

Blue Pencil

Newsletter of
The Society
of Editors
(NSW) Inc.

ISSN 1030-2557

PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007

November 2009

The writer and the editor

At our August meeting, editor Diane Jardine and author Larry Buttrose, who have worked together on two of Larry's non-fiction titles, discussed the author-editor relationship from their own perspective.

The writer: Larry Buttrose

I am a writer who has always enjoyed the editing process. A lot of writers don't. They don't seem to appreciate the input of highly qualified professionals, which I have always found editors to be. I have never worked yet with an editor who I thought was operating through ego and the only time I have ever complained about editors was when they were a bit slapdash.

In general I love the editing process. Getting a first draft down is incredibly exciting but once you have a first draft, particularly a work of fiction, the real joy is that you can put it away in a drawer for three months. The longer you can leave it the better it gets. When you come back to it, it will be completely fresh. You can read it as if it was written by somebody else and you can really get a perspective on it.

I am also a great believer in self-editing. I think the editing side is half of what a writer does and I think every writer is both an editor and a writer. I think the two should be in a symbiosis. Once you've done all the self-editing and decided this is the draft that's going to the publisher, then you get the

joy of working with a highly qualified editor. You get to take that extra step so that the book only ever improves and becomes more intricate and beautifully faceted.

Early years

When I was a young poet many, many years ago I was a major fan of Robert Graves. I read *The White Goddess* as a teenager, which is probably a very dangerous thing to do. A line that has always stuck in my head is: 'poetry is inspiration tempered by common sense.' To me any good writing is inspiration tempered by common sense. The common sense you might say is really the editing but, in fact, really good editing is also inspired.

And a really good editor feeds back the inspiration from the original manuscript and can add to it and enrich the book so that you almost feel like saying to the editor, well you should actually get a tiny bit of copyright on this because, although you didn't think up the idea, you helped create the final product.

I started out at the ABC as a 17-year-old cadet journalist while I was studying at university. On my first day I walked into a room that was blue with smoke and throughout it the tinny chatter of old Remington typewriters in steel cases. I walked by the sub table (I didn't know it was that at the time) where men in green visors had their heads down editing comps. It

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Next meeting: Tuesday, 3 November 2009

The Dictionary of Sydney – history for a new era

The Dictionary of Sydney is a long-term, metropolitan Sydney-wide project designed to bring history writing into the digital age. Shirley Fitzgerald will describe the scope of this fascinating new online resource and what management of such a large-scale project entails. The Dictionary of Sydney involves hundreds of writers as well as editors, multi-media and IT specialists and volunteers who undertake a wide range of literary and non-literary tasks. The term 'Dictionary' implies coverage of an 'A to Z' of everything, but it does not really convey the complexity of this work, which is also encyclopedia, gazetteer and historical atlas.

Dr Shirley Fitzgerald was the City Historian for the City of Sydney from 1987 until 2009. Before her adventure into the digital world, she had written about Sydney's history in the form of books, articles, pamphlets and street installations.

Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, 6.30 p.m. for 7.00 p.m. Drinks and light refreshments provided. \$15 for members and students; \$20 for non-members and those who do not RSVP; \$7 for holders of a current concession card or student card. Non-members who book and do not attend must still pay.

Please RSVP to (02) 9294 4999 (voicemail) or the email address <editorbruce@optusnet.com.au> by Friday, 30 October 2009.

December meeting: The Christmas Party. Tuesday, 1 December 2009. La Tavola Garden Restaurant, Chatswood. See flyer inside.

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was like walking into a newspaper out of Dickens only it was the ABC in the 1970s.

Soon after becoming a cub reporter I was made cub sub-editor for *The Central District News Bulletin*, which covered the Adelaide Hills, Southern Vale, the Barossa and up to Gawler. The stories for the bulletin didn't come from journalists. They came from 'correspondents' who were paid two dollars fifty for each story that they phoned in. I learnt my first real lesson about how to choose words properly when one of the correspondents sent

'...a really good editor feeds back the inspiration from the original manuscript and can add to it and enrich the book...'

in a story about how the Oakbank Races had to be cancelled because of 'persistent heavy rain after which all the horses had to be floated home'. The same correspondent also taught me about syntax. He phoned in a story about 'a persistent dog problem in Mt Barker' and 'recently an ABC correspondent was attacked by a dog on a motorcycle'. I realised, OK, that's what syntax is. Now I've got it, I understand.

