

Blue Pencil

Newsletter of
The Society
of Editors
(NSW) Inc.

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December 2005

Get fit for editing

At our September meeting, physiotherapist Francine St George demonstrated simple exercises that editors can use to avoid back and neck pain when working at the computer. During this educational and practical session, Francine skilfully explained the latest research on the human body—and even persuaded our editors to stand on one leg.

My first degree in anatomy taught me a lot because when you are working with a client you always go back to anatomy to consider what the muscles and other anatomical structures are actually doing when they are standing or sitting. It's also quite fascinating that both holistic medicine and research on athletes have arrived at similar solutions when analysing some of the body's aches or pains. There is some great research about neck and back pain that has been published in recent times that sheds a lot of light on how you can be preventative, particularly if you have a sedentary job.

Anatomy of posture

In the body we have approximately 450 muscles. Each muscle has a bias

for either supporting our posture or for moving us. The muscles that support our posture tend to be smaller and provide stability to joints. They are often called 'local' muscles. The muscles devoted to movement tend to be larger and are

'These muscles are called "slow twitch" because they are firing off all the time.'

referred to as 'global' muscles. When we move the smaller stability muscles contract first and the larger, more global muscles then come into play.

I often refer to the small muscles as having a '25-watt lightbulb' function. They are 'turned on' to some extent

all the time—you don't wake up as a bag of bones in the morning! Even when you sleep these muscles will still be holding the bag of bones—your shoulders, your back, your hip, your knees—together. These muscles are called 'slow twitch' because they are firing off all the time.

When you move quickly—to get out of your chair or go across the road—the 25 watt muscles should work first to stabilise your joints and then the '40, 60 and 75 watt lightbulb' 'fast twitch' muscles come into play to help you move.

Why is this relevant? Recent research has shown that when we have pain, the postural muscles are

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Next meeting: Tuesday, 6 December 2005

The Christmas Party!

Celebrate the festive season with great food, wine and prizes! We will be holding the 2005 Christmas Party at the friendly Buon Gusto restaurant. Party organisers have put together a great deal featuring a seafood menu. Just \$48 will secure you fine food and plenty of liquid Christmas cheer.

We welcome non-members. Booking is essential. Please RSVP before Friday, 2 December. Numbers are limited so book earlier to guarantee your place at the 2005 Christmas Party. See the enclosed booking form for more details or visit the society's website <www.editorsnsw.com>.

Buon Gusto Italian Restaurant, 368 Abercrombie Street, Chippendale NSW 2008, 6.30 for 7.00 p.m. For both members and non-members the cost is \$48 a head, including drinks. Please return the completed booking form by Friday, 2 December 2005 to Society of Editors (NSW), PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007. Enquiries to Bruce Howarth: (02) 4731 5406 or brhed@pnc.com.au. If you are using a credit card to book, you may phone (02) 9660 0335 or fax (02) 9660 9375 your booking to the society's treasurer, Janice Beavan.

February meeting: Tuesday, 7 February 2006.

inhibited (the 25-watt muscles have the dimmer turned on) and the larger muscles compensate to do work they are not designed to do.

This results in fatigue and it is particularly the case when we are sitting for extended periods of time. The spine is not intrinsically supported and so good posture cannot be sustained and neck or back pain can result.

'Specific awareness exercises need to be done frequently to remind the brain to use the correct muscles when we are sedentary.'

Interestingly, research using magnetic resonance imaging showed that after only one episode of neck pain or back pain the 25-watt lightbulb muscles had become neurally inhibited and showed signs of atrophy as rapidly as 48 hours later. As fatigue sets in, it may not only cause the neck or back to ache but may also cause headaches, RSI and other symptoms.

Postural endurance

If we want to retrain postural muscles it is not as easy as simply getting fit and going to the gym. Specific awareness

exercises need to be done frequently to remind the brain to use the correct muscles when we are sedentary.

The following tips can be used to start to retrain and strengthen postural muscles, minimise fatigue when you are sitting at the computer or desk and hopefully avoid neck or back pain.

Quick tips

While sitting.....

1. Breathing

Become aware of your breathing when you are sitting. Place your hands on the outer lower part of your rib cage and practise lateral breathing [breathing deeply into the back and sides of the rib cage] while you relax your shoulders. This will start to wake up your spinal stability muscles.

