2004 Annual report issue

President's report

As the AGM draws near, it's time to reflect on what we've achieved this year, to thank those who have helped us achieve these things, and to think about the year ahead.

We are fortunate to have such an energetic and experienced committee to guide the society through this time of change as we try to emphasise the professional status of editors. I sincerely thank everyone who has served on the committee or pitched in and helped. The task of running an organisation is so much easier with an enthusiastic and supportive band of colleagues who pull together to make things work.

Perhaps our list of people to thank should start with Julie Stanton, our catering officer. The meetings and workshops would make little impact on our members if we had no food—and even less if we had no drink! Julie carefully selects what we'll eat and drink, acts as bar attendant, and buys the gifts for our guest speakers. I was bemused to read in an old *Blue Pencil* that the catering officer had the easiest job on the society's list of tasks. How many of us would turn up to a meeting if we had to lug glasses, wine and all the other paraphernalia? Thank you, Julie. And special thanks for the spicy mulled wine last winter. I do hope you'll make it again next winter.

Of course, we wouldn't have a meeting if it were not for Deborah Edward, our meetings coordinator, who engages the guest speakers—and often writes a meeting report for *Blue Pencil*. She has some excellent speakers in mind for 2005. Thank you, Deborah.

How would we all know what was happening if it were not for *Blue Pencil*? Many thanks to Catherine Etteridge, who took over—at short notice—from Paula Grunseit. And many thanks to Paula, too, who overcame great difficulties to get the newsletter out on time. The editor of *Blue Pencil* has a band of helpers, proofreaders and researchers, who help with this task. Thanks go to Robin Appleton, Moira Elliott, Julie Harders, Janice Beavan, Deborah Edward, Rachael Fraher and Sharon Bridgett. Sharon transcribes the tapes from our meetings, but she has to relinquish this job, so if anyone is willing to help with the transcribing, please talk to me or Julie Stanton. Any takers?

We have published the *Editorial Services Directory*—a print version and an electronic version. This is an excellent service for our freelance members, but the pocket handbook-size of the directory belies the work that's gone into producing it, or the information contained within its pages. Our huge thanks to Cathy Gray for managing this time-consuming project.

One of our major achievements this year was developing a new website. Jo Healy-North did this almost single-handedly—and she keeps it up to date. Thank you, Jo.

I'd also like to thank the workshop team, who made an enormous effort to ensure the workshops ran smoothly. Sheena Pettigrew played a major role in producing the workshops and Russell Thomson, Therese Hanrahan-Tan, Julie Harders, Janice Beavan and Bruce Howarth were all part of the team. It takes a lot of work to pull these workshops together—but developing our members' editorial skills is one of the society's objectives.

Our thank-you list would be incomplete without mentioning other hard-working committee members: Bruce Howarth, our secretary, does many hours of work to ensure

Annual general meeting

Tuesday, 1 March 2005

No charge—food and drinks provided

Come along for discussion of the 2004 annual report and election of new committee members.

All are welcome, but only financial members may vote. If you haven't renewed your subscription yet, you can do so at the meeting (please bring your renewal form with you). You can also join on the night if you'd like to.

Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, 6.30 p.m. for 7.00 p.m. Drinks and light refreshments provided.
Please RSVP to (02) 9294 4999 (voicemail) or <brhed@pnc.com.au> (email) by Friday, 25 February. NO CHARGE.
Next meeting: Tuesday, 5 April 2005

everything comes together at the right time; Janice Beavan, our treasurer, does far more than look after the society's finances: she helps with the workshops, the newsletter—and a myriad of other things that crop up. Special thanks must also go to Moira Elliott, who spots any elusive errors that lurk within our publications. Thanks also go to Shelley Kenigsberg, the society's vice president and my co-representative on CASE.

Dr Peter Arnold stepped in to serve on the committee when Ginny Lowndes headed north to warmer climes. Thank you, Peter. And Pamela Hewitt and Deborah Edward have been our accreditation representatives during this important phase of voting on accreditation. Thank you. And thank you to Terry Johnston who publicises the society's activities.

Most importantly, I'd also like to thank Julie Stanton, Terry Johnston and Deborah Edward, who organised our superb Christmas party. Neil James from the Plain English Foundation cleverly devised officialese Christmas carols and conducted a mini choir, who sang the original carols, loudly accompanied by partying guests. Neil also judged our slogan competition, choosing 'Editors sassy the sentence' as the best slogan to spell out what editors do.