In the mid-1980s I started a co-operative press in Sydney with a few other people—Mandy Salomon, who is a comedian, and Martin Edmond, who is a superb writer of literary non-fiction. Martin, at that stage, was a struggling screen writer living in Darlinghurst. The press taught me about publishing on a slightly bigger level. We actually did desktop publishing in the mid-1980s. I had a little Apple Macintosh and we printed the pages on a dot matrix printer, put the books out and sold them. Unfortunately we called the press Foreign Books. Our idea was that it was strange terrain, it was foreign. My book was called *Learning Italian*. It was a book of poems but for years afterwards I was contacted by people asking 'Can I have a copy of *Learning Italian* please because I want to learn Italian'.

My first real book, which came out of the Friendly Street Poet series in 1982, was *Leichhardt Heater Journey*, a book of poems.

Working with a real editor

But my first real book I guess was *The King Neptune Day & Night Club*, which is a travel book about India, Africa and Indonesia. With that book I had my first experience of working with a real editor and that was Fiona Inglis who is now the head of the literary agency, Curtis Brown. Fiona was fantastic to work with. She was my window into real publishing and what a real publishing house might want. I gave her fairly finished copy but she came back with quite a lot of suggestions and it was great. I learnt a lot about extra, extra self-discipline through that experience with Fiona.

Almost the day that book was published everyone at the publishing house who knew of me left or was fired. This has happened to me four or five times in my career. Angelo Loukakis came to the company and he didn't know me and didn't know of my book. The book was basically shelved. They didn't push it. After about a year or so, the new people, Angelo and Claire, read the book and said, 'Oh this isn't bad'. They called me in for a meeting and said 'Why don't you write us another one?' and I said, 'What about that one?' They said, 'Write us another one.' I said, 'It's a travel book, I've got to travel to do it. It will take years!' They said, 'Well, that's life chief. Go and travel.' So I said okay.

Around that time I co-wrote a tap dancing musical called *Hot Shoe Shuffle*. It was the only thing in my blessed career that ever really made me any dough and allowed me to travel. So I was able to produce another book. It was called *Café Royale* and was published by Flamingo (HarperCollins). I worked with Claire Forster on it. It was a different experience with Claire because she was more of a commissioning editor. She took certain stories and she'd say, 'No, no, I don't want to include that, you've got to write more there.' This went on for about two years until finally she said, 'Okay, we've got the book.' Then she handed it on to another sub-editor called Lisa Mills who I worked with very closely. That book was actually quite successful. Again it was an eye-opener into a way in which you can work with an editor because Claire was much more hands on about the actual process of putting a book together.

The following year I had a novel in the works called *Maze of the Muse*, based on meeting Robert Graves, which I had pitched to HarperCollins. I had a different experience with the editing of that book because Laura Harris probably liked the book more than I did. Reading the book now it needed another draft. It really did. She was sure about the book and I wasn't. That again was a different lesson. I wasn't swept up in an egotistical typhoon when she said that she liked the book so much. I still had my own doubts but I gave ground on it. I said okay, publishing deadlines are coming up, what choice do I have?

After that book there was another novel, *Sweet Sentence*, which is to my mind a far better novel and is much more considered. When Angelo left HarperCollins (because everyone instantly left the publishing house when my book had been published) he went to Simon & Schuster which was planning to start an Australian fiction list. Angelo asked if I wanted to be on the list. I had been working on a book set in India. Angelo and Jody Lee read the book and liked it. Again it was another year of tossing passages around and story doctoring and then the book was accepted and scheduled. That was an amazing experience. Jodie was really like the story doctor but I worked with Julia Stiles as well, mainly on character. There were two other

'...you almost feel like saying to the editor, well you should actually get a tiny bit of copyright on this because, although you didn't think up the idea, you helped create the final product.'

editors that they gave me. They must have thought I needed a hell of a lot of help. But it was a fantastic experience. We worked and worked and I was very happy with the way that manuscript turned out. If you want to read a novel of mine, please read that one.

Editing another writer

Then life led me on a very strange course. I lived in Byron Bay for seven years until I managed to escape but while I was up there, I came into contact

with New Holland Publishers. They had a book by Rhett Hutchence who was Michael Hutchence's brother. He had written a 150,000 word manuscript and New Holland had entered into a contract with him for the book that would be published in the UK and the USA. It was an attempt to write like William Burroughs by someone who had never written before. New Holland was in a deep hole and needed someone up there who could work with this guy, which was almost impossible. So Fiona Schultz, who was the publisher, came up and lived in the hotel in Byron Bay for about a week and we tried to straighten him out and got him to tell other stories, wrote them down and typed them up. Then I cut half his book for which he hated me. I did a really hard edit on it. In the end it wasn't a half bad book called *Total XS*. It sold reasonably enough, more than any of mine in fact.

