

The desktop mentor

Janet Mackenzie has been in the publishing industry for 30 years and has written The Editor's Companion (Cambridge University Press). At the society's October meeting, Janet spoke about her work. Following are excerpts from her talk and Janet's responses to comments and questions from the audience in an interview session led by Shelley Kenigsberg.

I think I am supposed to start this talk by saying that writing the book was an incredible journey, then finish up by saying 'all major credit cards accepted', but I won't do that. The book actually had its genesis at a Victorian Society of Editors' meeting in 2002. A few of us 'veteran' editors were discussing the lack of mentoring and help for junior editors. I must have been sounding off a bit (we were well into the second bottle) because somebody said to me 'Janet why don't you shut up and write a book?'

It had never occurred to me until then. It was one of those penny-dropping moments—with a gasp: 'Why don't I?' Of course, I couldn't possibly have done it by myself but, fortunately, we have the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*. I was on the working group that helped to produce the *Standards*. I realised a lot of people don't know about the *Standards* and many who do know about them don't

understand what they mean for editing practice. I thought I could explicate the *Standards* and they would also form pegs on which to hang the book. I hope that is what I have done.

I said in the book's preface that the *Standards* can be regarded as 'beacons on a rocky shore' and *The Editor's Companion* 'takes them as its reference points for a detailed chart of the coastline'.

'I learnt editorial skills from jokes and anecdotes'

In the book I have tried to transmit three things: first, something that might be called editorial culture; second, a thorough definition of editorial skills; and third, professional self-esteem.

Editorial culture used to be transmitted in-house. As you have been told, I am terribly old, I edited my first book in 1969 believe it or not, *Asia's Modern Century*, a high school

textbook on Asian history. I worked at Melbourne University Press with Camilla Raab who was the senior editor there. For about eighteen months she sat down with me on every job I had done and went through every single page and said 'You shouldn't have done this and you should have done that'. It was such an incredible grounding for an editor and it really dismays me that people don't have anything like that now. One of the things I have tried to do in the book is to pass on some of the compass points that Camilla taught me.

I don't know how often I heard Camilla say, 'If it is bearable, leave it. Don't interfere, just to put your mark on the manuscript, leave it alone if you possibly can.' That was really good guidance.

I have tried to make the book lively and humorous too. I learnt editorial skills from jokes and anecdotes and awful warnings and I have tried to pass

continued on next page

Inside

Membership renewal	2
Minutes of 2005 AGM	3
New members	5
The doctor is in	6
CASE notes	7
News, notices and conference diary	8
Professional development	10

Next meeting: Tuesday, 5 April 2005

The art of newspaper copyediting

For journalists who edit newspaper text, there is never enough time or space. Articles destined for newspaper pages must be cut, condensed, 'precised', re-angled, re-jigged, merged with others or sliced up into more than one story—all to a tight deadline. How do newspaper sub-editors ('subs') do it?

Peter Meredith, a journalist of both the writing and subediting kind for more than 30 years, reveals all in a personal and anecdotal look at the art of newspaper copyediting.

Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, 6.30 p.m. for 7.00 p.m. Drinks and light refreshments provided. \$15 for members; \$20 for non-members and those who don't RSVP; \$7 for holders of a current concession card.

Please RSVP to 9294 4999 (voicemail) or <brhed@pnc.com.au> (email) by Friday, 1 April.

May meeting: Tuesday, 3 May 2005.

those on in the book because they are what stick in your mind. I have tried very hard to make it funny, and why not? It keeps you reading. It also makes the message stick in your mind if you have some associated anecdote or a joke.

I will give one example. Suppose I say to you that when editing verbatim quotations *sic* should not be over used because it is distracting for the reader—ho hum. Suppose I say to you that *sic* should not be repeated *ad nauseam*. The next time you are editing and you are tempted to put in those square brackets with *sic*, I hope that you will remember it and perhaps not make that mistake of over using *sic*. This approach is partly just for the fun of it, but it is also a deliberate tactic to try to help people.

I have talked about and tried to encourage editors to play with their editorial skills. I have provided a much more comprehensive definition of 'skill' than any other I have ever seen. The list includes things like being intelligent, which we are (sorry, we are an elite, we are tall poppies, get used to it), and editorial skills. I have tried to broaden the list to include what we actually do today, which is moving way beyond books into websites, government reports and corporate material.

