

# Blue Pencil

Newsletter of  
The Society  
of Editors  
(NSW) Inc.

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## Focus on production and printing

*At a special joint meeting in October, Galley Club members joined society members to hear Linda Watchorn from Random House and Michael Schulz from SOS Print + Media Group talk about their roles and the changes taking place in the book industry. This report summarises Michael's observations on printing.*

We printers are at the end of the supply chain. After the production guys are finished we get the book. I should just put that very quickly in context. Right now it is really tough. For a long time print was really the thing to be because there was nothing else. But then, suddenly, everybody was able to produce artwork and create their own files. That created a lot of problems for us because we received different files from all these different people and had to cope with them. At the beginning of the 1990s something else happened. This internet thing, something called the World Wide Web, was made accessible to everybody. We looked at that critically and thought, 'that can't really touch us', for a long time. But it did, and it does now, and whether we want it or not there are all these guys that are suddenly taking away a lot of our business. As a printer you suddenly found that you were only one part of

a big media mix and that is where we are now.

There are a lot of challenges for printers. Overseas the printers are looking much worse than here. In the USA the number of printers has declined drastically. The heavy metal we have in our factory is quite amazing and it produces a lot of magazines but there is not that much skill in what needs to be printed any more. There is automation, which we need to bring into our factory more and more because we need to do things faster, and we need to do things

with less people. Automation is very extensive change. There are a lot of changes in workflow, which we have to get used to.

Globalisation does not only mean that people get things printed in China. It also means workflow that goes all over the world. We print a lot of financials. An analyst can write something here at 7.00 p.m. then send it at 8.00 p.m. to the editors in London who edit it then send it at 10.00 p.m. to the lawyers in New York. They then send it at 11.00 p.m. to

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**Next meeting: Tuesday, 2 February 2010**

### Trends in the digital domain

Social networking and online communities are now a common part of everyday life and used by publishing houses, authors and readers to discover, discuss, promote and sell books. We are at a point where digital books and content are the focus of publishing.

Editors have an important role to play in selecting and modifying content to be released digitally, and will be part of the force that reshapes the 'book' in the coming months and years. Editors will need to remain in touch with the changing face of the industry and embrace new media without losing the integrity and quality they bring to their work. This talk will outline the new challenges and opportunities for editors regarding social networking, online communities, and other trends in the digital domain.

**Natalie Costa Bir** is the Digital Editor at HarperCollins Publishers. She has been in the publishing industry for four years and has worked in online and traditional marketing at HarperCollins, as well as in the editorial department. In August 2009, as the winner of the Unwin Fellowship, she travelled to the UK to research a project on online book communities and social networking and how these can be more effectively used to benefit the book industry.

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 and students; \$20 for non-members and those who do not RSVP; \$10 for holders of a current concession card or student card. Non-members who book and do not attend must still pay.

Please RSVP to (02) 9294 4999 (voicemail) or to the email address editorbruce@optusnet.com.au by Friday, 29 January 2010.

**March meeting: Society of Editors (NSW) Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, 2 March 2010—FREE to all members.**

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India to the typesetters who produce it. We get it at midnight or 1.00 a.m. and we have to have 1,000 copies on 1,000 desks in Sydney by 6.00 a.m. That kind of workflow is happening every night and that is something that we also have to get used to. But it is also something that we can do because everything is digitised now.

### Book printing

There is a lot of change in book printing production right now. There are a lot of opportunities but there are also a lot of things that we need to react to. The print runs of books are getting shorter. That is a global thing. More than 60 per cent of books are printed with runs of less than 10,000. That is an American figure so I would say in Australia it is even less. A lot of traditional printing was set up to run large quantities. We lived on quantity, running lots of copies. If we had to run shorter, normally the price would go up but that was very hard to explain to clients.

There is a lot of consolidation in the printing market. There is off-shore competition, on books especially. There is limited growth in the number of books that are published and the rising cost of returns. So when we work with publishers we need to understand the way their supply chain works all the way to book centres who then return books. This concept was totally foreign to me until I got into book publishing—that they actually return then pulp the books that we printed. That is very expensive obviously.

