

## An editor in New York

*At our September meeting, Alexandra Nahlous spoke about her experiences as winner of the Beatrice Davis Fellowship during 2010 and her observations about the women's fiction market. Following are some extracts from her comprehensive report on the world of New York publishing.*

The Beatrice Davis Fellowship is something I have always aspired to win. From the very first years of my editorial life I was aware of this extraordinary award, and of its significance to the lives of the fellows who were lucky and talented enough to win it. The value of the fellowship is immeasurable to the fellows but it is also tremendously valuable to the entire Australian publishing industry. Every single fellow has contributed enormously to enriching the industry.

### Aim of my fellowship

I have always been drawn to women's fiction, in particular romance fiction. New York is by far the largest producer of commercial women's fiction. New York publishers are many and varied, and they produce *New York Times* bestsellers time and again, in scope and volume unmatched in Australia. This is not simply about larger country equals greater numbers; US publishers have made an immensely profitable, thriving business of women's fiction publishing,

in particular romance. When I applied for the Beatrice Davis Fellowship, I wanted to explore intricately how US publishers achieve the successes they do, and to investigate the editing of commercial women's fiction in all its myriad guises: from contemporary, to chick lit, to romance.

### What is women's fiction?

Women's fiction is a broad, varied area that encompasses books written by women and books written for women. When I asked New York editors how they would define the genre, some told me that you can't (!), while others said you can define it by saying what it is

not: it is not a thriller; it is not a crime fiction; it is not a romance. Whatever you may think about women's fiction, it is more than clear to any editor, publisher or reader that there are books that speak to women readers—often only women readers—and that they are an important section in every bookstore.

### How the fellowship would work

My central idea was to gain placements with one large multinational publisher, one independent or smaller publisher, and an agent of women's fiction. I thought this would be my best chance to gain a thorough understanding of the

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**Next meeting: Tuesday, 1 February 2011**

### Who would want to direct a writers' festival?

Sydney Writers' Festival artistic director Chip Rolley talks about the challenges and surprises he has experienced at the helm of a festival with some 300 events and over 400 participants. As Sydney Writers' Festival 2011 looms large, Chip will outline his hopes and themes for the upcoming festival in May.

**Chip Rolley** is an editor, literary project manager and writer who has worked in Australia, the USA and China. Conversant with current literary, social, cultural and political issues, he has an eclectic background in marketing, advertising and literary events management. He is also an activist for freedom of expression, particularly through his recent involvement with both the International and Sydney PEN organisations.

In his writing, Chip has covered a wide range of subjects from politics to poetry, food to fashion. He has a particular focus on literature and Chinese politics and culture. His work has appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Australian*, *Griffith Review*, *Vogue* and *Rolling Stone*.

Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney at 6.30 p.m. for 7.00 p.m. Drinks and light refreshments provided. \$15 for members, \$20 non-members and \$10 for students or concession card holders. RSVP (02) 9294 4999 (voicemail) or [membership@editorsnsw.com](mailto:membership@editorsnsw.com) by Friday, 28 January 2011.

**March meeting: Society of Editors (NSW) Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, 1 March 2011—FREE to all members.**

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editing process, as well as to compare the practices of a multinational versus an independent versus an agent.

The specific questions I had were:

- How much editing do in-house editors actually do in general women's fiction versus romance fiction?
- Are editors so specialised that they only work on certain areas: that is contemporary women's fiction or chick lit or romance
- Subgenres: to what degree do editors and publishers seek out the creation of new subgenres? In other words, how organic is this process?
- What is the balance of the development of new subgenres between editors and publishers, agents and authors?
- Subverting the genre and subgenre rules and structures: to what degree is this allowed in considering making a book a success?
- How do editors and authors work within the structural constraints of women's fiction writing and publishing but still create something fresh and new and exciting?
- How do the publishers of successful women's fiction authors compare?
- What are the key elements that create successful women's fiction?

### **Placements and visits**

In organising the whole experience, securing placements proved to be the most challenging element. Notwithstanding time zone differences, delayed responses from busy publishers, and the need to bypass lumbering bureaucracy I was able to organise three main placements at:

- Voice/Hyperion,
- Writers House
- Atria, Simon & Schuster.

It was crucial to have one day free during the working week in order to meet publishers and editors. The publishers I visited were: Grand Central Publishing (Hachette Book Group), St Martin's Press, Harlequin, Avon Books (HarperCollins), Berkley Publishing Group (Penguin), Amy Einhorn Books (Penguin) and Pocket Books (Simon & Schuster).

### **WRITERS HOUSE:**

#### **The agency perspective**

Even if you have never picked up a Nora Roberts novel, you need only walk into any Australian Borders or Dymocks to

witness her enormity in the women's fiction market as her titles can take up an entire display. Her impact is doubly so in the USA. Roberts is primarily a romance writer, but she also writes futuristic police procedural novels under J. D. Robb. She has published around 182 novels and produces an average of five new novels a year. According to her agent, Amy Berkower, her average first print run is one million copies. As a writer, she exists on a scale that is incomparable. So I really wanted to know how an agent manages an author of that calibre: how do you keep her fresh and exciting, and how

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**'They are seen to be much braver as writers and people than many other commercial fiction writers.'**

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do you keep her selling?