'I really want to defend those traditional editorial skills and place them in the centre of our practice.'

We are working in a lot more areas than we did when I came through the book industry, as I guess all the older editors working today did. There are now young editors who have never worked on books but are entirely into electronic publications or corporate material and these areas have different rules. I have tried to spread the net as widely as possible and to address editors working in all these different fields, in different workplaces and under different arrangements.

We are under a lot of pressure at the moment with technological

change. We are being encouraged, pressured or required, especially if you work freelance, to do more than just the editing. We may do the concept development and the information design all the way through to editing the proof, proofreading it and correcting the proof. We are even asked to do marketing and distribution. It all comes down to the editor. Nobody is saying to the graphic designers, 'You really should brush up your proofreading skills'. It is the editors who are expected to expand their practice to fill all these gaps that have been created by the changes in technology and I think we need to be very clear about our traditional skills and what we have got to offer. Sure, if we want to take on other roles and learn other software we may offer graphic design as well as, but not instead of, editing. I really want to defend those traditional editorial skills and place them in the centre of our practice.

The other thing I wanted to talk about is professional self-esteem. It is important to extrapolate existing trends. If you do this it occurs to me that there are approximately 200 million people in India who are extremely well educated, who are fluent in English and who may even speak English as a native language. It might not be too long before they start offering their services as editors in Australia, given what has happened in other industries with software design and call centres. Obviously they won't displace us when a publisher needs an editor for an Australian novel or history book, but I can see it working for a biology textbook, an annual report, or something that just needs a wide copyedit. I think we have really got to be aware of where the challenges in our profession are likely to come from.

The following excerpts are Janet's responses to questions and comments from the audience.

If you are in a situation where a client wants to get the design done cheaply by using an editor, rather than calling in the designer, what do you do?

JM: You make very clear what you can do, what you will do and what you won't do. I was recently asked, weeks ahead

continued on page 4

Membership renewal

Have you renewed your membership?

If your mailing label has a red spot, or the subject heading in your email said 'last issue', it means that we have no record of your renewing your membership for 2005. Please renew soon if you wish to continue receiving the benefits of membership. If you have renewed but get the warning, please contact me to help sort it out.

We would also like to remind all members that you can choose to receive *Blue Pencil* as an emailed PDF each month, rather than a paper copy through the post. Please contact me if you would like to change your mode of receiving *Blue Pencil*.

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AGM MINUTES 2005

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc
Minutes of Annual General Meeting
1 March 2005

Present

Tina Allen, Robin Appleton, Kym-Maree Apps, Peter Arnold, Janice Beavan (Treasurer), Jennie Begg, Ruby Bell, Graham Bench, Sharon Bridgett, Deborah Edward, Moira Elliott, Catherine Etteridge, John Fleming, Kathy Fox, Elizabeth Galvin, Shirleyann Gibbs, Stephen Gray, Jo Healy-North, Jane Hinton, Bruce Howarth (Secretary), Terry Johnston, Shelley Kenigsberg (Vice-president), Michael Lewis, Sheena Pettigrew, Julie Stanton, Russell Thomson, Pauline Waugh (President), Emily Weston, Isabel Workman.

Apologies

Jean Cooney, Fiona Doig, Alison Hartman, Therese Kutis, Sandra Nichols, Merry Pearson, Austin Punch.

Welcome

The meeting opened at 7.15 p.m.

Minutes of previous AGM

The minutes of the AGM of 2 March 2004, as reported in the April 2004 edition of *Blue Pencil*, were accepted. Moved Jo Healy-North, seconded Shelley Kenigsberg, carried.

Financial report

The report was published in the March 2005 edition of *Blue Pencil*. After some discussion, the report was accepted. Moved Janice Beavan, seconded Jo Healy-North, carried. The president thanked the treasurer for her efforts throughout the year.*

Election of committee

The president vacated the chair and Mr John Fleming, the society's public officer, conducted the election. Nominations were received as follows:

Executive committee

President: Pauline Waugh

Vice president: Peter Arnold

Secretary: Bruce Howarth

Treasurer: Janice Beavan

General committee members: Robin Appleton, Sharon Bridgett, Moira Elliott, Julie Harders, Terry Johnston, Shelley Kenigsberg, Julie Stanton.