### Digital printing

One of the ways to do something about that is what Random House are doing with a short-run program to print things digitally. The digital production of trade books is growing roughly 20 per cent annually. That is a global figure. For occasional books the figure is about 15 per cent. That is a figure from a few months ago, which can change very quickly with new production methods and with legislation that may

be issued in different areas. There are now a lot of opportunities in colour and in personalisation and in book printing in general. The digital type of book is growing. Two years ago they were expecting 16 per cent annual growth of digital printing and we can certainly observe that in our factory. Digital printing is definitely a growth trend. Offset printing is plateauing or shrinking.

When you have a shorter run of the books, offset printing is very expensive. Every book would cost a lot because of the setup costs, because of the plates, because of the big machinery that is used. With digital printing the unit price is almost the same whether you print 20 or whether you print 200 or whether you print 2,000. The quality of digital

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**'...the quality of digital printing is sometimes indistinguishable from traditional printing...'**

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books is getting better and better, to the point that I would say somebody who is not an expert in printing would probably not be able to tell which one is digital print and which one is offset.

This is where the short-run program makes sense for publishers to only print 50 at a time and put them into the warehouse. They keep stock levels down and can do that because, although it costs a bit for each book, it doesn't really cost more overall when you look at the whole picture—at the warehousing, at the management costs, at the management of sending books out. So printing a book at a time may be more expensive but may be a more sensible solution.

As I said, I think the quality of digital printing is sometimes indistinguishable from traditional printing and the timeliness is there. We are very productive. One other thing that is under control now, and where some publishers are probably better than others, is the artwork. With Acrobat, the artwork became more controllable than it was before. When there were 50 different files it was a nightmare. But suddenly we could receive a pdf and go and print it. We can print it here, or at our partner printers in Brisbane, or we can do it in Perth. We can even do it in London. It doesn't matter because we know that the artwork is under control.

### Print on order

Six per cent of books are warehoused for 20 years or more and 66 per cent of books are warehoused for two years. Those are quite interesting numbers. Even when you go to a very organised warehouse there is a lot of paper sitting there. Linda mentioned the change to print on order. This is something that you are probably going to read a lot about. It is something that Random House is just starting and it is something that printers know how to make work. If you have a book and you print one at a time the artwork needs to be found, it needs to be sent to one of the machines, it needs to be printed out. Then another machine will do the cover. If it is a high quality cover it would go to a colour printer. Then the colour cover would be sent to a machine that does the plastic coating with celloglaze because the cover needs to have a bit of protection. Then the book goes to a binder to put it together. If you did all that manually that book would cost something like \$45 or \$50 or more. So printers have to really automate as much as they can. We cannot do this if we only do one at a time. So really what we are doing is starting a program and hoping we are going to have lots of these orders otherwise it just won't work.

We need to automate and we need to standardise. We need to standardise on one or two set stocks. We need to standardise on a white offset stock. We need to standardise on some formats because we need to do different covers together otherwise this one at a time option is not going to work. We need to standardise on the way that we are handling those orders. We need to automate the way the orders are coming in and how we can manage them. So we needed to set up a system where we can get those orders into production. We have to bind them and that needs to happen all the way automatically.

We set up a website where items could be ordered, where jobs could be tracked, where invoices are generated, where reports are generated showing which titles are printing, how many times, how many have been re-ordered by this one, what is the spend on that particular title. You can see the artwork that we have. We have an artwork depository where we store all the files so that when an order comes

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### NEW MEMBERS

Linda Cohen

Susanna Jardine

Simone Lyons

# 2009: Looking back—looking forward

The year 2009 has been significant all round—the last year of the first decade of the twenty-first century. Whether that decade was the ‘noughties’, the ‘twenty Os’, or the ‘two thousands’, we have still to decide...

There’s no doubt for the Society of Editors (NSW) that 2009 has been full of lively members’ meetings, planned and executed by members of the committee, and always well catered for by Nancy Shearer and her associates. The society’s professional workshops run by Meryl Potter get excellent evaluations every time, and the program would be the best in Australia. The social side was equally well maintained through freelancers’ lunches and twice-a-year dinners—especially the mid-winter dinner celebrating the society’s thirtieth birthday, which was the landmark event led by Catherine Etteridge and Susie Pilkington. *Blue Pencil* has kept people well informed about the society, thanks to Denise Holden; our website has been regularly updated by Abigail Nathan; and the *Editorial Services*

*Directory 2009–2010*, maintained by Cathy Gray, is out and being publicised by Terry Johnston. The vital role of keeping our finances in good order has been shouldered by Hillary Goldsmith, while Bruce Howarth has worked tirelessly as membership secretary, and ensured that everyone is emailed about editorial jobs being advertised in NSW, as well as IPEd events such as accreditation. The second accreditation exam was held in downtown Sydney in September, thanks to the efforts of Julie Harders, Sampath Narayanan and Sybil Kesteven.