My placement at Writers House was one day a week for six weeks. Most of my time at the agency was spent reading unsolicited manuscripts for agents such as Robin Rue, who is Kresley Cole's agent, and I sometimes brainstormed ideas for series titles for new acquisitions. Being in the agency was a totally new experience for me, and working with Robin Rue and Amy Berkower was a revelation.

For these two agents, women's fiction equals talent. Because the New York publishing scene is pervasive in this area, the fierce competition means that only truly talented writers hit the big time. All the women's fiction authors they have represented work very hard at their craft with a lot of passion and ability in order to achieve their great successes. One of the defining elements of writers of this genre is that they are seen to be much braver as writers and people than many other commercial fiction writers. While they work within defined genres or subgenres, or constraints and conventions, they take risks in their writing that are unparalleled. Robin Rue and Amy Berkower believe this to be one of the reasons why the genre continues to morph and grow, and why they themselves continue to be passionate about their own work in this genre.

The biggest current trend is paranormal fiction. It has been so for

around thirteen years, probably since the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* became a cult hit, and it does not seem to be showing any signs of slowing down. In fact, in the mass market, it is the only romance category that has continued to grow despite the recent financial crisis.

Romance fiction carries a sense of optimism that is addictive to readers. It takes people away from their lives and into intriguing worlds, and helps them to escape the drudgery of everyday existence. Here is perhaps the heart of its resilience to the financial crisis.

### **Packaging and targeting markets**

Packaging and targeting markets are central to the success of every women's fiction novel, whether commercial or romance. Packaging is the one area where agents will be actively involved every step of the way with the editor, particularly for authors such as Cole and Roberts. If readers cannot define whether a book is suspense or paranormal or contemporary romance, they will not purchase it. Similarly, if publishers do not make clear to booksellers where a book fits into this huge market, they will not be able to sell it either.

As agents, Robin and Amy never edit. They certainly read their clients' submissions, particularly those attached to a publishing house, and they will alert editors to problems they may have found in the manuscript, but, they say, editing is subjective and it is not the agent's job.

An agent's role, therefore—especially with a bestselling author—is to support both the author and the editor together, while, of course, making sure the author's interests are protected at all times.

For most senior agents strategy is where their strength lies, and so editing is not part of the process. This begs the question, therefore: are big-selling authors edited anymore? Amy Berkower is always involved in discussing her authors' ideas for a new book, which are often simultaneous or complementary to discussions with the editor, and involve much to-ing and fro-ing, particularly if discussing the creation of a new series, and thrashing out how to make it better or more interesting than the last. The mechanics

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## Workshop report: Books for older children and teens

*On Thursday, 21 October The Society of Editors (NSW) held the second of two popular children's book editing workshops, presented by Mark Macleod.*

Although this class followed on from the picture book class held earlier in the year, it stood just as easily on its own. While the content was slanted towards children's editing, much of the editorial advice, particularly with regard to working with authors and publishers and considering audience, could be applied to editing generally.

As this was editing for 'older readers' the class began by establishing what age group this actually included. This can be a complex question to answer as 'Young Adult' or 'YA' fiction can include a variety of ages, depending on who you ask. The challenge, then, was to establish the purpose of grouping in the first place—who imposes the guidelines and who cares? With that in mind, Mark went on to ask us how we thought kids actually select the books they read and gave us some interesting insights into the realities, which led to further discussion on marketing and presentation of books for older children.

Mark pointed out that, as with picture books, layout of books was very important for older children. As children get older they begin to choose books for themselves and he explained the different aspects of a book that appeal to these readers. We discussed the different types of readers within various age groups and how these children might choose books, and Mark provided plenty of examples to show us precisely what he meant.

Next up was breaking down age categories; how they are split and the topics each includes and how children respond to them. The Young Adult category sparked particular interest as it is a hot topic at the moment and a changing category in terms of how it is approached by readers and publishers alike. From deciding what to publish, to finding out what teenagers want to read, to actually getting these books into their hands, this is a particularly tricky age group to cater for.

Mark described being a children's book editor as like being an anthropologist—the best way to be a

good children's book editor or author is to be around kids, or at least be in a position to watch and observe them. Of course, this is advice that would follow for any editor of any genre: know your audience. Both the guest authors, Andrew Daddo and Susanne Gervay, covered similar points in their talks to us.

Andrew began by talking us through his journey to becoming a successful author. He told us of the struggle to write the first acceptable manuscript and of what it is like to be a 'celebrity' author. But more importantly, he talked about how to write for the audience—where he gets his inspiration and what it is like to do school visits—and how to collaborate successfully with an editor and an illustrator.

We learned how important it is to be able to see things from different points of view as Andrew described working through one particular manuscript, when the story did not work for his editor, Mark, and the pictures were not always executed the way he had imagined or written them. Andrew and Mark talked about the give and take of the editor/author relationship—how to work around stalemates and how to come up with compromise successfully. While the editor might be there to correct a perceived error, Andrew argued that sometimes an 'error' might not matter if the story is exciting and the child is going to get caught up in the action. Will a child notice something that an adult will pick up if it is something that keeps the story fun? It is important for both the editor and the author to consider how important a correction may be to a story.