As members of all state and territory societies have now voted to introduce accreditation for editors, a lot of work lies ahead to find the best way to implement an accreditation scheme. As CASE delegates from each society will meet in Melbourne on 12 and 13 February, no time will be lost in making accreditation a reality. And accreditation will enhance our image as professionals.

The committee guides the society and serves our members. Being actively involved in the running of the society is a rewarding and interesting experience. I invite you to join the committee, take on a role without joining the committee, or put up your hand for a task, however small.

This is a time of change for editors as we strive to enhance our professional status. I invite you to be part of this change.

Pauline Waugh

Pauline Waugh

Highlights for 2004 include:

- publishing the *Editorial Services Directory*, print and online versions
- developing a new website
- staging a successful Freelance Forum
- voting to introduce an accreditation scheme for editors
- running nine Professional development workshops
- increasing our membership
- increasing our attendance at meetings
- holding a successful Christmas party at Café Otto in Glebe
- providing a prize for an outstanding student in Macquarie University's Graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing.

Treasurer's report

Once again I am preparing the treasurer's report ahead of receiving the auditor's report. The auditor's report will be distributed to members at the AGM and published in the April edition of *Blue Pencil*. Usually the auditor shuffles the figures around a little into his preferred categories but I don't believe there will be major discrepancies between this report and his.

The society has had a very busy year. The value of the society and consequent support from members is reflected in the financial results. Our total income for 2004 was $64,368, which compares with a total income for 2003 of $42,346. The 2004 total income figure includes a small amount ($445) attributable to memberships fees for 2005 and the auditor may set this $445 aside for our 2005 report. Our expenses for the year are paid up to date with the exception of about $300 or so outstanding to committee members. As the figures stand, we have increased our financial assets to $30,536 by $7163, which compares with the 2003 surplus of $4825.

Our main sources of income were training workshops ($27,620—up $7178 from the figures for 2003 and including $6795 from non-members), membership subscriptions ($21,445—

up $6523), meetings ($6991—up $2129) and listings in the directory ($6580—up $5560). Our income from bank interest increased by $530 to $1366. The marked increase in income from the *Editorial Services Directory* is a result of the society's revised policy to apply an annual fee to listings.

The society's expenses for 2004 included an exceptional item—a laptop computer and software to prepare *Blue Pencil* for publication. Without this equipment, it had been very difficult to find a member with suitable facilities to support the editor's role. The committee decided the laptop and software were necessities and approved the expense of $4454. Our $7163 surplus is subsequent to this one-off purchase.

Expenses paid out for the training workshops during the year were $18,542. The overall financial result from the training program was a gain of $9078, a consequence of the training committee's hard work and the satisfaction of our customers. (Expenses of about $200 have spilled over into accounts for the new year.)

Once again our expenditure on meetings exceeded our income from meetings, this year by $3508. Of this excess, $587 was attributable to the Christmas dinner.

In 2004 the society published a hard copy of the *Editorial Services Directory*. Consequently expenses for the directory were high at $5576 and exceeded directory expenses in 2003 by $4826. Of this, we paid $2640 for design of the hard copy and establishment of the template which will serve us for editions to come. After costs the society benefited by $1004 from directory business.

Committee expenses increased by $890 to $1089, mainly because, for committee meetings, the society has been hiring space with light refreshments at City Tattersalls rather than have the committee huddling in a hotel lounge trying to block out noise. We have been maintaining two websites for the time being, until our new website address is firmly recognised, and website expenses were $705. Bank charges were significantly higher, at $1504, ($344 in 2003) because of increasing use of our credit

card facility, which the bank does not kindly donate.

Blue Pencil expenses were $7432 (including $4769 for printing and $1751 for mailing). We paid CASE expenses ($2157), an audit fee ($935), insurance premium ($614), stationery ($1895), postage ($908), telephone support ($477), and an achievement prize for a student in Macquarie University's editing program ($250).

Although the society has managed to accumulate funds, this has been in expectation of spending them. Implementation of the accreditation scheme will be a major expense in addition to expenses already incurred, and bound to continue, in support of CASE accreditation committee meetings, and 'incidentals' such as the mailout of voting papers. The various societies contribute to CASE expenses on the basis of membership size. Our share has been roughly 26 per cent. Our share of projected expenditure for the establishment year of accreditation is therefore likely to be close to $10,000. Costs are expected to decline as the scheme matures and more editors use the service. Nevertheless, we need to keep our focus on the goal by maintaining support for the society.