Apart from ensuring that all such activities continue in 2010, the society is looking further forward to running the IPEd National Editors Conference in Sydney in 2011 (7 to 9 September). It will be themed ‘New Horizons for Editing and Publishing’, to set the scene for a forward-looking program. The logistics have taken shape in the hands of Catherine Etteridge and Shelley Reid, who negotiated a stylish venue for the conference on Cockle Bay. Meanwhile Abigail Nathan and

her associates created a very attractive design for materials to promote the conference. It was well received when launched at the IPEd National Editors Conference in Adelaide, and we hope for strong nation-wide participation. If you haven’t yet seen the publicity for the conference, do check out the society’s website for a foretaste of what’s planned.

As all that says, the society’s work is vibrant, with inputs from editors working in many different contexts on the committee. If you would like to join the committee and/or play a part in planning the 2011 conference, do get in touch with any of the committee members listed on the back page of *Blue Pencil*. We would welcome your input, and you’d find satisfaction in working with fellow editors to advance the status and strength of the editorial profession.

**Pam Peters**  
**President of the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.**

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in it automatically routes the text to a certain machine and the cover to another machine. There is a workflow diagram that was set up after a fair few discussions, lots of revisions and a few arguments as well because there are a lot of considerations involved. For example, offset and digital stocks may have different paper thickness (micronage). Somebody has to adjust the width of the spine and make sure that the logo is still in the middle and that the texture is still there. All those kinds of checks need to be done before it goes to the machine. If you only realise at the machine that it doesn’t fit then you’ve got a problem.

### Benefits of digital printing

Some of the benefits of digital printing are that we can do this kind of thing within something like 24 hours. We can react more quickly to your orders. We have more planning flexibility but we don’t over-produce. Every one of the books that we produce is counted and is accounted for. We just print as needed.

There is going to be a change in technology in the next few years that is going to make a huge impact because it can print a lot of pages very, very fast on paper. This technology can print pictures off a roll at a speed of up to

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**‘So printing a book at a time may be more expensive but may be a more sensible solution.’**

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3,600 pages a minute. The potential that offers for book printing is amazing. Old 6250, one of the printers that we use, does 250 pages a minute. It is still a very good machine. However, the new technology is going to be disruptive. It is going to change the way our press room and print room works and it will also be able to print black pages with colour pages in between. It will bring down the price of colour pages by a fifth. It is going to enable us to give you 50 books of something at a unit price that is comparable to what you paid for 500 in China.

### Environmental concerns

There are also many environmental considerations and we ideally prefer not to be seen as tree killers. It can be a bit hard to sell printing because everybody thinks that the printing guys are the ones hurting the environment.

We obtained FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) accreditation very early in the piece. The paper stock that is FSC accredited comes from controlled growth forests and will be replanted. The accreditation means there will be no unnecessary damage done to the environment and to habitats that should be protected, and they also use accredited paper mills. In general FSC ensures that the resources that are used are not causing any damage to the environment and that resources are renewed.

*Michael Schulz is the Galley Club president and has been with SOS Print + Media Group ([www.sos.com.au](http://www.sos.com.au)) for about 20 years. He has lectured for the Macquarie University postgraduate program in Editing and Publishing.*



**The Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. will be hosting the  
5th National Editor's Conference in 2011.**

**7 to 9 September, 2011**

**Dockside Conference Centre, Cockle Bay, Sydney**

**The New Horizons theme was officially launched at the  
4th National Conference in Adelaide in October this year.**

**See page 5 for conference program details**

## Tiered membership

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

### Categories

This membership year (2010) the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. will offer members the option of three categories:

1. Existing members (as at 31 December 2006) can remain an ordinary member at the current fee (\$75/85) with the current entitlements; or
2. Existing and new members can become a professional editor member at the current ordinary fee with the current ordinary entitlements, provided you have two years' experience in a paid editing role and can supply two letters confirming your experience; or
3. Existing and new members can become an associate member at a reduced fee (\$55/\$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*).