Susanne Gervay felt much the same and said that an editor was someone to help her find her vision. She went on to relate her experience of publishing the 'unpublishable' and the impact of writing intimate material that so closely involves her key audience. She shared some personal memories of school visits and what they have meant for her. Susanne also described her different editing experiences and explained how

things can go right or wrong, depending on what sort of changes are made and how they are communicated to the author.

Both authors and Mark talked about the need to respect the author and their work and to take care with the writer's feelings during the editing process. Both authors pointed out the importance of sensitive feedback and gave us real-life examples of how harsh criticism can affect an author. Andrew reported being crippled for months after struggling to write a manuscript that 'worked' and Susanne said she could be felled for up to six months from one thoughtless comment. Andrew and Mark pointed out that many stories come from real-life experiences so that a criticism of a manuscript can feel much more personal.

Of course, not all manuscripts come from well-known, published authors. As editors we need to be able to handle manuscripts that come in raw. Mark walked us through the process of crafting the ideal cover letter and also clarified how to work out the positioning of a manuscript in accordance with the age categories we had looked at previously. A number of exercises gave us further insight into what it would be like to work on a raw manuscript from scratch and gave us a chance to work out how we might decide on the best structure of a work, how to position it in the age category and how best to go about promoting it.

By the end of the day we had developed a much deeper understanding of what goes into developing stories and books for older children. This was the perfect class for anyone who wants to learn more about not just editing for children, but editing fiction in general. The lessons from Mark and the insights from Andrew and Susanne were invaluable and certainly applicable to any genre, regardless of audience.

**Abigail Nathan**  
**Bothersome Words**

of editing, both structural and copy, are left completely up to the editor and the in-house production process. But they do not hesitate to tell editors that they are over-editing, particularly for their established authors. As Amy said, 'If an author has sold four or five books consistently well, you have to trust that both author and reader are agreeing, so if an author is telling you they are being overedited, you need to support them.'

### VOICE/HYPERION

The primary reason I chose Voice is that it is a unique and largely independent publisher, although it is part of the Disney group and is connected to ABC television. Voice describes itself as: 'a new imprint of books for women at the center of life—fiction and non-fiction for smart, educated, busy, curious, seasoned women for whom reading is a passion. An imprint by and for women—as women see themselves.' An imprint dedicated to women's writing intrigued me and I wanted to find out what differences, if any, this engendered in their operation as a publisher. Voice is strongly driven by Ellen Archer, the publisher of both Voice and Hyperion, and Barbara Jones, editorial director of Voice and Hyperion, but because the imprint is an intricate part of Hyperion, it is also led by the editor-in-chief, Elisabeth Dyssegaard.

I worked chiefly with Barbara Jones, which was a brilliant experience because I got to see a completely different side of publishing to the one I had emerged from as an in-house editor. I attended acquisitions meetings, marketing meetings, sales meetings and book events. Amazingly, Barbara had organised for me to work on several of her titles—*Drop by Drop* (non-fiction), *Only the Truth* (fiction), *Hills Covered in Wishes* (fiction), *The Profiler* (non-fiction) and *The Red Book* (fiction)—which enabled me to discuss the various aspects of editing and acquiring with her.

### Acquiring versus commissioning

There is a strong distinction in the USA between these two terms. Whenever I said 'commissioning' to editors, they thought I was talking about a newspaper or magazine scenario—as in, asking writers to write certain

pieces. Rather, they refer to what they do as 'acquiring'—buying manuscripts that have been written organically. Attending the acquisitions meetings of Hyperion was extremely enlightening. The editors and assistants not only went through titles they were in the process of buying (and discussed issues surrounding each title), but they also explored ideas for potential acquisitions, including brainstorming key elements. It was in these meetings that I discovered how innovative Voice/Hyperion are, and how determined they are to overcome the various difficulties

**'Whenever I said 'commissioning' to editors, they thought I was talking about a newspaper or magazine scenario...'**

encountered by the entire industry due to the financial crisis. There is a 'blog watch' team that keeps an eye on what is happening in the blogging world, particularly as there have been so many successful books to come out of blogging.

This attitude filtered through to their entire list, including women's fiction. Sarah Landes says that now more than ever, authors and editors need to think outside the box in order to create success.

Voice allows Sarah and Barbara to publish types of women's fiction that Hyperion have not done before. When considering fiction, they look for a great read, a fresh narrative voice and strong characterisation. Because Voice is building a fiction list, and because Hyperion is a front-list publisher (where most budgets are spent promoting the front-list titles), the fiction has to be bought at a modest price (that is, small advances of only a few thousand dollars, as opposed to tens or hundreds of thousands), and it has to be good enough to sell itself, in a sense.

Whether publishing fiction or non-fiction, Barbara says that for Voice, because they are often publishing a book that is unusual for the company, it is crucial to begin the process of thinking and shaping the company attitude right away. For example, if a book is a memoir, from the very first company communication and editorial meeting, she begins to sell it to her own team as a memoir, so that it's a known

and trusted quantity and it doesn't become lost in the myriad breakdowns that would be wrong for it.