Janice Beavan

Janice Beavan

Agenda

The agenda for the ninth Annual General Meeting of the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. is as follows:

1. Opening and apologies

2. Correspondence

3. Minutes of the eighth AGM of the incorporated society (printed in *Blue Pencil*, April 2004)

4. Discussion of the 2004 annual report, including the financial report

5. Election of the 2005 committee

6. Any other business.

Committee positions

2005 committee nominations

All committee positions (president, vice president, secretary and treasurer and five general committee members) are open to nomination, providing plenty of opportunities for you to help the society better serve your needs.

The president, vice president, secretary and treasurer constitute the executive, while the five general committee members undertake a variety of jobs. In addition, they may also undertake one of the specific jobs detailed below. However, if you want to do one of the general jobs listed below, you do not have to be on the committee.

Some positions require a bigger time commitment but you can offset this by co-opting helpers and tapping into the experience of past committee members.

A nomination form is included in this edition of *Blue Pencil*. You may nominate yourself for any position and/or job, but if someone else nominates you, you must sign the form to indicate your acceptance. You can give the form to the secretary on the night, before the start of the meeting.

Executive positions

President
You oversee the management of the society in accordance with the constitution and committee decisions, chair meetings and represent and act on behalf of the society and its members.

Vice president
In the president's absence, you will chair meetings and assume the various duties of the president.

Secretary
You maintain the society's records, take meeting minutes and distribute them to committee members; draft, send and receive society postal correspondence and answer voicemail.

Treasurer
You manage all monies, accounts, receipts, and book-keeping for the society and prepare a financial statement for the auditor and the annual general meeting.

General jobs

Catering officer
You order the food and wine each month and then attend the meeting to make sure all goes well.

Meetings coordinator
You arrange appropriate speakers for the society's monthly meetings.

Membership secretary
You receive and process membership applications and renewals; maintain the database of members' names and addresses; and print labels for mailings.

Newsletter editor/team
You produce the monthly society newsletter, organising and editing copy, typesetting the document, then liaising with the printer, and arranging packaging and posting of each issue. In the past, newsletter assistants have contributed by transcribing recordings of monthly meetings, proofreading, mailing and so on.

Publicity officer
You promote the society; publicise its activities and the editing services offered by members; and liaise with the media.

Training coordinator
You convene a working group to develop and implement the society's training activities.

Website coordinator
The website coordinator will maintain and improve the society's website and provide initial responses to emails to the website.

Workshop report: Quotations and negotiations

The Quotations and Negotiations workshop presented by Renée Otmar and Sally Woolett was held by the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. on Friday 9 July 2004.

Are you a freelance editor? Have you ever felt lost or somewhat 'at sea' when it comes to the complexities of quoting and negotiating for projects? This workshop explored some of the most difficult questions that freelancers grapple with at some time: What should I charge? How do I draw up a quote for a job? How do I negotiate rates with a client?

'Think of yourself as a business person'

Workshop presenters Renée Otmar and Sally Woollett have extensive experience as in-house and freelance editors. Between them, they have worked on hundreds of freelance projects so they were well-placed to provide answers and to describe the range of skills required.

The key points I retained from discussions on the day are:
• You should think of yourself as a business person and that you are running a business.
• The possession of good oral and written communication skills is integral to the job. An important part of this skill set involves being able to confront problems and work towards resolving them as they arise. It may be unpleasant but be honest and don't put it off! You have to keep your deadlines in mind.
• It is a good idea to follow up phone calls with emails and documentation.
• Assertive behaviour skills will not go astray—you need them when negotiating.
• Charging suspiciously low rates or 'undercutting' may land you a job but doing it devalues the profession and your own work effort.
• Always be on the lookout for opportunities and grab them when they arise.
• Learn from your mistakes.

I found the practical components of the course to be highly effective and realistic. On the basis of a client brief and a manuscript assessment, we were asked to produce an editorial review and, from that, a quote. We were compelled

> **'We spoke about estimates, charging and calculating set fees and hourly rates and how these are offset against the costs of running a business'**

to think about a variety of issues including:
• the many tasks involved in such a project
• how long each task would take
• whether the client's brief was accurate in its scope.

The pros and cons of different quoting methods were debated. We spoke about estimates, charging and calculating set fees or hourly rates and how these are offset against the costs of running a business. The importance of good business administration, including record keeping and project management, was also emphasised.

Attending professional development training is essential in any field but it seems particularly important for freelancers because work of this kind can be so isolating and because networking is such a vital part of professional life. Through its professional development training, the society provides opportunities for workshop participants to acquire and hone useful skills while making new contacts and sharing ideas and experiences.

