Accreditation: friend or foe?

Pamela Hewitt, the NSW society's representative to CASE (the Council for Australian Societies of Editors), led a spirited discussion about the issues of accreditation at the society's October meeting.

This discussion is to exchange ideas and responses on the issue of accreditation. We're only about eight months into the process and many issues have been raised. They're not insuperable obstacles, but the way they're handled will determine what happens.

The first thing I'd like to say is that no decisions have been made. Whatever happens is what comes from the membership. All feedback is passed to the working group and incorporated into the process. If we do go ahead with accreditation, your views will be fed into the proposals.

The working group convened very late last year. So far we've researched other organisations, seeing how they have handled issues of accreditation, registration and certification through a questionnaire. Gail Warman, the NT representative to CASE, has developed a matrix to report on those responses. We've got lots of valuable responses from around the world: societies of editors and proofreaders, translators, from Canada, in the Netherlands, in the UK—wherever we've found them, including the Society of English Speaking Natives in the Netherlands, the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communication, the Editors Association of Canada, the Association of Earth Science Editors, the Editorial Free-lancers Association and the European Association of Science Editors.

Some of you will be familiar with CREATE (Cultural Research Education & Training Enterprise Australia), which has convened a scoping study which covers editing under the publishing, journalism and writing industries. I attended their first meeting and I was the only editor there. At least one of us was present.

Writers were heavily represented, journalists not so prominent and one lonely little petunia of an editor in the onion patch, which is indicative of the state of play. Do we want to wait until

Inside

Next meeting: Tuesday, 5 November 2002

'Word' tips for editors

Bruce Howarth and Bruce White will share their expertise in Microsoft Word and Outlook based on questions submitted before the meeting. This is where we can find all the answers to those pesky 'features' with which Microsoft endows its software. *Questions must be emailed by Sunday, 2 November to the two Bruces (<white@msn.com.au> and <brhed@pnc.com.au>).* Time limits us to 12 questions so that our panelists are prepared.

Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney (between Park & Bathurst streets, near the Pilgrim Theatre and Pitt Street Uniting Church; the closest train station is Town Hall), 6.30 p.m. for 7.00 p.m. Drinks and light refreshments provided. $13 for members; $16 for non-members and those who don't RSVP; $7 for holders of a current Centrelink or DVA concession card. Please RSVP to 9294 4999 (voicemail) or brhed@pnc.com.au (email) by Friday, 1 November.

Tuesday, 3 December: Christmas Party

some structure or framework has been imposed, or do we want to be involved from the beginning with CREATE, which is establishing a four-step process over the next four years to decide the process and training system for our industry that will be linked to pay structures and to progression in the industry?

If we don't turn up and say what we want for our profession, the decisions will be made for us. And we mightn't like it if other people, who know nothing about editing, decide what kind of education and training framework we should have and what kind of competencies we should work to. This is what is happening across a whole range of professions quite outside publishing, and it will happen in the publishing industry unless editors make their voices and their opinions known.

Writers spoke loudly and clearly about the difficulties of squeezing writing into a framework; a good writer can break all the rules and still be a fantastic writer. You can say very similar things about editing; there are all sorts of creative ways of solving editing problems and the best editors are often the ones who take risks. The complexity of our profession doesn't mean that it won't be regulated. I should also say this is not going to happen tomorrow. I think the CREATE process is going to take several years.

Would you define CREATE?

It's one of the national industry training boards for the cultural industries, the industries including publishing, writing, entertainment, acting, journalism, performers. If you look at the industry and union coverage of the MEAA, that pretty well covers it. It comes out of work that was done in the late 1980s when people looked at industry awards and tried to link them to education and training as a kind of framework for progression in various fields. It's coming from an industrial agenda, but it will still have a great influence on our working life in the long run.

The accreditation working group is making sure that editors are included in the process right from the start. They were very pleased with our national standards (launched in April 2001), which covered an enormous amount of

groundwork. That's not the case with most other professions involved in this process. But ultimately, the CREATE process will lead to competencies or standards in vocational education and training in our area.

We've contacted lots of relevant bodies interested in accreditation, such as the Australian Publishers' Association (APA) and Editforce, with varying degrees of success. We haven't yet got the ear of the industry or employers and I think it is very important to do that. We can come up with whatever grand scheme we want, but it's industry acceptance that is important. 'The industry' is defined very broadly; I'm talking as much about an in-house editor working for an employer as a freelancer.

The paper on accreditation was published in *Blue Pencil*, but I'll just briefly summarise the most important aspects. We've received some responses already from meetings similar to this which are being held around the country.