That was a great experience and through it I met Fiona who is very unusual. Most modern publishers, when you give them an idea say, 'Sure, we'll get back to you.' Then the idea is run past about 15 people, 10 of whom are involved in promotion, marketing or sales...nothing to do with the actual book beyond 'Can we sell it like jellybeans?'. But Fiona was different to that. You'd pitch an idea to her and she'd say, yes that's alright or no, I don't like that. It was fantastic. If she said, yes then you'd start talking about it. So I've done six non-fiction books with her and this whacky other book which is a satirical graphic novel. I've worked with some terrific editors there. New Holland is a very interesting company because they are very small and stripped down. They do not have the whistles and bells like some of the bigger publishers do. They actually get the job done.

Larry Buttrose graduated from the University of Adelaide—where he is currently doing his PhD. A poet, novelist, travel writer and essayist, Larry is also a playwright and screenwriter. His most recent work for New Holland is Tales of the Popes: From Eden to El Dorado and in production at the moment Speeches of War and Peace, due for release in October.

The editor: Diane Jardine

I would say, looking under my bed at the boxes of books I like to keep, I have worked on close to 150 books and probably with as many authors. Every author I have worked with and every book project I have worked on, no matter that the schedule is the same, no matter that the stages are the same; every book is unique. I think that is what I enjoy about being an editor, particularly in trade publishing. Every book has its own life. No two books are the same and you don't get the 'same old, same old' every time, which is one of the great things about working in publishing.

There are certain things I like in an author. First, I like an author who is punctual, who delivers the manuscript on time. If the manuscript arrives on time and all the bits are there, you

'Every author I have worked with and every book project I have worked on, no matter that the schedule is the same...every book is unique.'

don't have to check the foreword or the appendix, that scores one point on the board. At the moment I am working with three marketing guys on a commissioned marketing book. They have their own consultancy and they're really great guys. They're really happening and they're really funky. I thought they would be great, that they would promote the book. They have had about five months to write this book, which is a small book. The main author rang me pretty much the day after the manuscript was due. 'We want to send it to some colleagues and we want to get some feedback on the manuscript. We need about two weeks to do that. It would really improve the manuscript.' I said, 'Okay. It's important that the manuscript is perfect when it comes in. Two weeks is fine.' I gave him a date for when the manuscript was due and off he went. So of course that date came and went and I emailed them asking how the reviewed manuscript was going. He said, 'Really well, really well, I need two weeks.' I said, 'Yes, we've spoken about that and I've given you the two weeks.' He said,

'Oh no, we're still doing something else and we need two more weeks.' I said through gritted teeth, 'OK, two more weeks. The manuscript is due on 30 July.' The manuscript came on 30 July with an email saying it was all complete. This particular manuscript had another editor to do the copyedit because I was doing the commissioning on this one. A couple of days later I got another email from the marketing guys telling me they still didn't have a final chapter. I hadn't realised the conclusion was missing because I hadn't read the whole manuscript. We're still waiting on the rest of their manuscript to come in. That's why we like a punctual author.

The second thing an editor likes in an author is someone who keeps to the brief—not someone who has a great idea at the last moment and wants to add it to the text. For example, the marketing guys rang me and said, 'We've got 60 illustrations. Will your illustrator be drawing them?' I said, 'I didn't know that there were illustrations when this started.' They said, 'Yes, we need illustrations. We have little diagrams of marketing segments.' Illustrations had not been costed into the project. I know that getting an illustrator to do a full blown illustration is about \$400 so 60 illustrations were just not going to happen at all for this little marketing book. I said, 'That's a bit of a problem. Could you send me a list of what you're doing and some samples and maybe one of the designers can draw one illustration.' He came back to me a couple of weeks later and said, 'We've found someone to do the illustrations.' They haven't arrived either so I don't know about those.