Paula Grunseit

Weasel bites consultant

BOOK REVIEW

After minimal prompting, Santa Claus blessed me with this book, and I've been entertaining myself with it since. And entertaining it mostly is.

Don Watson takes aim at the people who want to put the best spin on things ('involuntary career event'), who want to put out lots of words without actually communicating ('mapping', 'stakeholder'), who want to impress us with how impressive they really are ('Coming together to re-envision the Ph.D. to meet the societal needs of the 21st Century'). And he can be quite nasty about it (Definition for spiral dynamics: 'Who knows?'). Watson quotes a few politicians but has a particular animus against management consultants.

One thing I found distressing was the number of words in the list that have been press-ganged from respectable livings in various fields and turned into marketing sludge such as 'icon', 'context-sensitive', 'matrix', and 'synergy'. Sludge-makers seem to strive for respectability; sad to say, the borrowing sometimes strips the respectability from the original usage. Even for spiral dynamics, the individual words are quite innocuous; it's only together that they trade comprehension for pretension.

Of course, this is neither the first nor last plea for better language, though certainly one of the more entertaining. Gowers' *The Complete Plain Words* springs to mind as one excellent example, and of course there's Australia's own Doctor Eagleson. Unlike many Jeremiahs, Watson doesn't pretend that civilisation is doomed because of an unending rain of stodge. But he does, rightly, expect his readers to persuade people to write better. If all else fails, he says, laugh at them.

There is now a website sprung from the book: <www.weaselwords.com.au>. It's worth a visit for the horrible examples and for Bruce Petty's cartoons.

Bruce Howarth

Freelancing challenges (part two)

At the society's September Freelance Forum, held at Italian restaurant Buon Gusto, we heard four experienced editors discuss the challenges of freelance editing. Panellists Robin Appleton, Robert Pullan, Julie Stanton and Shelley Kenigsberg addressed problems such as copyright, defamation and retaining the writer's voice. Part one of the edited highlights from the forum appeared in the previous newsletter.

Shelley Kenigsberg

This talk will cover project management, negotiating with clients and preparing a quote.

Management is defined as: organising and controlling of the affairs of a business.

Project management, in the context of being a freelance editor, comes in many forms. It may be that you are project managing the editing component of a publication or you may be responsible for project management of the 'whole' job.

The whole job? This means everything that takes a project from manuscript to final publication. It will begin with a project or publication plan from the publisher and may include the editing, as well as managing designers, indexers, illustrators, translators, typesetters and printers.

Project planning

'Project plan is like foreplay: if it's omitted, there is little chance of a successful outcome; if it's perfunctory, the result may be unsatisfying; but if it's thorough, you enhance the experience for everyone concerned.' Janet McKenzie, *The Editor's Companion* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

So clearly, the scope of your project management can vary. You need to know:
• Which tasks are to be done.
• Who is to do each task.
• What timing is expected for each task.
• What budget might be assigned for each task.
• How to dovetail the discrete tasks.
• How to obviate potential problems.
• How to solve any unforeseen problems.
• How to keep everyone happy.

What will you need to keep everyone happy? You will need to apply the following skills and attributes:
• Negotiation—not just in preparing and submitting your quote but, once the job is underway, in smoothing the path for the various people with whom you're collaborating to create the publication.
• Think laterally
• Be flexible
• Be confident
• Have strong liaison skills —establishing close and smooth cooperation. That is your prime role as a good project manager. The aim is to work out what everyone needs to know and to tell them at the appropriate time.
• Communicate well—be effective, timely and diplomatic. Maintain the flow of information between author, client, designer, typesetter and printer, but don't overload them with unnecessary detail.

Freelances are contract workers

Freelancers don't usually have formal contracts. The norm in publishing is trust and there are rarely formal contracts drawn or signed, between clients and editors. Our contracts are mainly verbal (though beware, as Louis B Mayer said, 'A verbal contract's not worth the paper it's written on'!). Spell

'Always establish a chain of command'

things out in a description of the tasks you feel you will be performing. Even if this description doesn't form the basis of a formal contract, you will have put those tasks on record, should any dispute arise—such as a disagreement over who has been assigned the indexing.

The project team

You will need to form strategic alliances with the others in a project team, such as the in-house manager, the senior editor and the production manager.

Other members of the team may be freelance or out-of-house including the designer, translator, indexer, typesetter and printer.

The other important person on the team is the author. Sometimes a project will have a single author, sometimes multiple. If you will be dealing with multiple authors, always establish the 'chain of command' and ensure you're dealing with someone who's authorised to speak for all.