### Phasing in a new system

Before January 2011 all ordinary members will be asked to choose either:

1. Professional editor member status; or
2. Associate member status.

Four years should be sufficient time for those seeking professional status to gain professional experience if they do not already have it.

### 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: Successful proofreading

*On 8 October 2009 the Society of Editors (NSW) held a second workshop on proofreading, presented by our Professional Development Coordinator, Meryl Potter (DE).*

This workshop—scheduled following an earlier sold-out session in September—attracted participants from large organisations and the public sector, publishing and media, and, as always, there were new editors as well as old hands.

As editors and writers, we read every day as part of our work, but we were there to learn the specific responsibilities of a proofreader, and to practise some of the skills required in the job.

The day began with an overview of the proofreader's part in the production process. 'Proofreading is not the stage to be making editorial decisions', said Meryl in her introduction. 'Good editors make all the tough decisions during the editing stage.'

As one of the last readers before publication, it's the proofreader's responsibility to check that corrections have all been made, and that typographic and design styles have been applied consistently.

Meryl stressed the importance of a clear brief and good communication with the client. 'The job you do will always depend on the brief', she said. 'In publishing, expectations are usually

clear, but in the corporate world the line between a proofread and a light copy edit can be blurry.'

Ask the client: Is there a house style? Is there a style sheet for the publication? If not, you will have to develop one yourself.

After familiarising ourselves with the standard margin marks, we began with an exercise in 'blind' proofreading—reading proofs without the original marked-up copy for reference. Then we did an exercise in reading proofs against edited copy to check that all corrections had been taken in. We practised proofing tables and then tried working with a copy holder: reading out loud, listening, checking and marking corrections.

Meryl gave out checklists for each stage in the proofing process, and, as always, she had plenty of advice to offer from her experience.

Although proofs are often delivered electronically, printing them out is essential. 'Our eyes move differently on a page to a screen, and it's much easier to miss errors if we're reading on screen.'

For corrections, write in the margins (not within the text). Unless you have

been specifically asked to work in pencil, use pen, and make your marks neat and unambiguous. 'Typesetters have to work fast to take in corrections, so make their job easier by making your corrections crystal clear.'

Tired proofreaders make mistakes, and so it was great to have this advice: 'Take regular breaks to keep your eyes and brain fresh. And beware of "pressing on" when you are tired—this is when you will lose concentration and make (or miss) errors.'

Thanks to Meryl, as always, for presenting and doing all the behind-the-scenes organisation on behalf of the society. One participant wrote, 'As ever, Meryl's background contributed mightily to the day. So much experience to draw on.' It's been a very busy year of workshops and accreditation.

Thanks also to Jan Dunne, Richard Bilkey, Narayanan Sampath, Abigail Nathan, Ava Shifreen, Charlotte Fish, Nancy Shearer, Janice Beavan, Catherine Etteridge and Bruce Howarth, and to all the other volunteers who have helped with the workshops in 2009.

**Lachlan Jobbins**

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## 5th National Editors Conference 2011

### Conference Program

- Overall theme: New Horizons for Editing and Publishing
- Professional strand: Redefining role of editor in digital world
- Editing for new publishing technologies
- Publishing strand: Going global
- Parallel publishing in print and digital form

### Topics proposed for Conference speakers

- Into the future: socio-cultural trends in Australia and overseas
- Trends in information delivery and consumption

- Editing for multicultural readerships
- 'Death of the Book'? What kinds of books will continue to be produced?
- New editing technologies

### Workshops

- Focus on future skills, editing technologies
- Training workshops well-received by NSW editors can be repeated on demand for interstate editors coming to the Conference

Stay up to date with conference planning by visiting the official conference website:

[www.editorsnsw.com/conference2011.htm](http://www.editorsnsw.com/conference2011.htm)

# The PLAIN Conference in Sydney

*'Raising the Standard' was the seventh biennial conference of the Plain Language Association InterNational (PLAIN); the conference was at Darling Harbour, Sydney, in October. Associate member of the Society of Editors (NSW) Kate Benecke looks back at the conference.*

The two-day conference opened with a speech from then premier of NSW Nathan Rees and ended, for me, with a session analysing poorly written chainsaw instructions.