Another example is a doctor in Queensland. She's a very well credentialled doctor. If you speak on the phone she's fantastic. She knows exactly what she's talking about but she can't write. I was telling Larry about authors who don't self edit. In a way I think it's a little bit more than that. It's not about self-editing, it's about misunderstanding the role of what an editor is. She's not the strongest writer we've got but she did, to her credit, send in a manuscript. It's a book about prostate health for men. I was actually the copy editor on this project and as I said to my colleagues as I was reading

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it, I know too much about prostates. As a GP who experiences problems with a lot of men she'd decided to write funny anecdotes about men who had told her what they were thinking, what they'd said, what they said their wife said, and the fact that their wife sent them. Then she sent in a collection of songs and poems about prostates. She thought this would make it lightweight and fun so people wouldn't be scared.

She thought this was great and that the book was going to be hilarious and we would all be so chuffed that it was a great book about prostate health. I said, 'That's fantastic but the first chapter should actually be about symptoms and the second chapter should be about what you should do if you have symptoms and the third chapter should be about the different treatments.' I sent it back to her for review. It's still not ready for production and is now about six months overdue but

we are persevering with that. She has obviously not kept to the brief or perhaps not understood the brief. So we have a problem there with a book that is already over schedule. We've lost it off our publishing schedule, we've lost revenue and we have a sticky situation with a very prominent author which will be my job to sort out.

The third thing I like is authors who are co-operative and flexible and willing to accept constructive feedback on their work. I think that is really the crux of the editorial relationship. I don't pretend to be an expert in this area and I certainly don't pretend to tell you much about it but I think there is something to be said for experience and judgement when you are looking at someone's work. It is not your work, it is not about how you would say something. It's about creating the best way of producing and saying what there is to be said. And I think that's really a core skill that you need

to have as an editor, the core skill that makes an okay book a great book.

As a freelancer I edited a self-help book written by a lawyer who ran his own practice. He was successful but he wasn't Steve Jobs. The book was quite a good idea—about getting young boys back on the straight and narrow and making them realise they had a future. But was the lawyer a writer? No, he was not. He wrote the book and included lots of personal examples of his own tough upbringing in a relatively poor family. He had been involved in petty crime and other situations many teenage boys go through. Yet he turned his life around and became successful. Then he went on to talk about being organised and his example for this was his wife—how his wife was great at cleaning up and keeping things organised. I said, 'Perhaps your wife isn't the best example to us as a role model for young boys.'

Tiered membership

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

Categories

This membership year (2009) the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. will offer members the option of three categories:

1. Existing members (as at 31 December 2006) can remain an ordinary member at the current fee (\$70/75) with the current entitlements; or
2. Existing and new members can become a professional editor member at the current ordinary fee with the current ordinary entitlements, provided you have two years' experience in a paid editing role and can supply two letters confirming your experience; or
3. Existing and new members can become an associate member at a reduced fee (\$50) with reduced entitlements (an associate member cannot vote at an election, cannot become an office bearer and cannot be listed in the *Editorial Services Directory*).

Phasing in a new system

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

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

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

Experience

Professional editor members must have at least two years' in-house experience as an editor or the equivalent freelance or part-time experience. For example, if you worked half-time as an editor for four years (part-time or freelance) then that would be an acceptable equivalent to two years full-time work as an in-house editor. Professional experience must be in a paid editing role. As professional members may have had career breaks, there is no limit on how long ago the professional editing experience was obtained. Professional editor members will be asked to provide details of their experience and two letters (in English) that can be checked by a subcommittee appointed for this purpose. The subcommittee will simply confirm the statements supplied by the third parties. The letters can just be a statement of the years of experience in an editorial role. See the essential **Professional Editor Membership form** for more details about requirements.

Corporate Associates

A new category of Corporate Associates is also available. Publishing companies and other businesses and organisations that support the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.'s aims can become Corporate Associates. For an annual fee of \$400, Corporate Associates of the society will receive five copies of *Blue Pencil* each month and two copies of the current *Editorial Services Directory*, five free admissions to each monthly meeting and two free admissions to one special event per year, such as the Christmas dinner. The usual member rates on professional development courses and workshops will apply for up to five attendees from the Corporate Associate organisation (a saving of approximately \$95 per person).