Accountability is important so that people understand what decisions have been made and why.

The paper looks at why CASE is investigating accreditation and the need to involve all members in an open and informed discussion. The benefits of accreditation as seen by the working group include capitalising on the standards, which have gone a long way towards mapping our industry's, or profession's, standards.

Quality assurance is very important. Anybody can say 'I'm an editor' and take in the work of an editor, and there's no reason why that should be stopped. Some very fine editors, maybe some in this very room, have followed precisely that path. But that situation creates a quality issue because some of them are not so fine, and every time somebody does a shoddy job it adversely affects our professional standing.

This makes it much harder for us to convince people of the importance and value of our work—the complexity and the high level of skill that I'm sure

everyone in this room understands very well.

It's also about recognition and unashamedly about remuneration: editors are not funny old dears who'll work for a pittance. There are people who work as editors who don't really care what they're paid because they're doing it for love, or fun, or they've got other income, and that's fine. But there are others who are professional editors who make their living and put the food on the table as a result of the income that they gain from editing.

I know how highly skilled we are because I conducted a survey last year and was astonished to find that all but one respondent had a first degree, 23% had a masters degree, 8% had a PhD, and most respondents had some other postgraduate qualification such as a graduate certificate or a graduate diploma.

Most of us didn't start as editors, but initially trained as teachers, librarians, journalists, sinologists, doctors, just about everything you can imagine. People have come to editing for all sorts of reasons and they've brought with them a wide breadth of life experience which, when applied by people who care about words and have a sensitivity to them, is an extremely rich reserve. I think remuneration in many people's eyes is an important issue; many feel we are underpaid and that accreditation is one of a number of aspects of raising recognition of the profession.

Now the principles are all really important. Any system should be fair and transparent, recognising that editing is a craft and that you can't just set a little test, put the red pen over it and give it a mark out of 100 and say 'Yes, you're accredited' or 'No, you're not'.

It's been suggested that it should perhaps capitalise on the standards and work within that broad framework. It should be flexible because language changes, the profession changes, technology changes, and editing will change. It should be accepted by the membership, by clients, by employers and by trainers. We are aiming for the widest possible acceptance.

It should also be sustainable—there are expensive models, and others less so. Since there isn't much of a budget, we probably do need to go for the cheaper version.

Accountability is important so that people understand what decisions have been made and why, and that the people involved in accreditation are accountable for the decisions that they make. It should be linked to appropriate education and training so that if somebody seeking accreditation is rejected they can be advised how to proceed. We are aiming for a standard of competence, not excellence.

In our first teleconference we discussed *what* to accredit. Some organisations accredit courses, others accredit the individual. We are about accrediting the individual, not courses, because we don't have national course availability.

There are some national courses via universities which offer external and online programs.

If there were a groundswell of support from editors around Australia saying let's accredit one or several courses then we could do that. But the working group has assumed that our brief is to look at accrediting the editor rather than accrediting courses. And there is no option for those people who want to learn face-to-face unless they live in the right place. There are good courses in some states. But nobody knows how good the courses are because nobody's ever evaluated them. In the survey I'm conducting I won't be evaluating the courses. You could accredit the editor saying the qualifications are a component of accreditation.

Accreditation should not be linked to society membership. Whatever societies around the country decide, their membership criteria are in no way linked to

whatever accreditation framework is ultimately adopted. Even what we're doing is not necessarily wedded to accreditation, despite the name of the working group—we've looked at and thought about the concepts of certification and particularly registration, borrowing the relevant bits from the model that the Australian Society of Indexers uses.

Accreditation should be relevant to new and established editors. If someone's been working for 40 years as an editor, there would be a strong argument for accreditation if a points system, for example, were developed. There would be certain aspects that would be relevant to people who are established and experienced and to new people who want

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Petrea King
Quest for Life Centre
owned and operated by the *Quest for Life Foundation*

The Writer's Path

Quest for Life warmly invites you to travel *The Writer's Path*, a five-day creative writing course with a goal: to deepen your connection with your own inner self.

The course is fully residential and runs from 18-22 November 2002, inclusive.

Writing, like all creative endeavour, has its source in the inner self. We can all write because that source exists in all of us. On *The Writer's Path* you will discover how to access the source of your creativity, how to connect with your own true voice. As a participant on *The Writer's Path*, you will write your inner life, recording your inner journey to date and discovering what you need to know for the next stage.

In retreat at the *Quest for Life Centre,* set in nine acres of tranquil countryside at Bundanoon, participants will be guided through graduated writing sessions, and exercises designed to access the 'right brain'. Each day will begin and end with a meditation session to nourish both creative and spiritual impulses, and counselling will be available on the course if required.