### E-books

Hyperion was my first New York introduction to the highly topical issue of e-books. All the editors and publishers I visited were talking about e-books, the Kindle versus the iPad, Amazon versus the agency model, and much more. It would be remiss of me not to relay some of the remarkable things I learned about e-books and how US publishers are engaging with digital publishing.

- All publishers are now actively publishing e-books. Prior to the advent of the iPad, they were convinced that no book would be published for e-format only. But now, especially at Hyperion, publishing only e-books is a real consideration. Which books will be chosen for this format remains to be seen.

- For the majority of publishers, about two to four per cent of books in their lists are already available in digital form. The challenge now for all publishers is to decide whether or not to digitalise all the titles on their lists, particularly when a new book by an experienced author is published, giving readers the opportunity to purchase the entire back list.

- E-books, as an extra format, do not cancel out the usual costs of publishing: there are still advances to be paid to authors, publishers still have to print and distribute the physical books, and the infrastructure to produce e-books is costly, so the financial loss through the lower price point of e-books has yet to be fully measured.

- Women's fiction sells well in the e-book format. There is no evidence that e-books have increased sales in this genre. The figures show that women are buying women's fiction for their e-readers, especially sexy and paranormal romances (the speculation being that it is probably easier for women to buy these novels online).

- On average, publishers are quoting a 176 per cent increase in sales for e-books in the past two years. Hyperion has experienced an increase of 300 per cent. In particular, their *How to* section is doing very well, as are cookbooks and diet books.

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## ATRIA, SIMON & SCHUSTER

At my first meeting with Judith Curr, Atria's executive vice president and publisher showed me a series she had just acquired and told me they were going to make it a bestseller. I was not surprised by her confidence; Atria has, after all, published more than 165 *New York Times* bestsellers, and they publish some of the biggest names in women's fiction, including Jodi Picoult, Jude Devereaux and Jennifer Weiner. Judith organised for me to work with Peter Borland, vice president and editorial director, and I was instantly handed two manuscripts to work on: Shirley Maclaine's *I'm Over All That* and Portia Di Rossi's first memoir, *Unbearable Lightness*. This gave me a solid daily purpose of tasks (and allowed me to do what I loved), but I was able to break that up by attending meetings with Peter: from editorial, to marketing, positioning and publicity, and then the Simon & Schuster sales conference.

Atria publishes around 70 original books a year, and Peter's list comprises twelve to fourteen of those books. He is the only editor I met who had previously worked as a freelance editor.

Although I was astounded by Voice/Hyperion's innovative approach, particularly on the technology front, being at Atria showed me innovation on a much larger scale, and it helped me to realise that all publishers are grappling with finding new and creative ways to break through the financial crisis and continue to publish strongly in this rapidly changing environment.

One of the things taking off at Atria was the implementation of iPhone Apps. How does this apply to books? Readers can download apps about their favourite authors, such as Jodi Picoult, which for \$0.99 give them access to an entirely new side to the author. This includes seeing all the covers of their entire back list, visual author interviews, book reviews and articles—the possibilities are endless and are only limited by the technology.

The question that remains is: will phone apps help an author to earn out their advance? In the meantime, the company is trying to decide where costs for such things are allocated, and whether or not they are part of the book's publishing budget. (Atria's e-books sub-label is Atria Unbound.)

## How Atria's editors work

What I really loved about Atria was that the editors and Peter Borland and Judith Curr all worked very closely together, mapping out the various aspects of a book's and author's marketing, publicity and release into the world, and that they collectively make all the decisions necessary for their list. I was surprised that there was no 'covers meeting' where Atria covers need to go through the greater Simon & Schuster sales and marketing team—the editor and Judith have final say on covers and packaging. As Judith said, 'We know what the book is about, we know what it should look like, and we'll send it out into the world as it should be.'

The same rules apply to acquiring titles: the final decision lies with Judith, but the editors have incredible freedom in acquiring books they believe in, as long as they can convince Judith of their worth. The result is that the imprint is highly focused and closely directed in its purpose. If there is a million-dollar

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**'Copyediting...is seen as a highly technical, grammatical function, and most editors do not check or peruse copyedits.'**

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advance (not unusual in New York's publishing scene), then there is a more formal acquisitions approval process, but otherwise Judith has the final say.

## Structural editing versus line editing versus copyediting

One of the things that fascinated me while working with both Barbara Jones (Voice) and Peter Borland is the distinction editors make between these three types of editing. When I was first given the Shirley Maclaine book, Peter asked me not to make any marks on the pages, but advised that I was free to do a line edit. I took this to mean a copyedit, which concerned me because I thought it was going to be highly complicated not being able to mark up the pages. But as he explained to me, line editing and copyediting are entirely different things: to line edit, you look at making specific notes on the text by page and chapter, but your main task is to look out for the overarching plot, tone, characterisation, story arc and so on. Copyediting, on the other hand, is

seen as a highly technical, grammatical function, and most editors do not check or peruse copyedits, which are often done simultaneously to their line edits (often combined at a later stage by the production editor). So what constitutes a structural edit? It is as we understand it, but without looking too closely at the language.