**The Committee
Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.**

I spent many hours on this book and in the end I was quite open about changes I thought should be made. I wrote a big covering letter to try and be supportive saying, 'I love your idea but I think you should change your examples around.' As a freelancer, the books go off and other people look after them. Then I saw a copy of the book on the shelf one day and I was excited it had been published. I couldn't believe it. When I opened the book it was all still there. I think he totally ignored the edit. He had taken nothing on board. At the end of the day, it is the publisher's responsibility as much as his responsibility. My name wasn't on the book, which was okay. So, what can you do? I don't know what the publisher could have done if he had absolutely refused. That book was published and that book is an example of an author who just feels they have something to say that's really important and again I think it's the role of the publisher to be saying, 'Is this the book you want to publish?'

The fourth thing that editors like is an author who understands the mechanics and process of how books are published...but not too much. So Larry, for example, understands that when you send in pages, you cannot go on holidays to Byron Bay and sit on the beach.

I was recently working with an author who is a photographer and we were producing beautiful art photos in a panoramic book. They were gorgeous. It was a series and we decided the series had not been as successful as we'd hoped. We wanted to modernise it and update it so we changed the size and format of the book to a format that we thought would be easier on the shelf and would work. I emailed him and explained that we were looking at a new format and we had a new size in mind that was slightly smaller. He came back to me and questioned the new size. He said, 'I thought 190 x 190 was a very economical format. I understand there's a lot of paper wastage at the printer with this format.' I wasn't interested in saying that we're the publisher and we think this is going to work. So to my credit I went to the production manager and said the author's got a query about the format and the paper wastage. Could you talk to the printer about economical

formats and assure me this is a very economical format. Her comment was that different printers have different machines so yes we were okay. God bless him for being interested but I think authors can be too involved in that sort of detail and know too much about how a book is published. For example, they'll make a text change on the final pages and say, 'You can just do a search and replace on that.' But no, we don't get final pages and do a search and replace on this. That's madness. It's all done manually at that point in time. I think it's good to know how things work but it's important to trust the editors you're working with, trust that they know how things work too. They're revising in a certain way for certain reasons as well.

The final thing that the author needs to understand is that publishing is a business. It's commercial and ultimately the edited brief is to prepare a publication that matches the expectations of the author, reader, the publisher, the bookshop buyer and the audience, which is the general public buying the book. They have to do all that and bunch it into a timetable. So if your editor is explaining to you certain things that need to be done in a certain way, that's the number of balls they are juggling to keep everyone happy at one time. Authors should remember that they're not the only author the editor is working with. I've had up to 13 projects at any one time. So I think an author needs to understand there are processes, ways in which things are done.

On the publishing side they need to understand that it isn't all over as soon as they deliver the manuscript. One author ended up going on an eight-week cruise right in the middle of production. She left the day she handed the manuscript in. She didn't actually tell me she was on a cruise. She just said she was going away and said I could email her things. I sent her pages in PDF and then she abused me when she came back because the PDFs were rather large files and she had to pay a dollar a minute to download them on the ship. That author misunderstood what she needed to do. Once the book is written you're only just halfway through the publishing process.

I think the best books are the books that are planned up front and ideally

An editor likes an author who:

- is punctual
- keeps to the brief
- is co-operative and flexible
- understands the publishing process
- understands that publishing is a business

the first contact between the editor and author would start while the manuscript is being written so we would be involved in the commissioning stage. At that point you'd be introduced to your author, you'd be involved in all the chapters, you'd be there all the way through and that would be a great relationship with communication.

Authors are unique. Some are very involved. When you're in the full throes of production, they ring you every morning with an update on what they thought of overnight and another idea for the cover page. Other authors deliver the manuscript and think they've done their job. They don't even know what pages are. I like an author that's somewhere in between these two extremes—an author who is interested and involved but can also let me get on with the job and lead them through the process of production, guide them where they need to go and trust that I know what I'm doing.

Diane Jardine has been in the publishing industry for more than 17 years and in that time has worked across the spectrum of publishing with various academic, trade and custom publishing houses as well as a period in magazines. She has worked as a freelance editor with many of Australia's top trade publishing houses and now works as an in-house commissioning and project editor for New Holland Publishers.

IPed notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors Limited, October 2009

I have to record at the outset that the 4th IPed National Editors Conference held in Adelaide 8–10 October was not a great success: it was a stupendous success, thoroughly appreciated by the more than 200 participants.

All sessions, both plenary and parallel, were packed with enthusiastic audiences, who enjoyed the highly professional presentations covering topics ranging from aspects of the standard nuts and bolts of editorial practice to the sustainability of green editing. Some 25 per cent of submitted papers dealt with editing and publication in non-print media, reflecting the rapidly overwhelming importance of digital communication endeavours. My tip is that, by the next national conference, such papers will be in the majority.