Not your average weekend. But it worked for me. There were 14 conference sessions in all, with eight elective sessions with names like workshops, showcases and panels. No others involving premiers or power tools—but all of them good, and many of them inspiring.

The chance to dip into international insights at the whole conference sessions was enlightening. Candice Burt (South Africa) showed a slide of an ATM in South Africa with 11 official languages represented. South Africa has legislated for plain language change, targeting average literacy skills. But what's average literacy? And which of the 11 languages is to be 'plain'?

Dr Annetta Cheek (USA) outlined progress on a Bill for US federal departments to use plain language in public documents. Rachel McAlpine (New Zealand) briefed us on keeping a national push for plain language a streamlined, coordinated effort, with concrete goals and using local groups. There were overviews on plain language efforts in Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden and South Africa.

Phew! These were big questions. But what was not in dispute was plain language effectiveness. Advocate and former lawyer Christopher Balmford said the need for 'plain' was at work, at home—all communication, all the time. There was, he pointed out, no group of readers who actually preferred difficult sentences and skipped the graphics; no group that stated: 'I enjoy the hunt for information'!

My eight elective sessions were chosen from a mammoth line-up of 32; it was a comprehensive offering. Topics included literacy, legal language, translation, training, IT and technology, graphics, forms, government standards and document assessment.

Professor Michael Meehan's thoughts were a wonderful complement

to other sessions. He tore away the criticism that plain English 'denudes' language. Plain English is not plain thinking, he reiterated. The 'rich slurry' of language in the world of law, poetry and other contexts can give space for new thought. Some linguistic excess can be important. After all, if poetry was translated into plain English it's unlikely it would remain poetry.

Film critic Michele Asprey and writer Moya Sayer-Jones followed Professor

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## **'...if poetry was translated into plain English it's unlikely it would remain poetry.'**

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Meehan as part of the same 'Plain language and literature' session, also holding delegates' attention. Michele Asprey echoed that writing plainly is not a bar to writing with passion. The room was packed and everyone, I felt, enjoyed these perspectives.

The only regret of the entire conference was that while delegates chose eight sessions—there was always the niggling thought: 'I wonder what's going on in the other 24 sessions?'

Professor Pam Peters, always with her finger on the pulse, gave the keynote address and our dose of language usage information with some statistical back-up. There is, said Professor Peters, convergence of English as we communicate across borders but there's also simultaneous divergence, with the necessity for local variety. In a world with widespread internet usage, it seems greatest convergence is likely with vocabulary, and least convergence with pronunciation.

Studies of online material by Professor Peters revealed some perhaps unexpected trends. Australia is out in front in using '-ise' suffixes to spell words such as 'emphasise' and 'organise'. We are beating the Brits at their own game. Doggedly sticking to '-ise'; rejecting '-ize' suffixes even more strongly than UK language users.

Internationally, including Canada '-ize' is favoured. The preference is

less strong in the UK, and even less strong in New Zealand. But they all fall on one side of the ledger. Australia is on the other side. Fascinating! Dare I say, I didn't realise! (Apologies to Professor Peters here as I am sure my understanding is superficial. But that's why you give keynotes and I go as a delegate.)

Trainer Dr Marcia Riley, from the USA, reminded us all that plain language professional development is best with lots of doing, involvement, humour, surprises, treats and movement. No glazed eyes in her session. (And thanks for the Hershey bar Marcia!)

New Zealand's Duncan Sarkies, also a training specialist, flashed up a slide of a cluttered house—his mum's, he said. (Sorry Duncan's mum, if it's true.) In fact, I started to wonder if Mr Sarkies had been to my house. That clutter looked familiar.

The point he was making, the visual metaphor, was stark. We train ourselves not to see clutter. Habits are firmly held. When we train others in plain language the belief that 'weeding' out the junk is well worth the effort is really important. Heading to clarity and simplicity usually leads to greater effectiveness—achieving our communication aims.

Duncan Sarkies further caught my attention with a slide showing the lyrics of 'I shot the sheriff', written by Bob Marley—only written in the passive form. Didn't have quite the same impact. What a great little exercise for a trainer to do! Active construction wins again.