Preparing a quote

Usually, you prepare a quote for the editing tasks but if you are project managing as well, you'll need to be meticulous about record keeping. As project manager you will need to track the hours you spend on the smaller, more disparate jobs that are involved in monitoring of schedules and communicating with the various participants.

What do you need to know to prepare the quote for editing?
• the editorial brief (including target readership)
• the schedule.

Calculating costs

Even if you normally calculate your fee using an hourly rate, you may prefer to quote an overall cost for the job.

First off, as far as is possible, get a measure of the whole job. Understand how many elements there are. Look at page counts for each page. Find one excerpt that is a good sample of the most complex text and do a sample edit on this excerpt. Then extrapolate from that the length of time the whole project would take.

Don't forget to add in time for aspects of author/client liaison such as compiling and emailing author queries, phone queries and meetings.

If you are quoting from a sample of the whole manuscript, let the client know that it is not a firm estimate and that it may need to be adjusted when you have all the material. Are you ready to quote? No, there are other things to consider, before you get that magical 'final figure'.

Janet McKenzie, in *The Editor's Companion,* suggests adding a loading if you are working onscreen. You are using additional skills (journalists get a 6 per cent allowance for working onscreen), providing equipment that has

to be maintained and saving your client keyboarding costs.

In addition, there is what we call the 'fudge factor'. Many of us add a further 10 to 15 per cent to cover unforeseen problems such as rewriting text, tables that need to be redone or structural problems that need extra time to finesse.

Once you've added all these figures together, have courage and submit the quote!

You may be concerned that the quote will be too high, but it is worth noting that it is easy to underquote too! Of course, all this finessing of the quote takes a bit of practice so it is also helpful to revisit a job, once you have completed it, to see whether your original assessments were accurate or not. Good record keeping will help with this task. Record keeping may seem tedious at the time, but it is a vital part of a freelancer's role, particularly when you're juggling many projects and need to keep track of the time you're spending on each one.

Project managing your projects

Finally, a part of project management is knowing how much work is enough for yourself. We need to project manage our own workloads too. Keeping the schedule full without overcommitting ourselves is one of the biggest challenges we face as freelancers. How well we meet that challenge affects both our income and the quality of our lives.

While most publishers seem to understand and accept occasional refusals, some do become discouraged when their offers of work meet with repeated refusals.

If we don't continually work to build our businesses, the loss of a client, for whatever reason, could be devastating. Yet, if we attempt, systematically, to build our businesses by responding to advertisements, sending out query letters and following up on contacts, we may be inviting overwork and stress.

How do we decide how much is enough? Is there any advantage to cultivating potential clients if the schedule is already full? How often can a freelancer expect to turn down a publisher before the client becomes discouraged and stops calling?

Consider this: successful businesses don't specialise in widgets or gizmos or

even editing; they always specialise in solving problems. Translation: if you can't take on the project (for example, you are too busy or it is not your area of expertise), suggest another solution. Do not just turn down the clients; help them solve their problems. This might mean suggesting the name of another freelancer (be sure you know of a person with a reputation for doing good work) or an association that might supply names of freelancers. Or it might mean proposing an alternative schedule ('I can't take on the project now, but I'll be able to in three weeks. I can then guarantee you x-day turnaround').

Being in the problem-solving business certainly isn't a panacea for the perennial dilemma of 'how much is enough?' But it can be helpful. For example, you might call and ask, 'Did you find someone for the project?' That's a legitimate reason for calling—and an excellent opportunity to remind the client/prospect that you're still in business. You're also strengthening your network links—referring other editors and (let this not be underestimated) 'creating some positive karma'.

And what does that do? It keeps everyone happy of course! And, best of all, it keeps the clients coming!

Shelley Kenigsberg, our vice president, has worked in-house and as a freelance editor for the past 20 years and taught the Diploma in Book Editing and Publishing at Macleay College for 12 years.

Julie Stanton

For this talk on the editor-publisher relationship I am referring to working with trade and educational publishing companies. For the freelance editor, it is not so much a relationship with a company but generally a relationship with one person—the commissioning editor, managing editor or project editor. Once you become known to the in-house editor, you may become part of a group (unfortunately a small group) of freelancers that they use regularly, although not exclusively.

Starting this relationship is not easy. Many in-house editors use freelancers they have worked with in-house at some stage. They know them and also value

in-house experience. They sometimes feel more confident that someone with in-house experience will understand the pressures they are under and the perspective the publishing company has towards its publishing. The freelancer is likely to have an appreciation that a book is geared to a market (usually as broad a market as possible) and should be edited accordingly. For the in-house editor, the edit is only one part in a difficult process of publishing a project that is being juggled with many other projects. (I will come back to this later.) However, primarily, good and efficient editing are the overriding requirements.