Here is an opportunity to focus on your spiritual needs. Away from your busy life, in the clean air and quiet beauty of the Southern Highlands, in the company of like minds, take the time to enhance your creative potential and refresh your inner life.

Facilitating and sharing *The Writer's Path* with you will be **Petrea King**, founder of *Quest for Life*, **Wendy Sinclair**, writer/editor and meditator and **Gavin Sinclair**, psychologist and meditator.

For more information, please call Wendy Sinclair on 02 9904 3811.

Accreditation

to be involved as a professional. But it should be open to everyone.

We also need to think about how we handle things like specialist editing—science editing, legal editing, fiction editing, government editing, website editing. We know how different those areas are, we know how complex each of them can be. We also want a minimum of fuss, no long exams and maybe not even an actual test. That might be what people decide, that they want to go on a balance of experience, testimonials, and qualifications. There are lots of options; nothing is determined yet.

The responses so far—Western Australia has suggested that maybe a group of senior editors could be appointed to handle accreditation. Others have talked about a national secretariat, or completion of particular courses, or an entry test. They've talked about tiered registration, and it may be that we will find that at least two levels of accreditation are the sort of thing that people feel are necessary. There are also possible legal problems and insurance matters arising out accreditation. And of course the cost. There is concern about excluding editors without formal qualifications. People are interested to know how it will affect remuneration, and although that necessarily remains unknown, I can't imagine that it would have an adverse affect.

Victoria, like the other societies so far, has said that courses should be evaluated against the standards—that we need to cover a broad range of skills—and there's an indication of industry acceptance. Problems were raised about cost, and the idea was also put forward that editors' societies may consider working with CREATE to share the administrative burden and cost. My impression is that if we come up with the framework, CREATE will be happy to accept the industry definitions. It's something we could think about.

The ACT society said last year, before the working group got under way, that they thought that accreditation was a logical progression from the introduction of the standards. They felt some type of permanent national body or agency should be established to oversee it and grant the certificates and lend credibility to the process because if not, the short institutional memory of a voluntary society with a lot of turnover can be a problem.

Last year in New South Wales we produced a paper on accreditation and I've had individual responses from several people, including the idea that any accreditation system would be anti-competitive and raise the ire of the ACCC.

I contacted the ACCC and I have to tell you that Professor Fels' withers were unwrung. Even if it were anti-competitive, which the person I spoke to strongly doubted, if the process passed the public interest test, it may be decided that, on balance, the benefits to the public would outweigh any anti-competitive aspects. So we agreed that the working group or CASE would write to the ACCC outlining what we are proposing and that would cover any legal problems from the perspective of consumer rights.

There are other legal and insurance matters, and of course they'll have to be taken into account. The one issue that I think is very worthy of our consideration is how can an accreditation system guarantee that the work of accredited editors is competently performed? I think the answer is it can't.

Someone can be assessed as a competent editor and then tomorrow not perform competently. What we would be saying is, this person has been assessed in this manner against these transparent criteria. But the philosophical issue underlying that is still an important one; there are big differences between competence and performance and quality of work. They are related, but they are not identical concepts by any means. You can have a brilliant editor who doesn't function well because they don't have the communication skills in terms of working with people.

The issue of elitism was raised. I think we can all probably agree that nobody wants to establish an elitist club for its own sake or exclusivity. What we're about is improving the standards of the profession and increasing everyone's understanding of those standards.

Where to from here? There have been heaps of responses to the questionnaire. After these national meetings, we're planning to collate all the material that's still coming in and organise another teleconference. Then we'll prepare some models which will go back to the membership.

Ultimately, whatever is developed will have to be something that's supported by the membership nationally, very much like the standards process. I've also been working on the education and training side of things with a survey of national courses.

Can you reassure people that there will be sufficient consultation?

My understanding is that whatever proposal is developed after this round of response and feedback will be an amalgam of all the information and ideas that have come from the membership. We will put up one or several models and these will go back to membership for voting as happened with the standards. I'm certain that everyone would want them to be as widely distributed as possible through the newsletters, through the website, and so on.

Probably there'll be discussion of the proposals before the vote; I think that is the issue.

Yes. Maybe in a meeting like this or some other kind of forum so that we've brought it all back to the membership for discussion.

I've talked to someone in A&U today and HarperCollins this afternoon and they said that publishers would tend to work with people they already knew whether they were accredited or not.