Throughout the conference the detrimental cost of not using plain language was reinforced. So too was the importance of training follow-up; isolated training sessions are next to useless. These were good pertinent reminders for corporate types, government types, solo business people and everyone in between.

And not mentioned so far, that conference favourite—networking (no, not food and peppermints!). There were consultants and trainers, health

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# A few highlights from the 4th IPEd National Editors Conference

*We are grateful to the Society of Editors (WA) Inc. for permission to reprint Amanda Curtin's reflections on her experience of the conference published in the December issue of Bookworm.*

The benefits of attending a national conference are, for me, often long term. I find myself remembering some useful piece of information I heard at a conference session—or, more often, from a colleague over coffee between sessions. The opportunity to be inspired by international and national keynote speakers, to see excellent presentations, to meet editors from all over Australia, to learn from them and share experiences is enormously valuable and a great pleasure.

Here are some notes from a few of the sessions I enjoyed.

Pam Hewitt, in her presentation 'Don't be depressed: editing your way out of a recession', suggested that surviving difficult economic times came down to being well established, versatile and professional. There's not much you can do about the first—you're either well established or you're not—or maybe even the second, but Pam's discussion of the third included:

- having a good CV
- nurturing professional relationships
- learning to work smarter (e.g. using macros)
- having a marketing plan
- updating your skills
- reading and researching
- attaining, or working towards attaining, accreditation.

Melanie Dankel, from Lonely Planet, presented a thoroughly engaging session on managing the author–editor relationship, reminding us that editing is a conversation. She concluded with ten commandments:\*

1. Thou shalt build rapport with your author.
2. Thou shalt be clear (on guidelines, on requirements, on what you mean).
3. Thou shalt set reasonable deadlines.
4. Thou shalt acknowledge communications (applying the 24-hour rule).
5. Thou shalt be flexible and open to change (because nothing ever goes to plan).

6. Thou shalt always be polite.
7. Thou shalt maintain a sense of humour.
8. Thou shalt put yourself in the author's shoes.
9. Thou shalt provide positive and constructive feedback.
10. Thou shalt preserve the author's voice and the integrity of the author's text.

One of the liveliest sessions, for

## **'...all it takes for an "error" to gain a foothold in the language is consensus.'**

me, was Jackie Cook's 'Sub/texts: troubleshooting grammar in the electronic badlands'. Jackie talked about evolution in usage, reminding us that all it takes for an 'error' to gain a foothold in the language is consensus. Among her entertaining examples were:

- aural hygiene: the use of 'should of' instead of 'should have' because it is misheard by the 'new standard user' who is a speaker rather than a writer
- colonic regression: semicolons appearing where colons should be—or, in fact, where nothing should be!
- hyper-expressivity: the use of escalating intensifiers ('absolutely unique') and doubled absolutes ('really, really cool')

While conceding that these trends place traditional grammar under greater pressure, Jackie proposed that they also 'add and create as well as elide and destroy'—although I suspect that many in the audience disagreed with her on that!

In a joint 'Meet the publishers' session, Heather Cam (Managing Editor, University of NSW Press) listed the attributes she looks for in freelance editors:

- in-house experience
- university education (arts, sciences)
- command of language
- maturity

- flexibility
- sense of humour
- problem-solving ability
- good communication skills
- thoroughness
- reliability
- technical proficiency
- tact
- awareness of legal issues.

As WA's Accreditation Board delegate, the honouring of Australia's first Accredited Editors was a particular highlight for me, the culmination of many years of work by so many committed people.

The Adelaide conference was the fourth I've attended, and it was good to see several WA colleagues there. Back in 2001, when the first national editors conference was held jointly with indexers (Canberra), I was the only representative from Perth—but our numbers have been increasing steadily ever since. I hope you can join us in Sydney in 2011.

\*Thanks to Melanie Dankel for permission to reproduce these.

*Amanda Curtin is a writer and a freelance book editor based in Perth, and WA delegate to the IPEd Accreditation Board. Her first novel, The Sinkings, was published by University of Western Australia Press in 2008.*

**Copy deadline for the next issue of**  
***Blue Pencil***  
**Tuesday**  
**19 January 2010**

## Residential Editorial Program closing date 11 January 2010

The Residential Editorial Program (REP) is a training program for mid-career editors who would like to enhance their literary editing skills through intensive workshops with highly experienced and respected industry practitioners. It is conducted by the Australian Publishers Association (APA) together with the Literature Board of the Australia Council.