2. Align your spine

Imagine there is an imaginary hook from the top of your head to the ceiling lifting you gently up and aligning your spine. Relax the shoulders once you have achieved this position.

3. Eyes

As you focus on work that uses the eyes glancing downwards, this is a position of fatigue for the neck muscles. Every half hour focus on something that is at a distance at 45 degrees upwards and to the left, the same to the right then down 45 degrees to the left and right. By doing this frequently you are waking up the postural muscles in your neck and back.

4. Ergonomics

Be sure that you have the desk or computer straight in front of you while you are working. The body does not like small rotations, for instance when you cross your legs.

Regular breaks

Every hour or so, try to practise the tips above. Postural muscles are retrained by pre-empting movement. By standing on one leg you are creating an unstable base and this starts to strengthen your postural muscles. Alternating between sitting in a normal ergonomic chair and on a large 'fitball' can be helpful for posture.

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Third national survey of editors

The third national survey of editors was conducted at the 'Editing in context', conference in October 2005. As the conference was held in Melbourne, some 40% of survey respondents were from Victoria. There were 108 responses, a slight increase since the second national survey of editors, carried out in July 2003 at the Brisbane national conference.

Pamela Hewitt conducted the survey and compiled the results. See the website <www.emendediting.com.au> for full details. Below is a sample of Pamela's findings from the survey.

- Women continue to outnumber men in the profession, with 87% female respondents and 13% male.
- While 58% of respondents are over 45, this is down slightly from 63% in 2003, and 42% are under 45.
- 92% of editors hold at least a degree. Most (58%) hold more than one higher education qualification and just over a quarter have a Masters or doctorate.
- 95% of editors participate in professional development programs.
- Almost 70% of respondents had more than 6 years' experience as an editor, and the remaining 30% had been in the profession for up to 6 years.
- The proportion of full-time editors was 60% (compared with 51% two years ago), with 27% working part time and 13% working in the field in addition to other employment.
- The national average hourly rate is now \$61, a marked increase on the \$50 average reported in the previous two surveys. A breakdown by State and Territory follows: average hourly rates for editing were \$67 in Victoria, \$63 in the ACT, \$60 in NSW, \$55 in South Australia and \$49 in Queensland. The highest reported hourly rate for editing was \$120 and the lowest was \$25.
- As in the past, many editors charge different rates for different services. Proofreading rates averaged \$38, indexing was \$45, thesis editors averaged \$39 and manuscript assessment rates were \$36 [per hour] or \$325 per manuscript. Higher paid services were project management, which commands an average hourly rate of \$82, and document development, at an average hourly rate of \$56.

NEW MEMBERS

Steve Duncombe

Gabi Duigu

Michele Knight

Milena Morrow

Michelle Roberts

Freelance editing in Australia: career or labour of love?

A frequent topic of conversation at the freelancers' lunches has been the difficulty of making a living from editing. Freelancer Grant Bailey raises the issue of whether many editors are making a living from freelance work and what can be done to provoke debate and find some answers.

At the recent series of freelancers' lunches many attendees—including very experienced freelancers, some with decades of experience—have complained about the difficulty of securing regular work, the frequently poor rates of pay and the not-infrequent problem of non-payment, among other issues.

Faced with these problems—not to mention the additional 'job' of managing our businesses—it is surprising that so many of us persist. Clearly, the love of what we do, and the value we place upon good written expression, keeps most of us going.

Rather than let the discussions rest, I felt it would be advantageous to raise these matters for the benefit of all members, as a means of stimulating debate and (hopefully) finding some answers. Indeed, some of the problems that we each face as individual contractors might be better dealt with on a professional level.

The going rate

According to anecdotal evidence, the 'going rate' for editorial work in NSW is now about \$30 to \$35 per hour. By 'going rate' I mean the highest rate that most publishers are prepared to pay for copyediting work.

In the abstract, \$35 per hour for copyediting work seems like a reasonable rate. However, in assessing the suitability of this rate one needs to take into account a number of factors, such as the intermittent nature of our workflow, the costs of operating our businesses (such as electricity, telephone and computer maintenance costs), superannuation and, of course, taxation. Make allowance for free weekends and four weeks' annual holidays—to which most employees in Australia are presently entitled—and the annual income of the average freelance editor drops even further.