None of the editors I met would ever send line editing to a freelance editor. Copyeditors are regarded well for their technical brilliance, but they would never be trusted to look at the manuscript broadly enough to constitute a line or structural edit. Although I did not meet any freelance copyeditors in New York, I could not help but feel frustrated by the limitations placed upon them in this publishing scene.

On the question of 'how much editing do editors do?', I am thrilled to report that all the editors I spoke with at Atria (and Voice/Hyperion) still do a lot of editing—structural and line. Greer Hendricks, Jennifer Weiner's editor, works in a similar style to Peter Borland: they both write very detailed structural reports that include queries about chapters, paragraphs and lines in the manuscript. There is no shortcut for them. They simply have to do the work themselves because, although they both have associate and assistant editors working for them, they are the primary editors working on their lists, and their authors, particularly those of the calibre of Jen Weiner, expect them to offer comprehensive feedback and guidance.

## Format and packaging

Like all the editors and publishers I spoke with, Atria's editors are greatly concerned with getting the format right and putting the right package out into the marketplace. All women's fiction has moved from illustrated, chick lit, playful, bright and light covers to much more serious, photographic (aspirational photography rather than directive), with strong, dominant type usage for author names (to indicate their prominence in the marketplace), and almost always a quote of praise on the front cover, preferably by another hugely selling author in the genre.

The question of chick lit: is it now simply 'women's fiction'? Jennifer Weiner was the queen of chick lit.

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With her fifth book, *Good in Bed*, for example, she created a lovable heroine who is not normally written about: she is overweight (or 'plus-size') and she is 'good in bed'. This was a bit of a mark of chick lit: an unusual character, a comedic plot that is genuinely funny, and a larger-than-life scenario that still aims to be realistic. Chick lit spoke to women in a lighthearted, fun manner; it depicted slightly unusual, glamorous lives and offered an escape from the everyday. There was always a romantic element or romantic interest, but it pushed the traditional romance novel ideal of 'Mr Right Forever' and created 'Mr Right Now'. Chick lit's readers were working women in their twenties and thirties.

When I asked editors to define chick lit, they said things like, 'a group of friends in the city', 'women shopping and playing', 'fun, laughter, sexy' and 'an extension on romance fiction'.

So what happened to chick lit? It did not die—in fact, Greer Hendricks says, controversially, 'Jen Weiner is still chick lit!'—its writers simply grew up, and their readers grew up with them. What we now call 'women's fiction' can be described as having bigger storylines, deeper issues and more universal women's concerns. There is still a romantic element, but it is much more complex than the issue of 'Mr Right'. It can still be humorous and fun, but, ultimately, the storylines and the characters are more multifaceted. The packaging is still woman-focused. It must appeal to its readers, and although the type has become much more serious (emulating the big thriller treatment for author names) and publishers now use photographs rather than illustrations, they are still clearly and definably covers created to appeal to women. If they did not appeal, they would be lost in the marketplace.

*Alexandra Nahlous is Commissioning Editor, Fiction at Pan Macmillan Australia. She has worked across fiction and nonfiction in her 13 years as editor and was formerly the editorial manager at Allen & Unwin. Her list of authors includes Christos Tsiolkas, Wendy Harmer, Luke Davies, Rae Morris, Malcolm Knox, Robert Wainwright and Lisa Heidke.*

*The complete version of her report including her blogs from New York may be downloaded from the Australian Publishers Association website [www.publishers.asn.au](http://www.publishers.asn.au).*

Copy deadline for the next  
(March 2011) issue of

**Blue Pencil**

Tuesday, 18 January 2011

## Tiered membership

The society's tiered membership system will work as follows:

### Categories

This membership year (2011) the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. will offer members the option of two categories:

1. Existing and new members can become a professional editor member, with full entitlements, for the annual fee of \$85, provided you have two years' experience in a paid editing role and can supply two letters confirming your experience; or
2. Existing and new members can become an associate member for the annual fee of \$65 with reduced entitlements (an associate member cannot vote at an election, cannot become an office bearer and cannot be listed in the *Editorial Services Directory*).

### The new system

With the new two-tiered membership structure, former 'ordinary' members can continue to enjoy member benefits as either an associate member or a professional editor member (the latter by formal application, as explained below).

### Experience

Professional editor members must have at least two years' in-house experience as an editor or the equivalent freelance or part-time experience. For example, if you worked half-time as an editor for four years (part-time or freelance) then that would be an acceptable equivalent to two years full-time work as an in-house editor. Professional experience must be in a paid editing role. As professional members may have had career breaks, there is no limit on how long ago the professional editing experience was obtained. Professional editor members will be asked to provide details of their experience and two letters (in English) that can be checked by a subcommittee appointed for this purpose. The subcommittee will simply confirm the statements supplied by the third parties. The letters can just be a statement of the years of experience in an editorial role. See the essential **Professional Editor Membership form** for more details about requirements.

### Corporate Associates

A new category of Corporate Associates is also available. Publishing companies and other businesses and organisations that support the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.'s aims can become Corporate Associates. For an annual fee of \$400, Corporate Associates of the society will receive five copies of *Blue Pencil* each month and two copies of the current *Editorial Services Directory*, five free admissions to each monthly meeting and two free admissions to one special event per year, such as the Christmas dinner. The usual member rates on professional development courses and workshops will apply for up to five attendees from the Corporate Associate organisation (a saving of approximately \$95 per person).