I'm sure that's true, and I'm sure it's also partly a question of how well we run any accreditation system. If it has standing and acceptance internally, then it will, I think, become known outside. If it lacks internal acceptance, then it's not worth pursuing at this stage. All the evidence I've seen in terms of surveys, and so forth, shows that there is broad support for accreditation but people are rightly concerned about particular issues.

Is Australia treading a new path here? In the USA, are there accredited professional editors?

The UK started a new system in March this year. The coverage of the Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) widened to include not just freelancers. They've recently been through this same process. The other big organisation is BELS (Board of Editors in the Life Sciences), and they conduct periodic

examinations. We could certainly learn from the pitfalls others have encountered in developing the process.

The ones who've already got the experience, they're okay. But those coming into the industry, shouldn't they go and do a course, and even if they're doing short courses, shouldn't they get some points towards accreditation?

That's one proposal that people may support.

What I'm not satisfied about yet is I haven't seen a single good reason why we need accreditation. Standards yes, not a problem. Now, I'm a doctor. I've been involved my whole medical life with accreditation and performance. Medicine is life and death, editing isn't.

Accreditation of doctors in this country is costing a fortune. When somebody tries to knock back an application, it ends up in the Federal or High Court. You have to set up a national secretariat, which is preposterous. I know what is involved. It's all about having the corporate memory, that's fine, except for one major downside: the person who is your secretary or your CEO becomes the person with all the knowledge and manipulates your voluntary personnel from that point on.

You talked for a few moments about competence, about performance, about quality assurance, these are all good things. Somehow you've got to assess the person's competence. Competence is what performance is about. But the best editing work is invisible. We all know that. How on earth do you assess a shocking book; was it the writer, was it the editor, I've no idea. What I'm saying is I'm concerned that the whole thing is going to be an albatross and will sink the society.

I think you've got two ends of the spectrum and one of them is a very expensive model. Editors' societies probably can't afford cumbersome and expensive permanent secretariats and complex processes. The other end of the scale is ticking boxes. This approach has many problems. An applicant may have three degrees and have considerable experience and you

still don't really know whether they can edit well.

We're not trying to find out whether you're an excellent editor. It would be more to assess competence, to establish a certain minimum level.

How can you find out if I can do those minimum things regardless of how many courses I've done?

I don't know that we have to think in terms of either/or. We can make our own decisions about the level of accreditation we want. It might be zero where it currently is or it might be a decision to apply accreditation at a particular level, in line with the existing standards. I'm not wedded to any model. I think that's also true of the working group; we're still very open to everybody's suggestions about structure.

Are we making the system mandatory?

I've always assumed it would be optional.

. . . unless you're editing work by a rather scruffy gentleman who writes about politicians, you're probably not likely to be sued . . .

I'd like to discuss another organisation that has attempted to set up an accrediting body, the Australian Computer Society. Computer people and editors have some similar characteristics. People come to computing from all sorts of other backgrounds and there are standard computing courses which the ACS accredits.

The fact is, after 30 years of ACS attempting to accredit computer professionals, ACS has a wonderful record of accrediting computer professionals but it hasn't made the slightest bit of difference to the profession, although ACS would disagree violently. Something like less than 10 per cent of the people doing computing belong to ACS. People who

belong to ACS get zilch extra pay because of their accreditation. The other thing I want to point out is that my ACS subscription is higher than the Society of Editors, and I get less for it.

Everyone's got a story about their own accreditation experiences. Some of them are disasters. Some are fantastic.

We've contacted a wide range of organisations and from that we've got a range of different models. These responses are still coming in. The case I mentioned earlier, the Australian Society of Indexers, appears to have a low-cost functioning registration system. We asked one organisation questions about legal problems and whether anyone had ever been sued and about liability and they just said, 'We've been doing this for 30 years and it's never come up. It's not been a problem for us.'

Of course it's a problem in certain professions, but unless you're editing work by a rather scruffy gentleman who writes about politicians, you're probably not likely to be sued when you're an editor. We'll have to take legal advice and act on an informed basis.

It's no good pretending that this is an easy thing we are doing. There are no right answers.

In pursuing accreditation we want to raise the visibility of what we provide. It's becoming an increasingly freelance industry, whether we like it or not, and one of the functions of accreditation is to act cohesively as a group, to have a voice that is loud enough to speak to the industry and say, 'Well you may want to only pay so much, but we can guarantee that you're probably not going to get somebody who will do a decent job for that'. And to have some sort of weight and some sort of authority through that process. There are goals to be achieved through this, and professional benefits for us as editors.