Public officer: John Fleming

The meeting agreed that, rather than elect five committee members as required by the current rules, all committee members who had nominated should be accepted on the committee, and that a change to the rules would be made at a special general meeting to allow this.

Other positions

Blue Pencil editor: Catherine Etteridge

Membership secretary: Bruce Howarth

Publicity: Terry Johnston

Meetings: Deborah Edward

Professional development: coordinator: Pauline Waugh; assistants: Julie Harders, Sheena Pettigrew, Russell Thomson

Website: Jo Healy-North

Editorial Services Directory: Catherine Gray

Catering: Jennie Begg, Jo Healy-North

As no elections were required, John declared all the above office-bearers elected. He pointed out that the society was in a very strong position, with such a large group of workers.

Pauline Waugh took the chair and thanked all retiring committee members for their work, thanked all new committee members for their willingness to support the society and thanked John Fleming for conducting the election.

Close of business

As there was no other business, the meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

[*Copies of the annual auditor's report were distributed at the meeting and are included with this issue of *Blue Pencil*.]

of time, to do a job that was all in Word but using styles. I agreed but when the job came through it was something that should have been in Quark XPress or PageMaker. It was a horrendously complicated design and I looked at it and told them, 'My skills are not up to this, it should be in Quark.' They said, 'Oh no, we want to do it in Word'. I said 'I am sorry, even my Word skills are not up to it', so I ended up hiving off the job to somebody who is better at electronic editing than I am, because I knew I couldn't do a good job in that case. It has left a hole in my schedule...

Regarding the comments about designers, technological changes, including those in the pre-press area, mean that people no longer work in splendid isolation. Everyone in publishing, not just the editor, is now taking on new areas.

JM: I would like then to talk about cost shifting because technological change is saving publishers a huge amount of money but we are not getting those savings. Editors are not seeing the extra money and I don't know if graphic designers are. In the last ten years we have all set ourselves up with expensive equipment, we have upgraded our skills enormously, we have taken on more, yet they are trying to pay us less.

Apart from having the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice* as a basis, how did you know where to begin and what new territory to carve out for the book?

JM: I realised that any working Australian editor probably has the *Style Manual* on her desk. So I didn't do in detail anything that the *Style Manual* does in detail. The first eight or nine chapters of my book explicate the *Standards*. Then I explain what you do and which tasks are best done earlier and which are best done later as the *Style Manual* doesn't explain this. For example, 'When you get the job you start off by doing this and you can do these two tasks together, but the illustrations you had better leave till later.' I have tried to show a plan using my working methods. It may not be how you work, but it gives you a method that you can

follow which can break down this great heap of manuscript or this great bunch of electronic files when you don't know where to start.

I would like you to expand on your comments about the place that humour has in the editing game.

JM: I hope that, along with the work of Lynne Truss, *The Editor's Companion* is a pioneer of a new genre: the humorous textbook. It amazes me how dull textbooks are, having worked on many of them. You would think that anyone who writes a textbook must at one time have been passionate about that subject but textbooks have all the passion, the interest, the life and humour drained out of the subject. The approach is magisterial and you can't be magisterial about editing, you have got to be so flexible. There is never one solution in editing and there are often many different possibilities for solving a problem, so I have tried to convey that.

I'll relate another anecdote that I use to get the message across more forcefully. Rather than just say that authors can make astounding mistakes I will tell you this story. An academic historian wrote a book on the conscription referendums in World War I and his theory was that the attitudes towards conscription in Australia had changed markedly after a certain battle on the Western Front, the Battle of Verdun. His editor, in an excess of zeal you might think, happened to check the date of the Battle of Verdun and found that the author had it wrong, making his whole theory nonsense. The book had to be withdrawn from publication but that editor had saved that scholar's reputation and career. So, whenever I am editing and, reading along, I think: 'Surely this author couldn't have made this mistake—no, no she is an expert, she couldn't have got it that wrong?' I think about that anecdote and realise: yes she could have got it wrong and I had better check whatever it is that's niggling at me.

