before their numbers dwindled.

If you've got a book and you're thinking of publishing it yourself, sit back and let's peek at the road ahead.

Big Plus: You keep the money. You can release your book however you see fit and then reap the financial rewards. There's no agent taking 15 percent. There's no publishing contract that limits your royalties. It's all on you.

But: It's all on you. To successfully sell books, you have to master the art of self-promotion or invest in the services of a professional book publicity agency. You have to understand book marketing and meaningful publicity. Yes, you get to keep all your royalties if you do it yourself. But that doesn't mean much if you haven't sold any books.

Big Plus: You have more control. When you sign with a publisher, you give them a chunk of creative control. They hire the cover designer, they make edits, they suggest revisions. They may ask you to cut chapter 17 or kill your favorite character—things you don't want to do. So if you want more control over your words and design, self-publishing could make for a warm, cozy blanket.

But: You have to make sure your words and design are on-point. An editor is a must. So is finding the right professional designer. It's worth it. A well-crafted book with a well-designed cover sells more books than an error-riddled manuscript with a hand-drawn title. Trust us.

Big Plus: You write on your time. There's no one breathing down your neck, waiting for your draft. You set your own release date. If you want to release 10 books in a year, you can. You only have to answer to yourself.

But: You write on your dime. You don't get the luxury of an advance or any guaranteed payment.

Ultimately, how you decide to publish your book is up to you. You have to ask yourself: What do I want to accomplish? How much time can I commit to writing and promoting my book? How does my book compare to what's already out there? What's most important to me throughout this process?

Only you know the answers. Fortunately, there are many avenues you can take once you figure it out.

Reprinted with permission. Erin Entrada Kelly is a Book Publicist for Smith Publicity and also handles New Services Development for the company. www.SmithPublicity.com

Message from NCPA President, Sharon Darrow

- **The new website.** It's fully operational. Check it out at: www.norcalpa.org. The home page has lots of information and links for members and the public as well, including pictures and links for two of our members under the heading "Meet some of our authors & publishers." The members shown will change each time someone logs in. Every single member can choose whether or not they want to appear in this section when they complete their updated profile.

When members sign in for the first time, they will enter their email address, but choose "forgot password" in order to get an email inviting them to create a *new* password for themselves. Once that is done, they will see a new tab when they sign in titled "For Members Only," with meeting minutes and lots of tips and discussions.

Any member that wants to send an email to other members -- either one, a select few, or the entire membership -- can just select the "Emails" tab at the top of the website and compose away.

The Yahoo Group site will remain online because it has a huge amount of archived resources for members to research and review. The email function will be shut down by the end of the year, since all communications should be through the new website. No new members will be automatically added to the Yahoo Group; however, any member who wants to review the archived information can contact me to be given access if needed.

The Annual Book Award Competition is now open for entries! Anyone interested in submitting a book for the award needs to go to the "Events" tab on the website, then click on "Book Awards" for all the rules, information, and a link to the entry form. We hope this competition will be bigger and better than ever, and want to encourage people who've published during 2015 to start entering now!

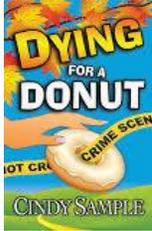
Meeting Minutes. We have many members who are not able to attend the monthly meetings, but who are still vitally important to the group. We've always had the meeting minutes published -- thank you, Tom Kando! -- but sometimes people just don't seem to check the minutes out.

I passed out a written sheet during our October meeting outlining the important topics that I wanted to share, but realized that members not in attendance wouldn't see it. With that in mind, I sent out an email to everyone with the information that was passed out at the October meeting. I'm going to do that every month from now on, so all members have access to the same information. Anyone who does not attend will miss a lot, including dynamite speakers, but at least they will get the basics through what I'm sending, and the rest through the minutes.

Board Meetings are open to members: We are now going to schedule Board meetings after regular meetings and hold them at the Denny's nearby. All NCPA members are welcome to attend. The next Board meeting will be held immediately after the regular meeting on November 14, 2015. Please let the Board know in advance that you will be attending the meeting, so we can have the proper amount of space.

Newsletter Editor: We are looking for a newsletter editor. If you are interested, please contact me, ASAP.

Member News

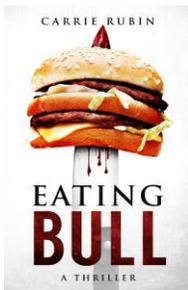


Cindy Sample will be releasing the fifth book in her national bestselling Laurel McKay Mysteries. *Dying for a Donut*, which is set in Apple Hill, has been described as a lip-smacking mystery. Her launch party will be held from 1:00 to 5:00 on Sunday, November 15th, at Face in a Book, 4359 Town Square Blvd, El Dorado Hills. Donuts, drinks, drawings and more.

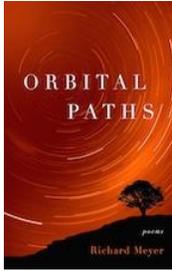
Cindy Sample: 2014 and 2015 LEFTY Award Finalist Best Humorous Mystery
DYING FOR A DONUT (November 2015)
DYING FOR A DUDE & DYING FOR A DAIQUIRI
DYING FOR A DATE & DYING FOR A DANCE
<http://cindysamplebooks.com>

*****Laurie Hoirup** shares: “I participated in the Board of Equalization (BOE) event, along with the Cal HR/SPB activities this year. Sales were okay. My annual spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) walk/fundraiser included a booth with lots of interested parents stopping by for information and purchasing my memoir. At the end of September, I was a speaker for the Northern California Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) conference and hosted a booth at the Disability Unity Festival, all of which connect me with more people with disabilities and a good market.