So, what does an in-house editor look for (apart from things like the MS edited pronto, to hear that there are no problems with it and that you are happy with the amount offered for the job)? This relationship is like most other business relationships: the in-house editor wants reliability, that is, that you will do what you say when you say you will do it—but with some flexibility.

The first step in achieving this goal is to make sure that you understand the brief. Most information is gained when discussing the project first on the phone, and then from the written brief that most editors send with the MS. For example, who is the audience for the book and where does it fit on their list. This can help you decide whether it is worth investing more time in the edit and whether the company will appreciate you investing this time. Find out as much as possible about the author/s. Is it a first-time author? Are they professional writers? Is this an academic writing for a general audience? This can help you anticipate possible problems. It can also help you with your quote and it may indicate if the fee being proffered is reasonable. If anything is unclear when the MS comes in, contact the in-house editor straight away.

When the MS arrives, even if you are not going to work on it immediately, spend time checking through it to find out if everything is there and that it looks to be as described. If you are quoting on the MS, you will be doing this anyway, but if you have been given a set fee, you will need to know if the fee is reasonable.

The in-house editor will need to know as soon as possible if something is missing or that the MS is not really what the publisher commissioned. Early warning of any problems or of an unexpected direction that the MS may be taking that is not as per the brief can save a lot of time and trouble. For example, there is the well-known 'light edit' or 'simple copy edit' that turns out to be a rewrite; this is just one of many major problems that could surface. Let the editor know immediately if you need more time and, if the job has been quoted on as a total rather than an hourly rate, negotiate more money.

Keep the in-house editor informed of progress or problems that may affect the schedule, but keep it to essentials. Email is best—it saves the in-house editor time and provides both of you with a record to stick in the file or as a reminder. Remember, the in-house editor will be working on many projects at once. This especially applies if you are dealing direct with the author—cc the editor on any important emails sent to the author.

'Try to offer solutions to problems that come up in the MS. . .do not underestimate its importance to the in-house person'

Even if you are not sure that something is a problem, find out—you may well have far more knowledge of the MS than the in-house editor who may have only had the time to give it a cursory glance. Major problems mentioned in time can give the editor the opportunity of rescheduling the book without causing major aggravation with sales and marketing, or to reschedule others in the chain such as the designer, the indexer and the publicist.

As Shelley mentioned in her talk, try to offer solutions to problems that come up in the MS. I know this is often done as a matter of course but do not underestimate its importance to the in-house person, whether the suggestions are accepted or not.

In the notes you send to the in-house editor with the MS, advise of any changes or suggestions you have made that you think may be contentious and aggravate the author or get them off-side. It gives the in-house editor an opportunity to soften the blow for the author or to decide if the change is worth upsetting the author. No editor wants to receive a phone call out of the blue from an outraged author or have to defuse a situation that was essentially unnecessary.

Keep a good style sheet that others can follow. Apart from being a professional requirement, no one is perfect and things you have missed can be easily picked up by the proofreader and then everyone ends up looking good.

What problems do in-house editors face? There is often little flexibility with budget. They have few support staff. They have most likely had to battle with sales and marketing in a publishing meeting to get the book accepted, or to convince them that the largish print-run requested (necessary to make the book work because of the big advance being requested by the agent) will sell through.

They then may have to wrest the MS from the author when it comes in late and hope that the freelancer booked up will still be able to do the book (again a familiar story). Deadlines are often hard to shift. Most publishers sell-in their new releases four months in advance of publication. Though many books have reasonable lead times, some don't and the sales reps may be selling-in the book at the same time that you are editing it. Pulling a book from the schedule after it has sold-in is always a problem so, as mentioned before, let the editor know of any problems that can happen. The book may be in a Christmas or other special catalogue (publishers usually pay for each book entered in such catalogues). No one is happy (publisher, bookseller, author) when a book already advertised in a catalogue will not be available in time.

Most major publishers must have a new release in the warehouse one month before publication. That is, for a September publication date, the book must be in the warehouse by the end of July. Often, all the invoices for new releases are run at once, and the books are picked and packed for distribution for that month. This is cost efficient and ensures that Perth and Darwin, as well as everyone else, will have books in the shops and on the shelves in time for publicity. Special runs can be made but this is costly. This does not mean that the relationship is a one-way conversation. The freelancer also has jobs to juggle and their own pressures. Once again, if you wish to alter the arrangements in any way, make the request promptly. The in-house editor will make adjustments if they can.