By avoiding the sort of traditional textbook approach, I have tried to make the message livelier and more memorable.

Janet has alluded to the Lynne Truss book [*Eats, Shoots & Leaves*] and other titles that have encouraged a new wave of interest in language and accuracy. How do you think editors can actually ride that wave?

JM: First of all we have got to value our skills, which I don't think we do sufficiently. It distresses me that some editors say that their work is invisible. If it is invisible why are you doing it?

It seems to me that the appeal of a well-edited publication is as evident as the appeal of a well-cooked meal or a well-tended garden. When you first step into a garden you see immediately if it is weedy and overgrown and there are branches lying across the path. The non-expert might not know how the effect of a well-tended garden is achieved—the gardener has been at work tidying and shaping and pruning—but they do appreciate it. With a well-edited publication you might not know how the effect has been achieved but the appeal is evident. It is obvious even to non-experts.

So we have got to value our skills and move away from this self-effacing rubbish that people go on with. We have got to come out and say we are intelligent and highly skilled and then we have got to back ourselves up.

This leads me into accreditation. I really hope that people support us and get behind it because until we have got accreditation, until we can say 'this person is a competent editor and this person is not' we have no basis at all for asking for more money. Accreditation will give us a very solid basis which no other editors' organisation in any country in the world has. It is groundbreaking stuff. If we can say here are the *Standards*, these are our skills, here is accreditation, we can ask for more money.

If you look at information architects who do to websites what we do to books, the only difference that I can see is that information architects don't know any spelling or grammar! So what are we doing grinding on at \$35 an hour? It is ridiculous when you consider the skills required. We have got to move beyond this humble handmaiden mindset.

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Isn't the market just still saying: 'I don't care if there is somebody with accreditation. I am going to go for the cheaper product'. Someone will do it for \$25 an hour. The real problem is that we have got to educate the public that you actually need editing.

JM: I would like to see academic research on what difference editing makes to a document so that we can then say edited documents are three times easier to read—or nine times. We have got to plug into all these traditional areas that we have neglected. We have been beavering away, keeping our heads down, but we've got to step into the modern world and do some PR. We have got to promote ourselves and make people value our skills.

The other thing we could do when we read a piece of shoddy rubbish is to write to whoever put it out and say, 'This is not acceptable'. I had a brochure from a mortgage company, handsomely produced, that said 'prices are rising in the Melbourne suburb of Cue'. It doesn't take a minute to send off a letter. We must refuse to accept it. Who will write the letters of complaint if it is not us? If you buy a book without an index, write to the publisher and say 'not good enough' (give me my money back), or if it is full of typos say 'not fit for the purpose'.

Although reviewers might say a book is garbage, they never say it is badly written, they blame the editor. When the book is good the reviewers never say the book is well edited.

JM: Yes, they never say the publisher's budget was too small, which is often the problem.

Can we take that point a bit further and appeal to people to ask their authors for testimonials? A lot of authors are very generous in thanking their editors. In fact almost every acknowledgement you read says 'thanks to my editor', sometimes to two or three of them.

It seems that in other spheres of life people don't shy away from saying 'Can you give me a testimonial about the service I supplied?' I think it is a really worthwhile thing for editors to do, not only to add to your CV, but to put it into a pool that we then use as 'ammunition'. If you do see a review saying 'this was badly edited' maybe

send a letter to the paper saying, 'perhaps not'.

We don't necessarily make the move that would redress a lot of these problems. I acquired a client from writing in and saying 'If you paid money to somebody to edit this book, you were ripped off.' I photocopied a couple of pages and I showed them what I would have done as an editor. They gave me work.

I have had the opposite experience, when you criticise a publication they won't come near you again.

JM: You have got to show them exactly how and why it is deficient and how you personally could improve it.

My favourite quote from your book is, 'sometimes you have to turn the disastrous into the mediocre'.

JM: Yes, or to put it another way, 'you can't polish a turd'.

I know this book is intended as a 'desk mentor', but can you give us your thoughts on mentoring and mentoring systems.