Of course, freelancers know all about these hidden costs; unfortunately,

clients (the ones writing our cheques) are at risk of forgetting.

The need for evidence

Before drawing any conclusions, however, we need to obtain solid evidence of the rates that freelance editors are actually receiving. The limitation to anecdotal evidence is that those that we personally deal with may not be representative of the profession as a whole.

The value of survey data is that it provides a snapshot of the viability of the profession as a whole, especially when survey results are compared over time. The NSW Society's 2001 survey of members (the most recent available) indicated that an average rate of around \$40 per hour was typical for copyediting work at that time (although direct comparisons are difficult due to the methodology employed in the survey). This compares unfavourably with the current going rate of \$35 or less reported by editors. Should the current rate be confirmed then we would have evidence of significantly declining pay rates. In that case editors would be wise to question whether work as a freelancer would allow them to achieve their long-term financial goals.

However, there is conflicting evidence. A very recent survey of editors, conducted at the National Editor's Conference in October by Pamela Hewitt [see panel on page 2], indicated that the average rate of payment for editors nationally is currently around \$61 per hour. The survey results, and a useful discussion, can be viewed at <www.emendediting.com.au>. The average rate for editors in NSW was found to be slightly lower at \$60 per hour. Editors in Victoria and the ACT seem to be doing slightly better with average hourly rates of \$67 and \$63 respectively.

The results of Pamela Hewitt's survey need to be treated with some

caution: the sample was small (only 108 responses were received—the membership of the NSW Society alone is over 360) and possibly unrepresentative of the profession as a whole (some freelancers were unable to afford the cost of attending the conference). Nevertheless, the findings do clearly indicate wide variation in the pay rates received by editors, itself a valuable insight.

Pamela Hewitt's findings justify a more detailed and widespread investigation and The Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. has already prepared a new survey that will be posted to members in the new year.

However, the best means of obtaining accurate data about pay rates would be by means of an anonymous survey of all members of the various State and Territory editors' societies nation-wide. I would suggest that the Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd) give serious consideration to organising such a survey.

The methodology of the survey will require careful consideration. Rather than focusing on hourly rates, the aim of the survey should be to obtain a true picture of the market value of editing work by eliciting data about the time worked in, and the income received from, editing. This is because declared hourly rates are often an inaccurate indication of income received from editing work. For example, a full-time librarian who does editing work part-time as a means of supplementing their income might be inclined to charge \$70 per hour for their services on the grounds that it would 'not be worthwhile' to do the work for lower rates. Being able to 'pick and choose', the part-time editor's hourly rate looks favourable. By contrast, a freelance editor devoting themselves full-time to editing work may have no option but to accept \$35 per hour for the same work. If the latter situation was the

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norm within the profession then the average of the two rates would not be an accurate indication of the economic value of editing work.

The survey should clearly differentiate between employed editors and freelance editors to account for differences in their pay and conditions (while freelancers may earn a higher hourly 'rate' they do not necessarily enjoy regular work, holiday pay, sick leave and superannuation).

Below the line

Some editors complain that they are frequently obliged to accept less than \$30 per hour, either due to the risk of losing jobs to other (possibly less qualified) editors or because the client cannot pay any more (for example, in the case of a start-up publisher). It should be noted that the NSW society's 2001 survey reported that only 7% of editors charged less than \$30 per hour at that time. Pamela Hewitt's results indicated that rates as low as \$25 per hour have been received but the incidence of this rate was not specified in her report. Again, some new survey data would provide a clearer picture of the current situation.

Editors also report regular unbilled editing time, usually as a means of keeping costs down to encourage future jobs from the client.

Below the belt

Most editors report having to chase clients for payment. Frequently, payment is not effected until months after the work is submitted. Apparently, payment of freelancers is seen as a low priority by some clients.

Non-payment for completed work is also an ongoing problem. As the cost of recovering payment by legal means often exceeds the invoice amount, most editors report having little option but to write off the amount owed. This does not help other editors, however, who are at risk of the same exploitation. An unethical operator could abuse editor after editor in this manner with little risk of repercussions.