'Make yourself and any specialties you have known to other freelance editors or other relevant people as they may recommend you'

So, how do you start this relationship? If you are new to editing or are looking to expand your publishing house clients, possible suggestions to gain the attention of in-house editors are:

• Send in a letter with your CV. Many do keep them on file. You can follow up with a reminder letter some time later, or a quick phone call—if you can actually get one on the phone.

• Become listed in a directory such as the Society of Editors' *Editorial Services Directory*.

• Look for ads in the positions vacant section of Thorpe-Bowker's blue *Weekly Book Newsletter*. Although in-house positions appear more frequently, there are ads for freelance project editors from time to time.

• Place a 'work wanted ad' in the *Weekly Book Newsletter*. (I have not tried this so I don't know how useful it is.)

• Use word of mouth as much as you can. Make yourself and any specialties you have known to other freelance editors or other relevant people as they may recommend you if the MS is in an area they are unfamiliar with or if they are unable to take on a job because of time pressures.

Julie Stanton worked in the Australian publishing industry for many years as a commissioning editor.

BELS Exam in Melbourne, October 2005

This is the first notice of the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) exam to be held in Melbourne in October 2005 during the CASE Editing in Context: National Editors Conference, 13 to 15 October 2005. Precise details of the date and time of the exam will be posted later in the year.

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

Applicants must apply to BELS for candidacy well before the exam. Applicants need to submit (by mail or fax) an application form (available from the BELS website) a CV, proof of education (copy of diploma or transcript from the highest degree), three letters of reference and US$25 (email BELS for more details about payments from candidates outside the USA).

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

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

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

Writers at Como: 25 to 27 February 2005

Writers and readers will enjoy a relaxed weekend festival at one of Melbourne's most historic mansions 'Como House', South Yarra. Marquees in the tranquil grounds of Como offer the perfect location for readers to meet writers for a festival of conversation and readings. The Melbourne Writers' Festival and Reader's Feast Bookstore in association with National Trust, Victoria will present some of Australia's and the world's best writers. Among the writers appearing will be Nigerian literary sensation, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Tara Moss, Sonya Hartnett and Shane Maloney. For further details contact Shirley Hardy-Rix on phone (03) 9842 9740, mobile 0412 057288 or email <hardyrix@onthe.net.au>.

CASE Editing in Context conference: 13 to 15 October 2005

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

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

Flash Fictions Competition 2005

The deadline for this competition for a short story of 500 words in any of the genres of 'speculative fiction' which includes horror, fantasy, and science fiction is Friday, 4 March. The competition is organised by the NSW Writers' Centre and sponsored by Infinitas Bookshop. The winning entries (and any commended entries) will be announced at 5.30 p.m. on Saturday, 19 March at the Writers' Centre's 3rd Magic Casements Festival. The writers of the stories will be invited to read their winning entries before an audience. For full conditions of entry and prize details, phone (02) 9555 9757 or email <nswwc@nswwriterscentre.com.au>.

Somerset Celebration of Literature: 19 to 12 March 2005

The aim of the Somerset College's Somerset Celebration of Literature is to encourage a love of reading and writing among both students and the general public.

In 2005 the Somerset Celebration of Literature will be 12 years old. It is seen as one of the most significant writers' festivals in Australia.

Writers attending the festival at Somerset College in Mudgeeraba Queensland this year include: Peter Goldsworthy, Tara Moss, Andy Griffiths, Markus Zusak, Kate Forsyth, Brian Caswell, Larissa Behrendt and Samuel Wagan Watson.

Further details can be obtained by contacting festival organisers on phone (07) 5530 3777, fax (07) 5525 2676 or email <events@somerset.qld.edu.au>.

See the Somerset College website <www.somerset.qld.edu.au> for up-to-date information.

Indexing conference—engage, enlighten, enrich: 18 to 19 March 2005

The Australian Society of Indexers will hold its next conference in Melbourne at Rydges Riverwalk, Richmond, from Friday 18 to Saturday 19 March 2005.

Full details can be found on the society's website, <www.aussi.org>.

The conference program is designed to consider indexing in a diverse range of disciplines, not just the traditional indexing spheres of back-of-book and database indexing.

The keynote address will be given by Professor Neil Archbold, Professor of Geology, Deakin University.

The conference program will be updated from time to time.

For the full program download the PDF (Conference Program - 119 KB - http://www.aussi.org/conferences/2005/Conferenceprogram.pdf).