While there's no necessary link between accreditation, education and training, and also no necessary link between status and accreditation, I think all of those developments probably work, to a degree, in tandem. As professionals, we are aware of what skills we have, we're aware of the skills we will need in the future. A well-run

Much ado about 'naughty' words

The roles of the editor and the linguist overlap in interesting ways. Any judgements we make are concerned with effectiveness and grammatical 'correctness', rather than morality; we base those judgements (the editor perhaps more so than the linguist) on what the intended audience will find appropriate.

Unlike professionals in any other field, we use language to study and talk about language. (J.R. Firth once described linguistics as 'language turned back on itself'.) We learn to distinguish between *use* and *reference*, so that we can discuss linguistic artefacts—from syllables and morphemes all the way up to conversations and complete books—in a way that distinguishes 'what we are talking about' from 'what we are saying about it'.

This raises interesting questions about taboo words. In this column, I'm exploring attitudes towards certain 'naughty' words, and I find myself wondering how to handle the words themselves. For, after all, there can't be such a thing as a *naughty* word; only naughty uses (or users). ('There is nothing either good or bad but thinking [or saying] makes it so.')

In an article for a journal of linguistics, I can—indeed, should—avoid euphemisms and circumlocutions; if my aim is to discuss the way people use a certain word, then to avoid that word is to obscure my point and to confuse use with reference. *Blue Pencil* is not a formal linguistics journal, but it is aimed at language professionals. What's more, one of the two 'big' words now increasingly makes its way into print in the mainstream media (though not, yet, in 'family newspapers'). So here, too, I will not confuse use with reference; those who know me are aware that I 'don't use that sort of language'—but I can write about it. My decision should cause no offence to any reader (nor to the editors of this journal); if it does, I apologise.

The issue of taboo words arose in a recent lecture given by a colleague to a class of second-year students at Macquarie University. A student made a comment about linguistic conservatism, to which my colleague and I responded with the story of the *Macquarie Thesaurus*. For those who aren't familiar with the story, here's the outline:

The Encyclopaedic (1990) edition of the *Macquarie Thesaurus* included two expressions that some members of the public found offensive. The expressions were *cold as a nun's tits* and *dry as a nun's cunt*. Although David Blair (then head of English, Linguistics, and Media at Macquarie) mounted a spirited defence on behalf of the editors, bomb threats and other threats of violence led to the decision to omit these expressions from the next edition.

Now I don't think anyone can deny the essential offensiveness of those two expressions. They make dehumanising assumptions about female members of religious orders. The second, in particular, includes a word that many find deeply objectionable; I have known women who use *fuck* without turning a hair, but consider *cunt* to be the ultimate obscenity.

We forget, sometimes, that taboos are matters of custom. Chaucer (like Shakespeare, perfectly capable of ribaldry) was apparently quite comfortable using *queynte* (which my complete edition coyly and inaccurately glosses as 'sexual favours'). Times and fashions change, and taboos change with them.

But my chief concern is this. Also to be found in the 1990 *Macquarie Thesaurus* is the expression *dry as a nun's nasty*. That expression contains no taboo words; nothing that, in isolation, would raise an eyebrow. Yet, to me, the attitudes it reveals about women and sexuality make it infinitely more offensive than the variant that was found so objectionable by others.

There are, I think, important implications for the linguist and for the editor—and perhaps for the legislator, when issues of discrimination and vilification arise. It seems that individual words can sometimes generate reactions that are only remotely related to the ideas they are used to express. When people react to taboo words with violence, or threats of violence, what are they afraid of?

Michael Lewis

Rowena Lennox receives Beatrice Davis Fellowship

The Literature Board of the Australia Council and the Australian Publishers Association are pleased to announce that NSW society member Rowena Lennox is the winner of the 2002 Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship. The Fellowship was announced at the Gala Cocktail Party and Awards Presentation at the Brisbane Writers' Festival on 3 October.

The Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship is named after the distinguished literary editor and honours her contribution to Australian letters. The Fellowship aims to recognise and reward editors for their contribution to Australian writing and publishing.

The judges feel that Rowena Lennox, the eighth recipient of the Fellowship, will be both an excellent ambassador for the Australian publishing industry and will do her utmost to share the knowledge she gains.

Rowena started working in publishing in 1988 and has worked as an editor for educational, academic and trade publishers in Australia and the UK. She has been freelancing since 1997.

The Fellowship is sponsored by the Literature Board of the Australia Council, the Australian Publishers Association and the following Australian publishers and industry bodies: Allen & Unwin, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, HarperCollins, Hodder Headline, Melbourne University Press, Pan Macmillan, Pearson Australia, Random House Australia, Scholastic Australia, Society of Editors (Queensland), Society of Editors (Tasmania) and Society of Editors (WA).