It would help if editors had some means of reporting non-payers to the society. This would allow the society to identify repeat offenders. The society

could then raise the matter with the client on behalf of the members concerned. Should the client continue to refuse payment then the society might have legal grounds for issuing a warning to other members about the client.

Individual members should also consider membership of the union that represents the profession, the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA). Membership of the MEAA is open to all editors, including freelance editors. Among other advantages, membership will entitle you to the assistance of the MEAA in recovering a payment owed to you by a client. Membership fees are based on a sliding scale that takes account of the member's income: the less you earn, the less you pay. For further information, telephone the MEAA on 1300 656 513.

Irregular work

Many editors are unable to support themselves financially by their editorial work. They supplement their incomes with part-time jobs, or rely upon the generosity of family members. It would be of value to discern, again by use of surveys, how many members consider themselves to be under-employed as editors.

Too many editors?

One complaint regularly made by editors is that there are 'too many editors' in the marketplace. However, the complaint prompts the question: too many editors for whom? Not for clients, who stand to benefit from any over-supply: more competition means lower rates. From a purely economic point of view, it could be argued that any over-supply serves the industry well.

It is difficult to test the claims of an over-supply: not all practising editors are members of the society so it is difficult to estimate the number of freelancers competing for work. Nor would it be easy to determine the total pool of work available to editors. In any event, editing is an unregulated profession not requiring formal qualifications so there is little that the society could do to control the number of practitioners.

A more useful enquiry would be to consider the likely effects of

introducing a system of accreditation. Would accredited editors be paid more and receive more work? If publishers can be confident of receiving a demonstrably superior service from an accredited editor then, in my opinion, accredited editors would be likely to do better than their non-accredited competitors. However, the process of accreditation would need to be rigorous; the 'rubber-stamping' of applicants will not suffice. Conferral of accreditation must indicate a high level of attainment in all areas of editing, and continued accreditation should be contingent upon the editor satisfying relevant work and training requirements. Moreover, some dispute resolution procedure should be implemented to ensure that complaints about accredited editors are effectively resolved; accreditation is only valuable if the accrediting organisation is prepared to uphold the standards it sets.

Conclusion

Anecdotal reports suggest that, for the majority of editors, freelancing does not provide a sufficient income for financial self-sufficiency. Many freelance editors complain that low rates of pay, in combination with the intermittent nature of available work, have made reliance upon supplementary sources of income a necessity for them. Survey data from a broad sample of members nation-wide would confirm whether these complaints are accurate for the profession generally.

Whether or not the concerns about deteriorating pay and conditions are confirmed, the collation of accurate survey evidence would have the further advantage of enabling IPED to set recommended minimum rates for editing work. Minimum rates would provide individual editors with guidance on what rates to expect and would help to promote fair pay within the profession. The setting of minimum rates would also be an important component of a system of accreditation.

Grant Bailey has worked as both an in-house and freelance editor and is currently a freelance editor based in Sydney.

IPEd notes November 2005

News from the Institute of Professional Editors (formerly CASE)

The national conference, 'Editing in context', held in Melbourne on 13–15 October was on all counts a great success and a credit—no, a high distinction—to the organising committee in the Society of Editors (Victoria). Full marks, too, to all the presenters in a program that was full of interest, never flagged and which often forced hard choices on participants when the parallel sessions came around. Selected papers will be put at www.socedvic.org/editingincontext/ on the conference website. All papers and associated material will be sent on a CD to registrants in due course.

The conference was held under the auspices of CASE (the Council of Australian Societies of Editors), which is now really, truly the Institute of Professional Editors. Support among the almost 300 conference participants for the institute and its plans for accreditation and other national activities was palpable. When, at the end of her keynote address on national affairs, Janet Mackenzie asked the audience if they were happy with the new name and its diminutive—IPEd, the response was an ocean of raised hands, followed by spontaneous applause. The proposal that IPEd's vision be 'To advance the profession of editing in Australia' was also warmly received. Later in the day, the institute was officially launched with much song (literally) and dance at the conference dinner.