Each from their own particular professional contexts and viewpoints, the four keynote speakers—Neal Porter, Wendy McCarthy, Natasha Stott Despoja and Julian Burnside—focused sharply on Getting the message across, the conference theme.

Neal Porter, an editor and publisher of children's books, revealed through delightful examples and with audience participation, the intimate and reversible relationship between words and pictures in this genre. There's more to the chicken and egg story than I'm sure most of us had thought.

Wendy McCarthy is a champion of mentoring as a means of enabling individuals to reach their full potential and get their message across in their chosen careers. She highlighted the importance of the relationship between mentor and mentee, and that there are

benefits to both parties. We much value her advice, because mentoring is of direct interest to us with the decline and fall of in-house training for editors in the publishing industry.

Julian Burnside was incisive and entertaining in his presentation that showed how we often need to dissect the message to get to the truth—or lies—of the matter. He recounted sections of the summing up of the chief US prosecutor at the Nuremberg war crimes trials, which laid bare the lies created and promoted by the worst of those arraigned. Regrettably, as related by Mr Burnside, such practices remain common among the usual suspects.

Natasha Stott Despoja first entertained us with numerous amusing anecdotes from her time as a senator in the Parliament of Australia. The serious side of her presentation that followed contained many useful tips about getting the message across in politics, parliament and the community. This is something that we, as a profession, need to do if we are to raise our profile from that of pedants and punctuation pundits to communication specialists. And what better to exemplify that we are the latter than the exemplary carriage of this conference.

The conference debate on the motion that 'A writer needs an editor like a fish needs a bicycle' was a hoot and laid 'em in the aisles. By audience acclamation the 'against' case won, but this obscene partisanship was somewhat redressed by chairman Burnside's decision that the 'for' case had won on merit. Just a few cheers there.

The IPed Council had its first opportunity to make, to a national

forum, a retrospective and prospective presentation on the Institute's activities. This was admirably done by Virginia Wilton, the Council's retiring chair. IPed's 2009 Annual General Meeting was held immediately preceding this. In another presentation, the IPed Accreditation Board outlined its plans and prospects, and honoured on stage some 35 of the first batch of 112 IPed Accredited Editors (AEs), together with many of the Distinguished Editors (DEs) who contributed their expertise and experience to make possible the first accreditation examination, held in 2008. The Council hopes that, through these presentations and personal contacts made with IPed associates during the conference, the members of the societies of editors that together constitute IPed gained a deeper understanding of its role, aims and work.

Congratulations are due to the Society of Editors (SA) for hosting and organising a wonderful conference, which I'm sure will be recalled with pleasure and professional pride by all who were there. If you were not, well, don't sulk, there's another big event in two years in Sydney. And from the content of presentation made by the Sydney team at the end of the Adelaide program, it's again going to be a real occasion. Also, the presentations made in Adelaide will, in due course, appear on the IPed website. Keep a lookout there.

Ed Highley
Secretary
www.iped-editors.org.

New Horizons
for Editing and Publishing

7 to 9 September, 2011

Dockside Conference Centre, Cockle Bay, Sydney

Put the date in your diary now

Workshop report: Copy editing – Getting started

On 17 September, the Society of Editors (NSW) held a second introductory workshop on copy editing, presented by Meryl Potter (DE).

2009 has been a busy year for our society's Professional Development Coordinator. In addition to her teaching load at Macleay College, Meryl Potter has organised and overseen a packed workshop schedule on behalf of the society, and co-written the second annual IPed accreditation exam, while somehow finding time for her freelance editing commitments.

She recently presented workshops on copy editing (13 August and 17 September) and proofreading (10 September and 8 October) on behalf of the society. All four were sold out, and the positive feedback is a tribute to their success.

One participant wrote, 'I came in from a publishing background to get a better understanding of copy editing in order to help me assess how much work would be necessary for manuscripts I consider, as well as gain an appreciation for the work that goes in. I got this and much more from the course. Very useful!'

It's always interesting to learn the backgrounds of people at workshops—there's usually a variety. At the second copy editing workshop, attendees came from commercial magazine publishing, government and the public service, web /blogging, educational publishing and the freelance world. Some were writers,

and others were editorial assistants or coordinators; most had some editing experience but little formal editing training.

Meryl began with a brief overview of the publishing process and the role of an editor—'to prepare manuscripts for publication and help authors and organisations achieve error-free publications that communicate clearly'—then took us through the many tasks a copy editor might be expected to do.