The REP will be held from 3 to 8 May 2010 at Varuna—the Writers House, Katoomba, NSW.

Closing date for applications is Monday, 11 January 2010.

Guidelines and application forms are available from the APA website—[www.publishers.asn.au](http://www.publishers.asn.au).

## Book Design Awards closing date 20 January 2010

Books published in 2009 are eligible for entry into the 58th Annual Book Design Awards. Entry forms and other details are available on the APA website—[www.publishers.asn.au](http://www.publishers.asn.au).

Entries and books must arrive in the APA office by end of business on Wednesday, 20 January 2010.

The awards will be presented at a gala ceremony at the Powerhouse Museum on the evening of Thursday, 20 May 2010 as part of the Sydney Writers Festival Program.

## The Digital Revolution: Publishing in the 21st Century, 17 February 2010

The Digital Revolution: Publishing in the 21st Century will be held on Wednesday, 17 February 2010 at the Australian National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour. You are invited to join international industry leaders Richard Charkin (Bloomsbury Publishing), Stephen Page (Faber & Faber), Michael Tamblyn (Shortcovers for Indigo) and key Australian speakers including Elizabeth Weiss, Victoria Nash, and Susan Hawthorne, in a one-day symposium to discuss what digital technology means for the Australian publishing industry.

Registration is essential. The fee for the full-day seminar is \$70. Included in the day's program is a networking drinks session to end the event. Registration forms may be downloaded from the website—[www.publishers.asn.au](http://www.publishers.asn.au).

## Diary dates for 2010 International

**Bologna Children's Book Fair**

23 to 26 March, Bologna, Italy

**Oxford Literary Festival**

20 to 28 March, Oxford, UK

**London Book Fair**

19 to 21 April, London, UK

**National Editors Conference**

8 to 30 May, Montreal, Canada

**Hay Festival**

27 May to 6 June, Hay-on-Wye, Wales

**Edinburgh International Book Festival**

14 to 30 August, Edinburgh, Scotland

**SfEP Conference**

4 to 6 September, Glasgow, UK

**Frankfurt Book Fair**

6 to 10 October, Frankfurt, Germany

## Interstate

**Perth Writers Festival**

5 Feb to 1 March

**Adelaide Writers Week**

28 Feb to 5 March

**Melbourne Writers Festival**

27 Aug to 5 September

**Brisbane Writers Festival**

1 to 5 September

## New South Wales

**History Writers' Festival**

13 March, Sydney

**Sydney Writers Festival**

17 to 23 May, Sydney

**Festival of Children and Young Adults' Writing**

3 to 4 July, Sydney

**Byron Bay Writers Festival**

6 to 8 August, Byron Bay

**Indigenous Writers' Festival**

6 to 7 November, Sydney

## New Horizons 2011 conference website

Stay up to date with planning for the 5th National Editors Conference to be held in Sydney, 7 to 9 September 2011, by visiting the official conference website—[www.editorsnsw.com/conference2011.htm](http://www.editorsnsw.com/conference2011.htm)

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people, legal people, local government bods, translators, administrators, social rights advocates, people who analysed the global financial crisis and people who represented those on the fringe of society. I met people who worked with kids' groups and people who worked with lawyers. People who wrote government documents, and consultants who re-wrote them. It was a merry mix. I even met two people from a former life, at least a former stage in my life. It was all interesting.

Of course the other conference favourite is the serious after hours networking—a cocktail reception and

a conference dinner. Regretfully, I could make it to neither. So this review lacks a taste of the after-hours mingling activity and the buzz of the night-time sessions. I was dealing with bedtime stories and children (mine)—not much buzz there, and even fewer cocktails.

PLAIN is a volunteer non-profit organisation of plain language advocates, professionals and organisations committed to plain language. The Plain English Foundation, advocating use of plain language in Australia, hosted this international event at Darling Harbour.

For me, a nine-out-of-ten conference. Well worth the trip to Sydney. And my apologies to those I have left

out, misrepresented or annoyed. The conference ended with the chainsaw man in the DVD retaining all his fingers, no thanks to the instructions. And as for Nathan Rees—who actually demonstrated an understanding of the subject and charmed audiences with anecdotes and information—two months is a long time in politics. Mr Rees is now a former premier. Maybe there's a job going in writing chainsaw instructions?