Members of the 2002 selection panel were Bernadette Foley (Publisher, Non-Fiction, Pan Macmillan) Sue Hines (Publisher, Allen & Unwin), Jane Palfreyman (Head of Publishing, Random House Australia) and Robyn Sheahan-Bright (Literature Board of the Australia Council).

Tips for keeping your ideas secure

A cautionary tale: A few years ago a client approached me about editing a project. He was armed with confidentiality documents for me to sign and I made an assumption—if my client was so careful about a legal contract with an editor, he must have done everything else to protect his property, right?

About halfway through the project I attended an industry function. A group of us began talking about what projects we were doing and I mentioned mine. Another person responded, 'Oh, you're working for that interstate company, DIY?' I was puzzled and said, 'No, I'm working for another company, XYZ.' The other person told me that couldn't be, as the other project had trademarked the same name as my project.

I immediately rang my client and asked if he had trademarked his project, given that he had invested heavily on product merchandising returning his investment. He said he had everything under control. I made another assumption, that he knew the difference between copyright and trademark. I was wrong. My client had the © symbol on his project and the Queensland company had a trademark on theirs. Trademark wins!

As Chris Finn from Finn Roache said in his presentation 'Identify, value and protect your intellectual property', you need to know the difference between all the ways to protect your ideas and keep your clients informed of what they need to know as well.

Copyright is the exclusive right to reproduce an original work, to authorise another person to do so and to prevent unauthorised reproduction of it. You can't copyright an idea. The idea has to be in a material form. Copyright automatically subsists in a work. As there is no formal registration of copyright in Australia there is no automatic monopoly protection of it. (Commonwealth *Copyright Act 1968*).

Business names and company names don't fit into intellectual property, so registering them at anything other than a federal level is almost meaningless.

A trademark is a sign used to distinguish one's goods or services from those of a competitor. A trademark gives an owner *monopoly* protection against all comers. If you want to own the signs that signify you or your products, you must register a trademark. Trademarks protect trade positions to stop confusion in the marketplace. A trademark is the result of an intellectual property endeavour. A trademark is only of use to you if you use it. It is good for about three to five years. If you don't use it, it will be knocked off the register. (*Trade Marks Act 1995).*

A patent covers a novel and useful invention that involves an inventive step. A patent provides the owner with the exclusive right to exploit an invention for a limited period, in return for which the applicant must publish details of the invention. (*Patents Act 1990*).

A design provides monopoly protection for finished articles that can be judged by the eye but does not include a method or principle of construction. It features shape, configuration, pattern or ornamentation applicable to the article. (*Designs Act 1906*).

The *Trade Practices Act* also significantly affects intellectual property and the way it is used or abused. A key element in invoking such legislation is the establishment of a reputation in the design, brand or product if statutory protection had not been sought. The *Circuit Layouts Act* and *Plant Breeder's Rights Act* also offer protection of intellectual property.

Intellectual property

Intellectual property, or IP, is a term that covers a conglomeration of rights that the law protects in relation to the result of creative endeavour.

Intellectual property is a product of the mind. It is fast becoming one of today's most important global business issues. Increasingly, business requires accurate, concise and relevant information on IP. IP Australia (1800 010 999 or <www.ipaustralia.gov.au>) is the government agency that provides a range of innovative and informative education tools to assist in meeting the IP demands of the future—and it's free of charge.

The law of intellectual property is essentially about the protection and exploitation of ideas. It is a compromise between the right of a person to protect your creation and the right of the public to build on it. Innovation comes at a price; the price is investment and that investment needs protection. Reputation comes with use, turnover and years.

Most large corporations have no regard for creative endeavour at all, and the copyright owner is still the employer if you created 'works' made pursuant to terms of employment. Few in-house writers and editors have the resources to battle a large company and most are forced to choose between eating and starving (commonly called principles). Food usually wins.

There is an array of methods to exploit IP from its outright sale to mere licensing or through joint ventures or franchising. The client usually starts at the top and says 'I want the lot', so you have to consider what 'the lot' entails. Copyright can always be divided by time of use, geographic area of use and media. If a client wants 'the lot', they should have to pay ' a lot' for it. Figure out what you have to sell and what part you want to sell, then make sure you are paid properly for it.

Technology won't progress unless inventions are made public, and an invention is only good for about nine months.

In the digital age you can't really touch what you have to buy and sell. The global age seeks to protect information in a world that has no physical boundaries. An idea has to be reduced to a real material form to be protected. A chip is not a material form. Material form has not been addressed legally and copyright in the digital information age has to change. A digital file may not necessarily be the property of the client either. Digital information is about access and use of your work. Seek advice about who owns digital files before you create them for a client.