Also in plenary session, IPEd's Accreditation Board (AB) brought participants up to date on progress towards implementation of the national accreditation system voted on and approved by the societies at the end of last year. Board chair Robin Bennett led the session with a talk that covered the

questions most frequently asked about the system. This was followed by a series of hypotheticals prepared by board members and designed to show the sorts of evidence of editorial skills that assessors will be looking for in applications for accreditation. This practical session was well received by participants and generated useful and incisive questions from the audience and, one suspects, helped to overcome the anxieties that some editors might have felt about the business. Certainly, the impression gained by IPEd delegates and AB members was that, among those editors present at the conference, there was generally strong support for the expeditious implementation of the system.

Enthusiasm for national activities among participants was also evident in the numbers of editors who signed up to join one or other of IPEd's working groups. As a result, the National Organisation Working Group has been reconstituted, with the primary task of taking IPEd through to establishment as a registered, legal entity. Its membership has grown from three to nine. The Promotions Working Group has been reinvigorated and renamed as the Communications Working Group with, so far, seven members. Education and training, and related issues of professional development, and their linkages with accreditation, were hot topics during the conference, in and out of formal proceedings. In her keynote speech, Janet Mackenzie called for help for the national body from editors with expertise and experience in these areas. The response was almost immediate and a new Education and Training Working Group with an initial membership of eight was formed.

We are seeking more members for the aforementioned working groups, and for the Standards Revision Working Group whose deliberations will parallel the refining of the accreditation system. We need all the help we can get and it would be a fine thing if all societies were represented on all working groups. If you feel you can make a contribution and can commit the time, please contact your IPEd Interim Council member (formerly the CASE delegate) in the first instance. You will be welcomed with open arms, and will enjoy the experience.

What spare time IPEd Interim Council and Accreditation Board members had during the conference was taken up by meetings to review progress and plot the future course. Conferences such as 'Editing in context' are rare opportunities for all delegates to get together face-to-face at minimal cost to their societies. The Accreditation Board met with a group of university educators, headed by Professor Pam Peters, interested in exploring how tertiary editing courses and accreditation might interact.

At the end of the conference, almost before the echoes of the final speakers had dissipated, the Tasmanians were on the podium promoting IPEd's next conference, to be held in Hobart on 9–11 May 2007, with the theme 'From inspiration to publication'. Not to be outdone, the South Australians then got up and sang about their conference in Adelaide in 2009. The national future seems assured.

Ed Highley, Secretary, Institute of Professional Editors
[vice Janet Mackenzie, IPEd Liaison Officer]
<www.case-editors.org>

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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1. Lateral breathe
2. Stand on one leg while you lateral breathe
3. Raise one arm; alternate left then right
4. Standing knee hug; alternate left then right
5. Pendulum
6. Advanced pendulum

The above exercises are a gentle sequence to start to retrain postural muscles. For further suggestions see <www.cyberphys.com>.

General fitness

To avoid neck or back pain or any of the other aches and pains that can occur with sitting for lengthy periods, the following tips are also important.

- Be sure to do some form of cardiovascular fitness 30 to 45 minutes per day. Walking and swimming are the easiest to do.
- Pilates and yoga are excellent for improving posture in the long term.
- Drink water regularly while you are working.
- Get a regular massage, particularly of the neck, shoulders and forearms.

Good luck looking after your neck and back and avoiding pain. Even when walking think tall, breathe deeply and laterally, and let your shoulders gently relax whenever possible.

Francine St George (MSc (Med), MAPA (Physiotherapist/Sports Scientist) is a physiotherapist who combines clinical work and personal training at the Physiotherapy Posture and Fitness Clinic <www.cyberphys.com>. She regularly teaches yoga and pilates classes for all levels of fitness and all ages. She is the author of a number of health and fitness books. Her most recent publication is Bodyworks, PPSC, Sydney 2003.

Occasional series on Australian editors

The Occasional Series on Australian Editors is aimed at increasing the visibility and profile of editors as significant contributors to our cultural heritage and promoting the editing profession

The Occasional Series on Australian Editors (OSAE) working group hosted two significant events at the national editors conference (13–15 October): ‘Some of the finest: honorary life members’ (a panel) and ‘Editors in conversation’ (a series of recorded interviews).