C O N F E R E N C E   D I A R Y

An optional Cindex workshop conducted by Frances Lennie will be held on Thursday 17 March from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. (Extra charge)

The conference will be held at Rydges Riverwalk, Bridge Road, Richmond <www.rydges.com riverwalk>. Located only 4 km from the Melbourne CBD, Rydges Riverwalk provides easy access by tram to a number of local attractions. More information is given in the PDF (Rydges Riverwalk - 150 KB - http://www.aussi.org/conferences/2005/RydgesRiverwalk.pdf).

Registration (received before 31 January 2005) includes all conference materials, lunches, morning and afternoon teas .

Costs for attending the conference are as follows:
• Australian Society of Indexers member: $363
• Non-member: $440
• One day/speaker registration: $225
• Cindex workshop, Thursday, 17 March: $70
• Conference dinner, Friday, 18 March: $77
• Guests for conference dinner, Friday, 18 March: $77

A late fee of $55.00 will be charged for registrations if the application is received after 31 January 2005.

To register, download the registration form in PDF (79 KB - http://www.aussi.org/conferences/2005/RegistrationForm.pdf) and fax or mail to the conference office.

Contact Margaret Findlay for further enquiries, please phone (03) 9277 5549 or (03) 9818 1760, fax: (03) 9818 1760 or email <findlay@acer.edu.au> or <mailto: findlay@acer.edu.au>.

Advertising rates

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

Membership

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

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

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

Listing in the *Editorial Services Directory*

The society's *Editorial Services Directory* is available online at <www.editorsnsw.com/esd/>. New listings and updates can be added quarterly as follows:
• online only: July (deadline 30 June); October (deadline 30 September)
• print and online: January (deadline 31 December); April (deadline 31 March). The cost is $40 per year ($20 for new listings received from April to September) in addition to the fee for membership of the society. New listings should be submitted using a template available from Cathy Gray at <cgray@mpx.com.au>.

Committee meetings

All members are welcome to attend the society's committee meetings. Please contact a committee member for details if you wish to attend the next meeting.

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> Copy deadline for April issue:
> Friday, 11 March 2005

Professional development

Onscreen editing: a project approach

Presenter: Bruce Howarth   **Date:** 5 March 2005

People accustomed to editing on paper can be hesitant about tackling onscreen editing. Yet, in current production processes, editing electronic files can introduce big efficiencies. In this workshop, we'll go through the main steps of a project to see how the computer can help (or occasionally hinder) the process. We will show how Word's facilities support the tasks you are required to do, including version management and coping with big documents. We will also look at the restrictions created by needing to interface with publishers' systems. To help you master the techniques and tricks of editing onscreen, the workshop will have discussion and practical sessions. Each participant will have a computer.
Places are limited, so early booking is essential.
The cost will be $195 for members and $245 for non-members. The venue will be the Ultimo campus of TAFE NSW (maps provided).

MS Word: basic editing skills

Presenter: Bruce Howarth   **Date:** 16 April 2005

If you are not very familiar with Word, this workshop will help you unlock some of the power that Word offers to help you do your tasks faster and more efficiently. Topics will include customising Word's user interface, templates and style sheets, track changes, and basic find and replace. Each topic will be discussed, and participants will then have time to work through examples. Each participant will have a computer.
The cost will be $195 for members and $245 for non-members. The venue will be the Ultimo campus of TAFE NSW (maps provided).

MS Word: advanced editing skills

Presenter: Bruce Howarth   **Date:** May 2005 (tba)

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

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

Membership Renewal

Membership of the Society of Editors runs from

January to December. Only paid-up members can vote in

the AGM. Please return your renewal forms with payment

as soon as possible. Forms can be downloaded from the

society's website: <www.editorsnsw.com>.

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

NOMINATION FORM

For the Annual General Meeting, 7 pm, Tuesday, 1 March 2005

Nine committee positions and several other positions are open to nomination. The president, vice president, secretary and treasurer constitute the executive; the five general committee members serve on the committee and undertake a variety of tasks related to managing the society's business. Anyone, including committee nominees, may nominate for or be appointed to the specific jobs detailed in the March issue of *Blue Pencil*.

You do not have to be on the committee to undertake any of the following jobs:

Catering officer, meetings coordinator, membership secretary, newsletter editor, publicity officer, professional development coordinator, website coordinator.

I hereby nominate..

for the committee position of...

or for the job of..

Signed..

Name..

Address..
....
....

I accept nomination...

(Nominee must sign if not the nominator)