As with any creative endeavour, work out your terms of business with your clients before you begin work. If you don't discuss your terms with a client out of fear of losing them, the client is not worth having. Those terms must deal

Accreditation

accreditation system should make us more aware of what standards the industry demands and what we should be offering. It's a complex relationship between standards, recognition and acceptance.

The other thing is to what extent do we want to have these things imposed on us, because change is happening in the industry and there is no denying that.

If you have a system which is accepted from within the profession, then it gains a certain standing and that standing is mirrored in the clients, and clients come to expect that. There are lots of professions where there are people who operate in the less regulated areas of the profession and those who operate in a credentialled area.

We all join together in the society because we care about the work we do, we're interested in discussing it with our colleagues. We want to make contacts, we want access to further education and training programs. We want to involve ourselves in our profession. Accreditation may be one way to pursue these goals.

About the Society of Indexers—I think that that's quite a good example; you were saying they're paid about $45 an hour. What do they need to do to become accredited?

It's more straightforward than editing. You can compare an index to the national standards. A published index is assessed by a panel. The panel charges $40. It takes them about two hours—they don't make any money out of it.

Unlike editors, it is possible to take an index discretely and know that everything in that index is the work of one person.

I'd like to take back to the working group an honest representation of what are clearly very diverse views. I hear some strong reservations and in other areas, support. I think a lot of people want to know more about the process.

What is the value to me of knowing I'm accredited?

If you were a publisher and you wanted to employ an editor and you had no other means of knowing anything about two possible editors, and one's accredited, one's not, in the absence of anything else, would accreditation make a difference? Now that's just a question mark. Do you think it would? Obviously it would depend on the system. My assumption is that the accredited editor would have an edge.

How are we going to assess the assessors?

There might be a national assessment team. We don't need to restrict ourselves to thinking about a test model. What we're looking at, I think, is assessing a standard of competence, not some abstract standard of perfection. It would also involve making assessments about complex and high-level skills. I think that we're all agreed on that.

Early next year I would hope that the models or recommendations would be finalised, and then taken to the membership in a workshop or similar forum. It may take twelve months or more. Democracy is very time consuming.

Supplementary information
The following supplementary information available from Pamela:
• accreditation paper
• information on CREATE
• questionnaire to organisations and matrix for responses
• responses from other states.

Contact <emend@bigpond.net.au> or (02) 9518 4144.

This is an edited version of an address to the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. on 3 September 2002. Views expressed are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the Society of Editors.

Carolyne Bruyn transcribed the talk and Carey Martin and Pamela Hewitt edited it.

Ideas

with the issue of intellectual property, and particularly copyright in its ever-faceted aspects.

Consult your local Business Enterprise Centre (BEC) for practical assistance and confidential advice. You can telephone them on (02) 9282 6977 or go to <www.sydneybec.com.au>. BECs offer business support, advice on various forms of finance that may be available, drawing up professional business plans, networking and training. They operate resource centres that assist with everything from market research to bookkeeping. They also help evaluate your innovation.

September 11 saw the destruction of an empire. Consider this: if your company was in that building, what would have been left? Perhaps only the idea. How would you protect it? How would you value it? What is it worth?

As knowledge is power, get peer group support: belong to the organisation representing your industry and gain as much knowledge as possible of the worth of your intellectual property, its protection and its exploitation before you launch it in the marketplace.

Ginny Lowndes

L E T T E R S

Got those bad language blues

I'm sorry, I can't bear it any more. It's enough to finally send an editor stark, staring, raving mad.

It all started with the sports commentators. It often does. From there, this evil malaise has spread its pall across journalists of all calibres across our fair country. To my horror, I daily hear the words 'impacted on' in reference to anything and everything which might affect something, adversely or not (but usually bad, as is the way with news).

Whatever happened to 'affected'? What did that poor word to do be dropped without so much as a by-your-leave from our lexicon? When it became surplus to requirements, I hope it got a good redundancy.

Guys, guys, wisdom teeth become impacted. To use 'impact' in this way is not wise.

Please consider replacing 'impacted on' with the shorter and more accurate 'affected'.

Thanks.

Carey Martin

PS And while we are at it, remember that a back flip ends where it starts off.

Book proposal number 17: *Love Your English*

Shelley Kenigsberg has sent us the following book proposal from a site she visits called 'The vocabula review' at <www.vocabula.com>

What is Schmuckville, Rice-a-Roni, a fudgsicle, or a Devil-came-down-to-Long-Beach trip, Mr all-go no-quit big nuts, or premenstrual nuclear meltdown?