JM: The South Australian Society of Editors is looking into mentoring if you read their newsletter which is online. I know Queensland is thinking about doing it. I know the Literature Board of the Australia Council is very keen to give money to mentoring schemes. There is going to be a paper about it at the National Editors' Conference in October 2005, so I am in great hopes of getting together some kind of nationwide mentoring scheme.

I think editing is such a subtle skill and that the learning time is so prolonged that mentoring is the best way to learn. But I really do feel for people who come out of a tertiary course or a certificate course, especially if they have got no in-house experience. I don't know how they manage. An experienced editor at your elbow or at the end of your email would also help to make our work more consistent. Again, this would enable us to ask for more money.

Janet Mackenzie convenes the national working group on accreditation for CASE and is an honorary life member of the Society of Editors (Victoria).

NEW MEMBERS

Melinda Jollie
Gillian Sykes
Barbara Munce
Colette Hoeben
Hilary Denholm
Helen Ingman
Therese Hudson
Kym-Maree Apps
Austin Punch
Helen Payne
Rowena Smith
Susan Murray
Karen Pearce
Jude Jones
Catherine Evans
Penny Marr
Dianne Finch
Barbara Hale
Bill Thomson
Abigail Nathan
Emma Hardman
Kim Beveridge
Wendy Webb
Jill Garland
Aileen Leddy
Kathryn Belling
Ondine Evans
Lisa Miller
Brooke Carson-Ewart
Ruby Bell
Emma Halgren
Elizabeth Galvin

The patient's question

My query concerns the use of semicolons, particularly in that sense of giving an amplification or restatement of something already said. The style guides all seem to say it's correct to use a semicolon when what follows takes the form of an independent clause (e.g., 'We need to set priorities; we must respond to immediate needs as well as to long-term goals.') but what happens when what follows is not an independent clause?

This seems to be quite common—I certainly seem to be plagued by authors who love this construction—but is it correct (and if not, what form of punctuation should be used?)

For example:

His subjects can be read as still lifes; as intellectual investigations on the problems of illusion and reality.

The notebooks contain written annotations; for instance on Basil Stewart.

The diagnosis

We seem to have two separate (albeit related) problems here. They probably both result from the unfortunate name of the semicolon, which is not half a colon. The two stops have quite different functions, despite their similar names and appearances. Nevertheless, the patient's problem could be seen as calling for either, depending on what the writer is really trying to do. Yes, a semicolon must be followed by a full independent clause rather than by a sentence fragment or a dependent clause, but let's look more deeply into the issues raised.

The function of the colon (:) is to signal the fulfilment of a commitment. It's often used to introduce a list, where each item in the list can, in turn, be substituted for the element (the word or phrase) immediately before the colon. The element before the colon can be thought of as a 'placeholder' for the items in the list. That is equally true whether the list is presented in conventional prose form or as a bulleted list. Here is one example presented in both forms:

If our picnic is to be a success, we need to take some goodies: champagne, baked meats, and fresh bread.

If our picnic is to be a success, we need to take some goodies:

- champagne,
- baked meats, and
- fresh bread.

(Although many would punctuate the items in the bulleted list differently, I've adopted the most conservative approach; it is identical to the standard punctuation of normal running prose.)

The interpretation of this example, in either form, is that each of the listed items can take the place of what is immediately before the colon: 'some goodies'. Sharp-eyed readers will have noticed that I have just used the colon to introduce and deliver what amounts to a list with only one item. This, I think, is the normal case of 'giving an amplification or restatement of something already said'.

'neither example works with a semicolon'

The relevance of independent clauses to colons is that, at least according to some style guides, what precedes the colon (the entire sentence or fragment, not just the word or phrase prefiguring the list items) should be an independent clause. For my part, I have no problem with usage that leaves an 'empty' placeholder:

If our picnic is to be a success, we need to take: champagne, baked meats, and fresh bread.

But there is a widespread (and perfectly legitimate) view that a colon in such a construction is improper.

I should add here that the 'placeholder' before the colon does not have to be as discrete as 'some goodies' in this example, and it does not have to be the word or phrase immediately before the colon. We could have preceded the colon with 'We need several things to make our picnic a success'; the items in the list are still prefigured by, and can substitute for, 'several things'.

So where does the semicolon (;) fit in? Does it have a function that can be described as 'giving an amplification or restatement of something already said'?