Without the support of the Victorian OSAE working group these events would not have gone ahead. As convenor of the Occasional Series I’d like to thank the current working group: Kerry Biram, Renée Otmar, Anitra Nelson and Jenny Craig, for ensuring the success of these events. A big ‘thank you’ also to Pam Hewitt who worked with us, facilitating and recording Renée Otmar and Loma Snooks in conversation.

Renée capably chaired the honorary life member’s panel and even when the hand-held microphone died in the middle of the proceedings, honorary life members continued, undaunted! We thank the Society of Editors (Victoria) for sponsoring the panel session and Ron Thiele, who organised a photo shoot of honorary life members during the conference in the grounds of the conference hotel.

The concept for both events was well received by conference delegates and State and Territory honorary life members who accepted our invitation to participate: Sheila Allison (Tasmania), Pamela Ball (South Australia), Robyn Colman (Tasmania), Beryl Hill (Victoria), Renée Otmar (Victoria),

Loma Snooks (ACT), Wendy Sutherland and Lee White (Victoria). We thank them for supporting the occasional series. By gathering this historic material we are building our digital and print-based archives.

These are the first in what we hope will be a series of interviews with editors. The working group is well aware of the urgency of the task that lies ahead in documenting the working lives of many editors who won’t be around forever to tell their stories. And what stories they have to tell! We also know that very little has been written and documented about editors, the projects they have overseen, and the authors, designers and publishers they have worked with.

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In many ways the Occasional Series (in all of its emerging manifestations) is complementary to Janet Mackenzie's selections from the Newsletter of the Victorian Society of Editors. *At the Typeface* was launched with great ceremony at the conference. As Janet remarks in her preface, the biographical notes of those who feature in *At the Typeface* 'have gone on to do amazing things, but to research their subsequent careers would have required effort beyond the scope of this book'.

This is a central aim of the Occasional Series project—to seek out, research and document the history, biography and working lives of Australian editors. We face an enormous task because there are so many. But we have made a start and we are committed.

We urge State and Territory societies to think about what the Victorian working group have achieved in a relatively short time, and to consider how each society can begin to document the working lives of their members.

When the working group has recovered we will update the Society of Editors (Victoria) website for the Occasional Series project and we will continue to do so. If you want to know more about this project, visit the website and follow the links: <www.socedvic.org>.

Diane Brown, Convenor, Occasional Series working group (2005):
<diane@netspace.net.au>

When clients don't pay: DIY debt recovery

When clients owe you money, a few strongly worded communications can usually get things moving. Unfortunately, my client (my partner prefers the term 'shyster') refused to pay, or even explain what he was unhappy with. He laughed at a letter of demand from my lawyer.

My first instinct was to write off this debt as a 'learning experience'. After some investigation, I decided to enter the world of small claims and Local Courts. (Local Courts deal with debt recovery claims up to the value of \$60,000.) I had done a professional job and I should have been paid.

I am happy to report that I have emerged from this small claims process with the debt paid in full and my professional self-esteem restored. Here's a summary what I have learned along the way:

- The small claims debt recovery process is designed to be relatively straightforward and low-cost. You do not need a lawyer.
- Use the Local Courts for help and advice. I spoke to the Chamber Magistrate and counter staff many times. They helped me through each step of the process.

• Believe in the quality of your work. I sent my work to other professionals to ask for their opinion—was it so 'substandard' that I should not charge the client? (Luckily, the answer was 'No'.)

• Read about the risks and considerations before you start. The following websites are useful.

• The Arts Law Centre of Australia has a clear description of the debt recovery process on <www.artslaw.com.au/LegalInformation/DebtRecovery/DebtRecoveryNSW.asp>.

• Lawlink NSW (law and justice agencies in NSW) has guides to procedures in the Local Court on <www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/local_courts/ll_localcourts.nsf/pages/lc_goingtocourt>. See links under 'Civil Claims & Debt Recovery' section.

• You may end up settling out of court, before you get to a hearing. The client eventually paid me in full to avoid the hearing.

• Don't expect a quick outcome. It took me nearly six months to get my money. Even with a judgment in my favour, the actual recovery of the money took months.

Lorraine Leung

Conference notes

Please contact the committee if you were lucky enough to attend the National Editors Conference or Style Council 2005 and let us know which sessions you thought were especially useful.

The Society of Editors (Victoria) is preparing a collection of papers presented at the conference and plans to put these on a CD for conference participants.