**Kate Benecke Communications**

[kateben@quikdsl.com.au](mailto:kateben@quikdsl.com.au)



## Membership renewals 2010

The deadline for membership renewal for 2010 is 31 December. You should have received your membership renewal notice by post. If you have moved recently make sure you notify the Membership secretary, Bruce Howarth, at [editorbruce@optusnet.com.au](mailto:editorbruce@optusnet.com.au) so he can update your postal address details.

## Christmas Party

Society members enjoyed a great night of feasting and frivolity in the vine-draped courtyard of La Tavola restaurant in Crows Nest.

Thanks to those who helped organise the night and make it a great success:

- Pam Peters who hosted the evening and organised the alternative book title competition
- Catherine Etteridge who organised the 'lucky plate' competition and party poppers
- Hillary Goldsmith who managed the bookings and the money
- Denise Holden and Catherine Etteridge for judging the book title competition.

The competition required members to come up with a book title based on a blurb from a bookshop catalogue. The results were creative and amusing, and, most agreed, much better than the actual book titles. The four winners took home a copy of *Editors in Conversation*.

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, Lachlan Jobbins, Julie Harders and Nicky Shortridge.

Printer: Complete Design, Marrickville

Published: 11 issues a year (including 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, 19 January 2010.**

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 (horizontal only); one-third page, \$125 (vertical or horizontal); quarter page \$100 (horizontal only); 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 2010 fees are \$75 for ordinary member or professional member renewals; \$85 for new professional members; \$55 for associate member renewals or \$65 for new associate members. Interested organisations can become corporate associates for \$400 per year.

To obtain a membership application form go to 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 society's *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:

- 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 [esd@editorsnsw.com](mailto:esd@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.

## 2009 COMMITTEE

**President: Pam Peters**

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**Catering officer: Nancy Shearer**

Email: [catering@editorsnsw.com](mailto:catering@editorsnsw.com)

### 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).

## Professional development

### Writing and Editing for the Web

**Date:** February 2010 (Date TBA. Watch society website for flyer)

**Presenter:** Simon Hillier

This workshop is designed for people building a new website or improving current website copy, or for anyone writing and editing for the web who wants to understand its potential challenges and opportunities. You will receive up-to-date practical guidance, tips and language tools to enhance your internet writing and editing skills. Group and individual exercises are included throughout the day. Cost includes lunch and refreshments.

### Grammar Essentials

**Date:** Thursday, 18 March 2010

**Time:** 9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

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

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

**Cost:** \$195 for members, \$290 for non-members

Editors often feel that they need more grammar, but how much is enough? The major grammars of contemporary English consist of more than 1,000 pages, with vast networks of grammatical terms. Editors probably do not need to know all of them—unless they are aiming for a career change. What they do need for the purposes of professional editing is enough grammar to:

- make the most of dictionaries, style manuals and other language references
- understand and explain the variable points of current English usage
- capitalise on language resources for cohesive writing
- enlarge their repertoire for managing stylistic change.

Let's bridge the grammatical gaps and find grammatical resources for enhancing all aspects of writing and editing. The workshop is designed to be interactive and to allow for discussion of the ins and outs of usage as they arise. Feel free to email questions and examples before the workshop to [education@editorsnsw.com](mailto:education@editorsnsw.com).

### Publishing and Editing Children's Picture Books

**Date:** Thursday, 22 April 2010

**Presenter:** Mark Macleod

### Planned workshops for 2010:

- Manuscript Assessment and Reader Reports
- Plain English
- Punctuation
- Advanced Copy Editing

### To register for workshops

Use the enclosed form or download one from the website. Please note that workshops require a minimum of 10 registrations by the closing date to go ahead.

For booking enquiries, contact Bruce Howarth by email at [membership@editorsnsw.com](mailto:membership@editorsnsw.com). For more information about workshops, email Meryl Potter at [education@editorsnsw.com](mailto:education@editorsnsw.com).

### Payment for workshops

To secure a place you must send payment with your registration form. Registrations will only be confirmed when we receive payment. Our workshops fill very quickly and we often have people on a waitlist who may miss out on a place if people who have registered but not paid do not show up on the day. Please contact the treasurer if your company needs an invoice.