Well, yes—to a point. The semicolon has two functions: similar to (but stronger than) a comma, and similar to

(but weaker than) a period or full stop. The 'strong comma' function applies to nested lists, like this:

A lot of equipment is required for a successful picnic: knives, forks, and spoons; dinner plates, side plates, and serving dishes; cups, saucers, and several types of glassware; salt, pepper, mustard, and chutney; and enough waterproof rugs for everyone to sit down in comfort.

While all the listed items could have been presented as a single-level undifferentiated list, it might suit the writer's purpose to group them; the commas separate the items in the groups, and the semicolons separate the groups.

(Incidentally, therein lies my reason for using the 'serial comma'. Conjunctions like 'and' and 'or' have a purely joining function; commas have a function that is a combination of joining and separating. The old view that the comma does the same job as the conjunction doesn't hold water.)

The 'weak period' function of the semicolon can be seen in the sentence two paragraphs above, where it lies between two complete grammatical structures:

While all the listed items could have been presented as a single-level undifferentiated list, it might suit the writer's purpose to group them [semicolon] the commas separate the items in the groups, and the semicolons separate the groups.

We would not be alarmed if these were presented as two separate sentences, with the semicolon replaced by a period and followed by a capital letter. We would also be comfortable with a single sentence where the semicolon is replaced by an optional comma and some kind of conjunction. In short, if we have two 'sentences' (where a 'sentence' might itself be compound or complex, but in any event has at least one independent clause), we can juxtapose them in three different ways:

Xxx. Yyy.

Xxx; yyy.

Xxx so yyy.

The first way, keeping the two sentences entirely separate, leaves it to the reader to work out whether the two are directly related. The second way shows that they are directly related, but doesn't say how. The third way makes the relationship explicit. But the relationship, whether suggested by a semicolon or made explicit by a conjunction, must be between two independent clauses.

Now it is possible that the relationship is one of equivalence, as in 'giving an amplification or restatement of something already said'. Then, certainly, we could—as I have just done—use something like 'as in' as the conjunctive element in a single sentence without the semicolon, or we could leave that relationship implicit and present the original and the restatement as two separate structures separated by a semicolon or a period. But still, the semicolon requires the same rules as the period; it must be both preceded and followed by a complete grammatical structure—an independent clause (with or without other related clauses connected to it).

Having said all that, the patient's example sentences clearly don't work as written (with semicolons). Do they work with colons? The first, I think, does:

His subjects can be read as still
lives: as intellectual investigations
on the problems of illusion and
reality.

But the second doesn't, in my judgement:

The notebooks contain written
annotations: for instance on Basil
Stewart.

The problem here seems to be that 'for instance' is really doing the same job as the colon would—it's introducing 'on Basil Stewart'. In this case, I would punctuate with a comma rather than a colon—but neither example works with a semicolon, because there is no independent clause after the punctuation.

As a coda, how many readers would prefer 'still lives' to 'still lifes' in the first example?

Michael Lewis

CASE notes

February 2005

LIFE AFTER CASE: A NATIONAL ORGANISATION BECKONS

As any vaguely business-minded person would know, the only way ahead is to keep moving. Stand still and before you know it you're so far behind your image is the size of a full stop on a blank page that's quickly turning.

Australian editors have come a long way since creating the Council of Australian Societies of Editors. CASE was conceived informally in 1998, bringing together eight State and Territory society delegates to plan and implement activities that would benefit Australian editors at a national level. CASE's document *Australian Standards for Editing Practice* was published in 2001.

CASE's more recent venture, and one which followed on naturally after the *Standards* document, has been the creation of an accreditation process for editors. Members voted overwhelmingly in favour of CASE's accreditation proposal last December. Accreditation fosters recognition of and confidence in the profession, and confers credit on editors.

But accreditation would be impossible to implement if CASE remains an informal body. Without a formal status, CASE has no control over its finances—it cannot open a bank account—and has no means of protecting its members from liability.

The next natural step for editors is to create a national organisation. What this means is that CASE would be disbanded and an incorporated association would be registered in the name chosen by its members (see below). The national organisation will play a supporting role towards the State and Territory societies. It will primarily concern itself with promotional and professional issues and outcomes for its members in Australia—and at some stage even beyond. The exact structural model, its composition and functions have yet to be detailed. An Issues Report on the formation of a national organisation is due in July this year.