For those who were unable to go, the next conference is not far away. Start planning to attend 'From Inspiration to Publication', the 2007 National Editors Conference on 9 to 12 May in Tasmania. The conference will be held at the Wrest Point Convention Centre, Hobart. See you there!

Publishers and Authors Bookshow, 26–27 November 2005

The seventh independent Publishers and Authors Bookshow will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, 26 and Sunday, 27 November at the NSW Writers' Centre in Sydney. A program of talks will feature publishers, booksellers, agents, distributors, publicists, editors, manuscript assessors, artists, illustrators and self-published writers. Entry to the Bookshow is free; tickets to the talks program cost \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members. To purchase tickets go to the website <www.nswwriterscentre.org.au>.

MEAA Workplace Laws Forum, 29 November 2005

Following the National Day Of Community Protest in November, the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) is continuing the campaign to oppose the federal government's proposed changes to workplace laws.

The MEAA campaign is working to protect existing entitlements by extending collective agreements. Keep up to date with ongoing developments at <www.alliance.org.au/rightsatwork>.

As part of the campaign the MEAA will host a Workplace Laws Forum on Tuesday, 29 November from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Vibe Hotel, 80 Alfred Street, North Sydney.

ACTU secretary Greg Combet will lead a panel in discussing how changes to workplace laws will affect Alliance members. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Nicole Scardino at <nicole.scardino@alliance.org.au> by 5 p.m., Monday, 28 November.

Freelancers do lunch, 29 November 2005

The next freelancers' lunch will be held at Cafe Trim, State Library of NSW, Macquarie Street, Sydney at 12 noon on Tuesday, 29 November. There is no need to RSVP. See you there!

The Galley Club Christmas Party, 2 December 2005

The Galley Club Christmas Party will be held at the Kirribilli Hotel (downstairs function room), just across the road from Milsons Point railway station.

The party includes drinks, fingerfood and prizes and starts at 6.30 p.m. on Friday, 2 December. The cost is \$25 for non-members. For members who renew their membership for 2006 on the night, the Christmas party is free (\$50 membership per year).

RSVP by 25 November to Samantha <catering@galleyclubsydney.org.au>.

Miles Franklin Literary Award closing date, 9 December 2005

Entries for the Miles Franklin Literary Award, worth \$42,000, will close on Friday, 9 December 2005. Details and application forms can be found the website <www.trust.com.au/awardsmiles_franklin>.

At the Typeface available now

At the Typeface edited by Janet Mackenzie and published by the Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc. was launched at the National Editors Conference. This highly entertaining collection of articles from the society's newsletter spans the past 30 years. *Typeface* provides a unique glimpse into editing and publishing. Copies can be ordered via the society's website <www.socedvic.org>. The cost is \$30 plus \$10 postage.

The Fine Print call for contributions

The copy deadline for the third issue of *The Fine Print*, an online journal dedicated to editing, is 10 December 2005. Contributions on all aspects of editing are welcomed. The journal is published each February and August. For more details visit the website at <www.emendediting.com/ezine>.

Current Publishing Practice report released

Jeremy Fisher, executive director of the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) has written a report on the Australian publishing industry, *Current Publishing Practice*. The report draws on many sources, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Publishers Association.

The author notes a decline in 'the publishing of books relevant to Australia's literary culture'. Despite healthy increases in previous years there was a decline of \$50 million in sales of Australian-originated books in 2003–2004. The report includes a comparative table of the standard contract conditions offered by most Australian publishers. *Current Publishing Practice* can be purchased from the Australian Society of Authors (phone 9318 0877).

Are you looking for a literary agent?

The website for the Australian Literary Agents' Association (ALAA) is now up and running at <www.austlitagentsassoc.com.au>.

The ALAA was formed in 2003 in order to provide a public presence and a point of contact for Australian literary agencies and their staff.

According to the new website, 'Literary agents seek outlets for the work of writers they represent, and oversee the contract relationships between authors and those who use their work—book and magazine publishers, film, theatre, radio and television producers, and others. They see that their authors get a fair and profitable deal. They are especially concerned with publishers' advances, the way publishers promote their authors, overseas rights, translation rights, film rights and opportunities, and many other detailed contract matters.'