**The Committee  
Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.**

## Workshop report: Editing Intensive 1

*The society's Editing Intensive 1 workshops have been well attended this year. Kate Benecke, who was at the workshop on 4 November, looks back at the day.*

The workshop had two main messages: make informed editing choices, and apply them consistently. 'Edit the same way on page 600 as you did on page one.'

All the good advice was swimming around in my head when the workshop concluded. At day's end, I am sure I was the only person in the train carriage thinking about pilcrows and daggers\*.

Heading home to regional NSW, I noticed things. The sign near the escalator at the airport read 'access via trains' and 'access via walkway' whereas the other side read 'All Departure Gates'. Practical—but something inconsistent there!

For many of us, especially those working solo for much of the time, a whole-day session with a group working with equal precision, or more, is great; dissecting text, dissecting decisions, sharing reasons.

There is value in refining work processes, boosting professionalism and checking we are 'on track'. Of course, the workshop is also preparation for those sitting the upcoming IPed exam.

There was certainly workshop demand. The November workshop filled within five days. When a December workshop was announced, the same thing happened. Another workshop was planned for January.

The workshop offers information, exercises, some fairly fast editing, and detail. One early exercise was to create a style sheet for a given article. And the article—superannuation. Ah, superannuation. Painful to think about, painful to edit!

So, in summary, it was a well-selected workshop exercise. There

were more than a few style sheet entries required: style for percentages; style for other numbers, money, dates and ages; capitalisation for 'government' (or not); style for laws; and so on.

Style and structure are most likely to be clear and systematic, we were reminded, with an accurate brief (describing document purpose, intended audience, author's expectations); good reference books; and a thorough, succinct style sheet.

'All choices for spelling or style go straight on the style sheet.' This was like our workshop mantra!

The presenter, Meryl Potter, worked through the workshop notes and topics

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**'Good decisions early in the editing process guard against problems later.'**

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raised by participants with enthusiasm. She encouraged us, trying not to crush participants with the wealth of detail that emerged from exercises and discussion.

There were some good tips on reference books. Apart from a reputable dictionary and the *Style manual*, some recommended books were: *The Chicago Manual of Style*; *Butcher's Copy-editing* by Judith Butcher, Caroline Drake and Maureen Leach; and Amy Einsohn's *The Copyeditor's Handbook*.

Another great exercise was about single-day and multi-day coach passes, combined with tourist attractions. You get the picture—all those names, abbreviations, prices, dates, tables of costs and captions.

The afternoon saw some tricky bits (excuse the technical term) focused on: measurements and conversions of measurements for cookery, craft, DIY and so on; currencies and converting currencies; spacing and shortenings for units of measurement and rounding of measurements.

Another good quote: 'Good decisions early in the editing process guard against problems later.' Who doesn't want fewer problems?

The day covered workbriefs, reference books, variable style decisions, style sheets, mark-up symbols, lists and tables, captions, and a little on charts and graphs. Queries were taken. Exercises were undertaken. Lunch was eaten, morning and afternoon tea devoured.

I don't think it would be possible to cover more in one day.

By 4.00 p.m. my head was spinning with hyphens and dashes, tables and captions, A\$ and AUD, bowls of mints and jugs of water.

If I have left anything out, or unknowingly misrepresented some part of the day, I apologise to Meryl Potter and/or the group. I must have been momentarily distracted by a jug of water or a mint. Or a pilcrow or dagger?

**Kate Benecke**  
**Kate Benecke Communications**

\*The pilcrow and dagger are typographical symbols:  
—pilcrow is the paragraph mark ¶  
—dagger is commonly used to denote a footnote †.

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**New Horizons**  
for Editing and Publishing

7 to 9 September, 2011  
Dockside Conference Centre, Cockle Bay, Sydney

## **2010 Book Design Awards, closing date 21 January**

Books published in 2010 are eligible for entry into the 59th Annual Book Design Awards. Entry forms and other details are available on the Australian Publishers' Association (APA) website [www.publishers.asn.au](http://www.publishers.asn.au)

Entries and books must arrive in the APA office by Friday, 21 January.

## **Unwin Trust UK-Australian Fellowship, closing 30 January**

The Unwin Trust Fellowship enables a member of the Australian book trade to visit the UK for up to three months. Anyone working in bookselling and publishing is eligible.

The fellowship is designed to enhance understanding of the book trade in the UK and provide a means to increase understanding of each market. The Fellows have at least three years' experience in the book industry on applying, and a clear view as to how the experience gained will be of benefit to their career. For more information contact Maree McCaskill, Australian Publishers Association by email at [maree.mccaskill@publishers.asn.au](mailto:maree.mccaskill@publishers.asn.au)

## **Book Industry Strategy Group (BISG), submission date now 31 January**

The deadline for submissions to the Book Industry Strategy Group (BISG) has been extended to 31 January 2011.

A key requirement of the BISG process is to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues facing both the industry and consumers as the Australian book industry incorporates digital technologies.