Editors need a voice which represents their interests nationally and internationally. A national organisation of editors will seek to advance the editing profession and find ways to ensure a highly regarded and sustained presence in related business and professional spheres.

The National Organisation Working Group is looking for volunteers to help it with its historic transition. Particularly welcome would be the input of any member who has experience in and/or knowledge of governance models for non-profit organisations.

Haya Hussein
Convenor, National Organisation Working Group
Council of Australian Societies of Editors

www.case-editors.org

Tasmania's Ten Days on the Island festival: 1-10 April

Local, national and international artists from 20 islands around the globe will take part in Tasmania's Ten Days on the Island festival.

To highlight the significant part that writing and reading play in the cultural life of Tasmania, two major biennial literary awards will be announced during Ten Days on the Island (1 to 10 April). Now in its fifth year, the \$40,000 Tasmania Pacific Fiction Prize is awarded to the best novel written by a resident or citizen of Australia, New Zealand, Melanesia and, for the first time in 2005, Polynesia. The inaugural \$10,000 Tasmania Prize is for the best book about Tasmania from anywhere in any genre, be that fiction, non-fiction or poetry.

Treasures of Tasmania's literary scene, short-listed authors and the award judges will feature in a week-long series of free readings and lively lunchtime literary forums in The Pacific Crystal Palace. There will also be a Writers in Conversation evening in Launceston, in the lead-up to the announcement and presentation of the awards.

For festival details visit the website <www.tendaysontheisland.org>, telephone: 61 3 6233 5700 or email: <info@tendaysontheisland.org>.

Romance Writing Festival, NSW Writers' Centre: 21 May

A one-day festival featuring Australia's best-known romance writers will be held in conjunction with the Romance Writers Association of Australia.

For more information on the festival visit the NSW Writers' Centre website: <www.nswwriterscentre.org.au>.

APA Design Awards: 27 May

The 2005 APA Design Awards will be held at the Powerhouse Museum on

Friday, 27 May as part of the Sydney Writers' Festival. For more details about the awards visit the APA website <www.publishers.asn.au>.

Sydney Writers' Festival: 23-29 May

The 2005 Sydney Writers' Festival, featuring guest speakers from around the world, will be held from 23 to 29 May this year. Over 200 world-leading literary, social and political writers, and distinctive new talents from home and abroad, will engage with an estimated 50 000 visitors at more than 150 events stretching from the centre of Sydney to the Blue Mountains. For more details visit the website: <www.swf.org.au>.

NSW Government Printing Service sold

The NSW Government Printing Service, which has for many years supplied document management services to NSW government departments, has been sold to data manager, Salmat.

Bologna Children's Book Fair: 13-16 April

The 42nd annual Children's Book Fair will be held in Bologna, Italy from 13 to 16 April. The fair will be the meeting place for children's book publishers from around the world, providing an opportunity to buy and sell rights to children's titles, establish new contacts and see the latest trends in children's publishing including educational materials.

Visit the book fair's official website at <www.bookfair.bolognafiere.it>.

The New Yorker editor mourned

The US publishing world has been saddened by the loss of influential *The New Yorker* editor, Eleanor Gould Packard, who died recently aged 87. David Remnick is quoted in *The New York Times* as saying: 'If it's true *The*

New Yorker is known for the clarity of its prose, then Miss Gould had as much to do with establishing that as its more famous editors and writers.' When interviewed for the preparation of her obituary, the amused editor had told her interviewer: 'I'll have to stage a faked death and come back to correct my obit.'

UK Society of Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) new website

The Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) has relaunched its website. A major feature of the website <www.sfep.org.uk> is the (searchable) version of the SfEP Directory, which provides contact information for over 500 SfEP members plus brief details of the skills, subjects and services they offer.

The SfEP has about 1300 members and associates (mostly in the UK), providing a wide range of editorial services to the publishing industry and beyond. More than 40 publishing companies are corporate associates.

BELS Exam in Melbourne: October 2005

This is the first notice of the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) exam to be held in Melbourne in October 2005 during the CASE Editing in Context: National Editors' Conference, 13 to 15 October 2005.