Love Your English developed from my work writing booklets designed to make original-version commercial movies accessible to Spanish-speaking students of English—a highly successful form of 'edutainment'. As I analyzed word-for-word the scripts of, say, *Armageddon*, *Deconstructing Harry*, *Titanic*, *The Sixth Sense* or *Bridget Jones's Diary* in order to explain jokes and puns, blasphemy and bad grammar, mystifying phrasal verbs and double entendres, I found myself increasingly fascinated by the inherent creativity, wit, and vitality of the English language, so skilfully pressed into service by the screenwriters.

My movie notes grew to include examples from newspapers, magazines and books, song lyrics, the Internet, product names, advertising. My work became infused with the desire to convey this fascination to my readers while providing them with tools for a broader understanding of the resources of English, used intuitively by speakers, that they could carry over into other areas of their learning. I sought to convey above all what was clearly the English language's inbuilt sense of fun.

Love Your English, though, is not only for the advanced language student, for it offers all users of English a deeper insight, appreciation, and ultimately passion for the living processes that have made English the world's most flexible and versatile linguistic tool.

Love Your English includes:
• Waiter! There's a Glitch in My Soup—

A brief history: an open-arms policy to foreign words.
• No Nukes—The passion for monosyllables. Anglo-Saxon/Latin words. Shortening.
• I Fed-Exed the Children—Versatility and parts of speech.
• Why Spanish Gynaecologists Talk About "El Pill Scare"—Simple attribution.
• Send It by Snail—Vernacular rhyme, assonance, and alliteration.
• When You Look at Me with Those Undress-Me Eyes—More complex attribution.
• Sexoholics: Videorazzi Expose Glitterati
• Blends.
• A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Near-Earth Asteroid Rendez-Vous.
• Acronyms.

Valerie Collins

New members

Welcome to the new members for September/October 2002:
Phillip Byrne
Alexandra Holliday
Nicole McKenzie
Kellie Byrnes
Wendy Morgan
Cassie Futcher
Kirsten Wilkins

SOCIETY OF EDITORS (NSW) INC.

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N O T I C E B O A R D

Training
Society workshop
Copyediting: Skills and Issues

Presented by Shelley Kenigsberg, BA, DipEd, President, NSW Society of Editors (NSW); Lecturer, Book Editing & Publishing Diploma, Macleay College.

Saturday, 16 November, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Sydney Room, Level 2, City Tattersalls Club, 198 Pitt Street, Sydney. Cost members $99; others $130 (includes lunch, morning and afternoon tea).

This workshop will focus on the skills copyeditors are required to have/exhibit/develop and consider some of the issues modern professional editors face:
• what editors are expected to know—the Standards document, content expertise or generalist knowledge, standard references
• what editors are expected to do—fact checking and queries, consider consistency and clarity, check word usage, errors in logic, assign styles
• the process of putting a publication together from idea to final output (textbook, web document, novel or business communication)
• text structure (though not structural editing)
• author/editor roles; successful communication
• basics of grammar, syntax, spelling & punctuation
• levels of design editors need to know
• advise on hard copy vs electronic editing.

There will be a Q & A session. Please email questions to Pauline Waugh at <paulinewaugh@ozemail.com.au>. Advance notice will help us structure the session.

Bookings to Society of Editors (NSW), PO Box 254 Broadway NSW 2007, by Monday 11 Nov 2002.

NSW Writers' Centre, Rozelle
Poetry—A Sudden Enlargement of the World, with Margie Cronin

Saturday, 2 November, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Cost members $60; members' concession $50; non-Members $90. GST inclusive. Bring lunch and writing materials.

A Decent Proposal—Pitching to a Publisher, with Rhonda Whitton

Saturday, 16 November, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Cost members $60; members' concession $50; non-Members $90. GST inclusive. Bring lunch and writing materials.

NB: Participants should have either written a manuscript (or part thereof) or have a well-thought-through concept for a fiction or non-fiction book.

Writing and Selling Feature Articles, with Rhonda Whitton

Sunday, 17 November, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Cost members $60; members' concession $50; non-Members $90. GST inclusive. Bring lunch and writing materials.

NB: Participants should bring a concept for an article as well as any relevant research material. Participants who have written an article are encouraged to copy the first four paragraphs of that article onto an overhead transparency, and bring it to the workshop.

For information about any of these courses call (02) 9555 9757 or email<nswwc@ozemail.com.au> or visit the website at <http://www.nswwriterscentre.org.au>.