Dr Barry Jones AO, the Group's chair, strongly encourages editors to take the opportunity to influence the future of the Australian industry.

## **Style Manual 7th edition on hold**

The Australian Government has announced that it will not proceed with phase two of the tender process to explore options for revising and updating the Australian Government Style manual, 6th edition, published in 2002.

## **Beatrice Davis Fellowship 2012, closing 25 March**

IPEd has announced that it will join the major sponsors, the Australia Council for the Arts and the Australian Publishers' Association, to support the 2012 Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship. Information about the Fellowship including guidelines and the application form may be downloaded from the APA website: [www.publishers.asn.au](http://www.publishers.asn.au).

## **Accreditation exam, May 2011**

The IPEd Accreditation Board expects to hold the third Accreditation Exam in May 2011. Costs for the 2011 exam will be finalised closer to the exam time. A

guide for candidates will be available on the IPEd website early in 2011. Visit [www.iped-editors.org/](http://www.iped-editors.org/) for information about past exams.

## **Diary dates for 2011 Overseas**

### **Bologna Children's Book Fair**

28 to 31 March, Bologna, Italy

### **Oxford Literary Festival**

2 to 10 April, Oxford, UK

### **London Book Fair**

11 to 13 April, London, UK

### **National Editors Conference**

27 to 29 May, Vancouver, Canada

### **Hay Festival**

26 May to 5 June, Hay-on-Wye, Wales

### **Edinburgh International Book Festival**

13 to 29 August, Edinburgh, Scotland

### **SfEP Conference**

25 to 27 September, Oxford, UK

### **Frankfurt Book Fair**

12 to 16 October, Frankfurt, Germany

## **Interstate**

### **Perth Writers Festival**

4 to 7 March

### **Alice Springs Writers' Festival**

6 to 9 May (to be confirmed)

### **Melbourne Writers Festival**

26 Aug to 4 September

### **Brisbane Writers Festival**

7 to 11 September

## **New South Wales**

### **Sydney Writers Festival**

16 to 22 May

### **Mildura Writers' Festival**

14 to 17 July

### **Byron Bay Writers Festival**

5 to 7 August

## **Call for papers – New Horizons for Editing and Publishing conference**

This is the first call for papers for 'New Horizons for Editing and Publishing', the National Editors Conference 2011.

- papers are for 25–30 minute sessions during the main conference (8–9 September)
- closing date for submitting abstracts is 10 February 2011
- download the submission form for abstracts (300 words) from our conference website [www.editorsnsw.com/conference2011.htm](http://www.editorsnsw.com/conference2011.htm)
- the conference committee will notify applicants as to whether their proposal has been accepted on 24 February 2011

- full accepted papers due 7 August 2011
- papers will be considered for inclusion in the conference proceedings, which will be published electronically.

'New Horizons for Editing and Publishing' is a broad theme that encompasses trends, innovations and new markets across all genres of editing, and includes both traditional and electronic publishing. Three streams will cover different areas of work for editors: trade (fiction and nonfiction); academic, education and technical; government and corporate. We especially encourage senior in-house editors to submit papers for the conference.



## Xmas Dinner thanks

Another great venue with terrific food, another great Christmas party!

Thanks to the hardworking committee, our festive dinner at the Red Snail Cafe was a wonderful night. Special mentions go to Therese Hall, Hillary Goldsmith and Anna Rauls for making all the arrangements, to Terry Johnston for finding the venue and to Susie Pilkington, Jacqui Smith, Pam Peters and Catherine Etteridge for their assistance. And what about those prizes?

Thanks go to our generous corporate sponsors Murdoch Books and Allen & Unwin for donating a fabulous collection of books as lucky door prizes.

See you next year...

## Membership renewals 2011

The deadline for membership renewal for 2011 is 31 December. You should have received your membership renewal notice by post. If you have moved recently make sure you notify the Administration manager, Anna Rauls, by email to [membership@editorsnsw.com](mailto:membership@editorsnsw.com) so she can update your postal address details.

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.  
PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007; Voicemail: (02) 9294 4999  
[www.editorsnsw.com](http://www.editorsnsw.com).

## Blue Pencil

Editor: Denise Holden

Assistants: Moira Elliott, Catherine Etteridge and Julie Harders.

Printer: Complete Design, Marrickville

Published: 11 issues a year (combined January/February issue)

Your comments and contributions are welcome. Mail them to the Editor, *Blue Pencil*, Society of Editors (NSW) Inc., PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007, or email the Editor at [bluepencil@editorsnsw.com](mailto:bluepencil@editorsnsw.com).

## Copy deadline for the March issue is Tuesday, 18 January 2011.

The views expressed in the articles and letters, or the material contained in any advertisement or insert, are those of individual authors, not of the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

## Advertising rates

Full page \$375; half page \$200; one-third page \$125; quarter page \$100 one-sixth page, \$75 (half of one column). Inserts: \$200 per hundred for DL-sized or A4 pre-folded to DL size. Circulation: approximately 400. Please note that the committee reserves the right to decide whether advertisements are appropriate for this newsletter.