The website presents the ALAA to the public and includes a list of members and a code of practice. ALAA members are obliged to adhere to the principles outlined in the code of practice.



Sedition—the impact on editors, writers and publishers

The government's proposed 'anti-terror' laws may effect editors, writers and publishers.

The Australian Press Council has made a submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee arguing that 'The proposed sedition laws appear to go further than is required and should be reconsidered.' Visit <www.presscouncil.org.au> for details.

Concerns have also been expressed by such institutions as the Australian Writer's Guild (AWG), Australian Society of Authors (ASA) and the Australian Screen Editors Guild.

The MEAA is calling for the removal of sedition and urging the adoption of professional privilege for journalists. 'Notice to produce powers for police could force journalists to reveal information, including the identity of confidential sources.' For more details see <www.alliance.org.au>.

According to Thorpe-Bowker's *Weekly Book Newsletter* (3 November 2005) the Australian Publisher's Association has advised members 'to be aware of the current offence of publishing "seditious words" and how the bill might extend their potential liability.' The proposed laws will increase the penalty for publishing 'seditious words' from three years to seven, and will include two new offences not previously covered by the Crimes Act. 'Publishers will need to be careful, for example, that commissioning books from commentators does not amount to lending legitimacy to their opinions or as implying an offer of assistance to any relevant groups that might be encouraged by their words.'

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007; Voicemail: (02) 9294 4999
<www.editorsnsw.com>.

Blue Pencil

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Assistants: Robin Appleton, Janice Beavan, Moira Elliott, Julie Harders, Meryl Potter

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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 Catherine Etteridge at <cje_editing@hotmail.com>.

Copy deadline for the January/February issue is Tuesday, 8 December 2005

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, \$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. 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 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 <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

InDesign

Date: Friday, 10 February 2006

Presenter: Alpha Computer Consultants

Venue: Level 3, 123 Clarence Street, Sydney

Cost: \$300, lunch not included.

Course includes: course notes, certificate, twelve months help desk (via email to reinforce the learning) and repeat any public course within six months for free (conditions apply). Each student will have a workstation.

MS Word: advanced editing skills

Date: TBA

Presenter: Bruce Howarth

Venue: TBA

Cost: \$195 for members, \$240 for non-members.

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.

Effective writing: structure, style, and the power of plain English

Date: TBA

Presenter: Pauline Waugh

Writing and editing for the creative industries

Date: TBA

Presenter: Ginny Lowndes

Regional members living more than 200 km from Sydney will receive a 40 per cent discount on the cost of the society's workshops.

Cancellation and refunds

The society will refund 100 per cent of the fee if you cancel four or more working days before the workshop, and 50 per cent if you cancel one to three days before. However, please note that there can be no refund if you cancel on the day of the workshop.

For more information about the society's workshops, please email Pauline Waugh at paulinewaugh@ozemail.com.au.

**Don't forget to book
for the Christmas Party!**

**RSVP before Friday, 2 December.
Numbers are limited so book
earlier to guarantee your place.
See the front page and the booking
form for details.**

**Copy deadline for the January/February issue of
Blue Pencil:**

Thursday, 8 December 2005

Christmas Party!

you are invited to

Buon Gusto Italian Restaurant

Address: 368 Abercrombie Street
Chippendale NSW 2008
Time: 6.30 for 7.00 p.m.

Tuesday, 6 December 2005

Cost: \$48 a head, including drinks

Celebrate the festive season with great food, wine and prizes!

We welcome non-members.

Booking is essential. Please RSVP by Friday, 2 December.

I would like to attend the Christmas party

Name:.....

Email address:.....

Phone: (W)..... (H).....

Cheque/money order enclosed for \$.....

Please charge \$.....to my credit card Bankcard MasterCard Visa

Credit card number:.....Expiry date:.....

Name on credit card:.....

Cardholder's signature:.....

Pay on the night (but you must book beforehand):

Please return to Society of Editors (NSW), PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007.

Enquiries to Bruce Howarth: (02) 4731 5406 or brhed@pnc.com.au.

**If you are using a credit card to book, you may phone (02) 9660 0335
or fax (02) 9660 9375 your booking to the society's treasurer, Janice Beavan.**

The society can help arrange safe transport home.