Last but not least, an old friend and colleague, who also writes a weekly blog around disability issues with a huge following, wrote a specific article regarding authors with disabilities and included my name and memoir title. My memoir continues to sell well and I am routinely asked about my new book “Being Different is Okay” and when it will be available. It’s great to have an anxious audience, as so many of my fellow authors are aware. My hope is to have it published by the end of the year so that I can enter the annual NCPA writing competition. Time will tell.”



ScienceThrillers Media (Amy Rogers) is pleased to announce the November 12 release of *EATING BULL* by Carrie Rubin in print and digital formats. In this novel of suspense, a lonely, obese teenager becomes the target of a serial killer when a public health nurse encourages him to sue the food industry.



ORBITAL PATHS by Richard Meyer, published by ScienceThrillers Media in September, enjoyed several weeks in the top ten of amazon's bestseller list for Poetry: Themes: Nature.

*****Amy Rogers** will speak to the NorCal Editorial Freelancers Association on November 5, 7 PM. The topic is, "What the heck is hybrid publishing?"

News from CWC

November 2015

November 6, 2015, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch Writers Network – Antoinette May, award winning author and journalist, on "Romancing the Monster." IHOP, 2216 Sunrise Blvd., Rancho Cordova, CA 95670.

November 13, 2015, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch Open Mic, Enjoy 10 minutes of fame! Readers and Listeners Welcome. Barnes & Noble, Birdcage Center, 6111 Sunrise Blvd., Citrus Heights, CA 95610.

November 14, 2015, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch. Local Author Event featuring keynote speaker Ken McKowen (Publishing Syndicate); panel presenters Nanci Lee Woody, Mark Weideranders, Cindy Sample, Dahlynn McKowen, Steve Liddick and Kathy Boyd Fellure; and CWC Sacramento Branch President Margie Yee Webb. The creative process, editing, publishing and more!

Meet and greet with above authors plus Mary Lou Anderson, Daniel Babka, Raymond Leo Blain MD, Anara Guard, David Hagerty, Syndee Hendricks, Ronald Javor, Meera Ekkanath Klein, Sherry Joyce, Richard Steele and William T. Stewart.

Free Event. Folsom Public Library, 411 Stafford Street, Folsom, CA 95610.
<http://www.cwcsacramentowriters.org/2015/local-author-event/>

November 21, 2015, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch Luncheon Meeting – Kevin Smokler, author and writing consultant, on "Criticism: Meet Confidence!" Cattlemens Restaurant, 12409 Folsom Blvd., Rancho Cordova, CA 95670. Meeting fee (includes lunch): \$17 Member and \$20 Non-Member.

December 2015

December 4, 2015, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. California Writers Club, Sacramento

Branch Writers Network – Lisa Deines Wiggins, 4th degree black belt in Taekwondo, on “Getting Inside The Fighter’s Mentality.” IHOP, 2216 Sunrise Blvd., Rancho Cordova, CA 95670. www.cwcsacramentowriters.org

December 5, 2015, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch Holiday Social – Join in the festivities with fellow writers. Details to be announced. Marie Callender’s, 5525 Sunrise Blvd., Citrus Heights, CA 95610. RSVP to Margie Yee Webb at mywebb@sbcglobal.net. www.cwcsacramentowriters.org

Other Notices

- ✓ Know someone who is looking for quality assisted living? Be sure to ask for a tour of our monthly meeting host, Brookdale.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Your notice or announcement could go here!

A Note from the Editor

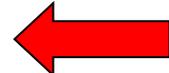


It has been a pleasure to serve as your newsletter editor for the last two years. Given my move to Sonoma County and extended time down in Mexico, I will no longer be filling this position. I have enjoyed hearing your news and sharing it with the rest of NCPA. I have truly grown as a writer during my years with NCPA and count so many of you as friends.

Until a replacement Newsletter Editor has been appointed, please send your articles and announcements for the newsletter to Sharon Darrow at: Sharon@SharonSDarrow.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). 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, Wednesday, December 23, 2015. Please submit material, especially anything longer than a brief notice, well before the deadline. Use NCPA NEWSLETTER — as your email subject heading.

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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.

—Linda Bello-Ruiz, Editor



Translation: I don't say goodbye; I give you thanks; because I'm a better person now than when we met.

Board of Directors of NCPA

President Sharon Darrow Sharon@SharonSDarrow.com 800-462-2328	Vice President Richard Steele S46@zetabb.com
Secretary Tom Kando Kandotom@csus.edu 916-852-0253	Treasurer Amy Rogers Amy@ScienceThrillersMedia.com 916-469-7695
<i>Note that the Executive committee consists of president, VP, secretary, treasurer, and communications director, the five elected officers.</i>	Communications Director Norma Jean Thornton normathornton@yahoo.com 916-991-5751
Membership Chair Sharon Darrow Conference Chair Norma Thornton	Webmaster Ted Witt tedwitt@prettyroadpress.com 916-934-8434
Speakers Bureau Chair Pending	Awards Dinner Coordinator Norma Thornton normathornton@yahoo.com 916-991-5751
Scholarship Director Kimberly Edwards	Immediate Past President Dennis Potter dennispotter56@aol.com 916-208-8334 (work) 916-253-758 (home)

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

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