## Membership

Membership of the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. is open to anyone working as an editor for publication (print or electronic documents) and anyone who supports the society's aims. Membership is available in different categories.

Membership runs for a calendar year. The 2011 fees are \$85 for professional members (new or renewal) and \$65 for associate members (new or renewal). Interested organisations can become corporate associates for \$400 per year.

To obtain a membership application form visit the Society of Editors (NSW) website—[www.editorsnsw.com](http://www.editorsnsw.com), phone (02) 9294 4999 or write to PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007.

## Listing in the Editorial Services Directory

The *Editorial Services Directory* is available online at [www.editorsnsw.com/esd](http://www.editorsnsw.com/esd). New listings and updates can be added quarterly as follows:

- January (deadline 31 December)
- April (deadline 31 March)
- July (deadline 30 June)
- October (deadline 30 September).

The cost is \$40 per year in addition to the fee for membership of the society. New listings should be submitted using a template available from the administration manager at [membership@editorsnsw.com](mailto:membership@editorsnsw.com).

## Committee meetings

All members are welcome to attend the society's committee meetings, generally held on the second Tuesday of each month. Please contact a committee member for details if you wish to attend the next meeting.

## Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. **2010 COMMITTEE**

**President: Pam Peters**

Email: president@editorsnsw.com

**Vice presidents:**

**Susie Pilkington**

Email: vp1@editorsnsw.com

**Owen Kavanagh**

Email: vp2@editorsnsw.com

**Secretary: Shelley Reid**

Email: secretary@editorsnsw.com

**Treasurer: Hillary Goldsmith**

Email: treasurer@editorsnsw.com

**General committee members:**

**Terry Johnston**

Email: committee1@editorsnsw.com

**Julie Harders**

Email: committee2@editorsnsw.com

**Sonja Goernitz**

Email: committee3@editorsnsw.com

**Therese Hall**

Email: committee5@editorsnsw.com

**Jacqui Smith**

Email: committee4@editorsnsw.com

**Administration manager: Anna Rauls**

Email: membership@editorsnsw.com

**Newsletter editor: Denise Holden**

Email: bluepencil@editorsnsw.com

**Publicity officer: Terry Johnston**

Email: publicity@editorsnsw.com

**Meetings coordinator: Therese Hall**

Email: meetings@editorsnsw.com

**Professional development coordinator**

Email: education@editorsnsw.com

**Website coordinator: Abigail Nathan**

Email: web@editorsnsw.com

**Editorial Services Directory**

Email: membership@editorsnsw.com

**Conference convenor: Catherine Etteridge**

Email: conf@editorsnsw.com

## **Professional development**

### **Editing Intensive 2**

**Date:** Thursday, 17 February 2011

Thursday, 10 March 2011

**Time:** 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

**Presenter:** Meryl Potter, DE

**Venue:** City Tattersalls Club, 198 Pitt Street, Sydney

**Cost:** \$195 for members, \$290 for non-members (includes lunch, morning and afternoon teas).

**Please register by 2 February AND 23 February 2011.**

Participants will spend most of the day editing and discussing the approach to a short text, comparable to the Part 2 text in the sample accreditation exams. The workshop will focus on:

- following the brief provided and making style decisions
- developing an efficient style sheet appropriate to the text
- writing sound and civil author queries
- establishing the heading hierarchy and working with mark-up.

This workshop is not for beginners: you should have some editing experience to get the most from this workshop, or have completed the 2009 Copyediting and 2010–2011 Editing Intensive 1 workshops.

### **Grammar Essentials**

**Date:** Thursday, 17 March 2011

**Time:** To be advised

**Presenter:** Pam Peters, Emeritus Professor Linguistics, Macquarie University

**Venue:** City Tattersalls Club, 198 Pitt Street, Sydney

**Cost:** \$195 for members, \$290 for non-members (includes lunch, morning and afternoon teas).

**Please register by Wednesday, 2 March 2011**

Editors often feel that they need more grammar, but how much is enough? This workshop is designed to be interactive and to allow for discussion of the ins and outs of usage as they arise.

### **Preparing for the Accreditation exam**

**Date:** Thursday, 7 April 2011

**Time:** 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

**Presenters:** Pam Peters and Meryl Potter

**Venue:** City Tattersalls Club, 198 Pitt Street, Sydney

**Cost:** \$150 for members, \$290 for non-members (includes lunch, morning and afternoon teas).

**Please register by Wednesday, 23 March 2011**

The workshop will be divided into four sections, working through the revised sample exam of 2009 and additional exercises. You can email questions before the workshop to the coordinator at education@editorsnsw.com.

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## **Workshop information**

### **Registration**

To register for workshops use the enclosed form or download one from the society's website and send it to the administration manager, Anna Rauls. Please note that workshops require a minimum of 10 registrations by the closing date to proceed. The society reserves the right to cancel workshops if there are insufficient enrolments.

### **Payment for workshops**

To secure a place you must send payment with your registration form. Workshops fill quickly and we often have people on a waitlist for courses. Please contact the treasurer if you need a tax invoice.

### **Regional members**

Regional members living more than 200 km from Sydney may receive a 40 per cent discount on the cost of the society's workshops (excluding computer-based workshops).