Precise details of the date and time of the exam will be posted later in the year.

BELS is a US-based organisation that offers certification by examination to editors in the life sciences. Formed in 1991, it has certified members worldwide, including about five in Australia. You can read all about the BELS organisation and the certification exam by visiting the BELS website at <www.bels.org>.

Applicants must apply to BELS for candidacy well before the exam. Applicants need to submit (by mail

CONFERENCE DIARY



or fax) an application form (available from the BELS website) a CV, proof of education (copy of diploma or transcript from the highest degree), three letters of reference and US\$25 (email BELS for more details about payments from candidates outside the USA).

Applicants admitted to candidacy will receive a study guide, the schedule of exams and an exam registration form. Candidates who decide that they want to proceed with the exam will need to forward the exam registration form and a further US\$100. Applicants have about two years from being accepted as candidates to sit the exam before they have to reapply.

For further information about BELS and the exam from someone who has taken it, please contact Janet Salisbury ELS, phone (02) 6282 2280, email <janet.salisbury@biotext.com.au>.

Candidates should also contact Janet so she can keep them informed about details of the exam.

CASE Editing in Context conference: 13 to 15 October 2005

The Editing in Context conference will be held in Melbourne from 13 to 15 October 2005. Conference organisers will be calling for papers in April/May and early-bird registrations will open about July.

Details will be on the website <www.socedvic.org/editingincontext/>. If you have any suggestions or questions, please contact the conference convenor, Lan Wang, at <editingincontext@optushome.com.au>.

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

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Copy deadline for the May issue is Tuesday, 12 April 2005

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

Advertising rates

Full page, \$150; half page, \$80 (horizontal only); one-third page, \$50 (vertical or horizontal); quarter page \$40 (horizontal only); one-sixth page, \$30 (half of one column). Inserts: \$75 per hundred for DL-sized or A4 pre-folded to DL size. Circulation: approximately 375.

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 runs for a calendar year. 2005 fees are \$65 for new members (\$40 if joining after 30 June) and \$60 for renewals.

To obtain a membership application form, phone (02) 9294 4999 or write to PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007. You can also download an application form from the society's website at <<http://www.editorsnsw.com>>.

Listing in the Editorial Services Directory

The society's Editorial Services Directory is available online at <www.editorsnsw.com/esd/>. New listings and updates can be added quarterly as follows:

- online only: July (deadline 30 June); October (deadline 30 September)
 - print and online: January (deadline 31 December); April (deadline 31 March).
- The cost is \$40 per year (\$20 for new listings received from April to September) in addition to the fee for membership of the society. New listings should be submitted using a template available from Cathy Gray at <cgray@mpx.com.au>.

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.

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Professional development

MS Word: basic editing skills

Presenter: Bruce Howarth

Date: 16 April 2005

If you are not very familiar with Word, this workshop will help you unlock some of the power that Word offers to help you do your tasks faster and more efficiently. Topics will include customising Word's user interface, templates and style sheets, track changes, and basic find and replace. Each topic will be discussed, and participants will then have time to work through examples. Each participant will have a computer.

The cost will be \$195 for members and \$240 for non-members. The venue will be the Ultimo campus of the TAFE NSW, Sydney Institute of Technology, (maps provided).

MS Word: advanced editing skills

Presenter: Bruce Howarth

Date: 7 May 2005

If you have used Word for some time, you will know the feeling that there is even more to learn, or that there must be a better way to do some task. In this workshop, we will look at advanced find and replace, positioning graphics and fields and will introduce macros. Each topic will be discussed, and participants will then have time to work through examples. Each participant will have a computer.

The cost will be \$195 for members and \$240 for non-members. The venue will be the University of Technology, Sydney, Broadway (maps provided).

Further details about the workshops will be posted on the website and sent to members. Please note that the society can only provide manuals and handouts to people who attend the workshop. For more information please email Pauline Waugh at <paulinewaugh@ozemail.com.au>.

Call for contributions

Have you been to an interesting conference or event? We welcome your contributions to

Blue Pencil.

We would like to publish your articles, book reviews or letters. Please email the editor at <cje_editing@hotmail.com>

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