'Every manuscript that comes across your desk presents different challenges and flexibility is one of the most important things to learn.' Editors have to balance the needs of author, publisher and reader; manage budgets and schedules; have a broad general knowledge of a vast range of topics; and have an eye for detail while keeping the big picture in mind.

In the morning sessions we did exercises in marking up a manuscript, grading headings and identifying the audience for a text. We then moved on to questions of spelling and style—choosing and using a dictionary and style manual, and creating and using an efficient editorial style sheet.

As the 'benchmark reader', no one (except for the author) will read a text as carefully as its editor. The editor's job is to make 'a measured intervention' in

terms of the five Cs of good editing and clear communication. An edited text should be clear, concise, consistent, correct and complete.

Meryl stressed the value of an editor's references: 'Good editors are continually looking things up. This keeps the quality of work high and also keeps us learning.'

Every point was illustrated with exercises. Inevitably there was much more than we could do in a single day, but she provided a detailed solutions guide to take home. Meryl stressed that for developing editors, 'the thing that makes the difference is struggling with text and trying to come to decisions. Every manuscript adds to your knowledge.'

As always, I finished the day tired, but inspired. As one participant wrote, 'this was a fantastic workshop. As well as practical advice, I'm leaving with a better mindset for editing and a renewed enthusiasm.' Many of us are planning to attend the proposed Advanced Editing workshop in 2010.

Many thanks to Meryl for her organisation and presentation, and for the high quality of the workshops throughout the year. On behalf of the society, we owe her a debt of gratitude.

Lachlan Jobbins

Snippets from the Adelaide conference

'Editors can't read and not edit.' Lisa Morrow

'What editors do is make words dance on pages.' Wendy McCarthy

'There aren't many jobs in the world where you get to spread pixie dust around.' Wendy McCarthy on mentoring

'My advice is it's better to die in a boardroom than die of boredom.' Wendy McCarthy quoting her own mentor

'We can't talk about the new media anymore. That is so 20th century!' Dr Jackie Cook

'Colonic regression – that's what I like to call the loss of the full colon.' Dr Jackie Cook

'Hunting the feral apostrophe.' Section in Dr Cook's presentation

'Have we relied too much on the magical "?" without explanation?' Dr Greg Maguire on editor queries

'Most public utterances these days are bleached of all meaning.' Julian Burnside

'To boldly split infinitives where none have been split before.' Julian Burnside

'Now we're "content strategists". Let's charge a higher fee.' Elizabeth Spiegel

Freelancers do lunch, 30 October

The next freelancers' lunch will be held at the Marlborough Hotel, 145 King Street Newtown, at noon on Friday, 30 October. Mains cost about \$10 to \$14. The pub is a five-minute walk from Newtown Station and is near the corner of King Street and Missenden Road.

The society organises these informal freelancers' lunches every second month or so. The invitation to lunch is cordially extended to other freelancers who work in the publishing industry.

There is no need to RSVP. See you there!

The Indexing Companion Workbook

Glenda Brown has published a workbook on book indexing to be used in conjunction with *The Indexing Companion*. The workbook contains practical exercises with detailed answers to guide learners to a deeper understanding of the indexing process. *The Indexing Companion Workbook* is available for purchase as a printed book or PDF ebook. Details at <http://tinyurl.com/TICWBI>.

Deadly literature award

Lorraine McGee-Sippel is the winner of the 2009 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Deadly Award for outstanding achievement in literature. Lorraine began writing in the 1990s and her work has appeared in numerous anthologies and publications. In 2001, her autobiography *The Best Part* was shortlisted for an emerging writer fellowship at Varuna. In the same year she was awarded the first Indigenous Mentorship with the Australian Society

of Authors. In 2008 she received the prestigious Inaugural Yabun Elder award for her contribution to reconciliation.

Galley Club Christmas Party, 18 December

The Galley Club Christmas party will be held on Friday, 18 December upstairs at the Camperdown Hotel, 138 Parramatta Road, Camperdown. More details in the December issue of *Blue Pencil*.

Christmas Party

Tuesday, 1 December

6.30 p.m. for 7.00pm

La Tavola Garden Restaurant

16 Falcon Street, Crows Nest

\$30.00 per person includes herb and garlic bread, pasta course, choice of mains, dessert, soft drinks and coffee. BYO wine or beer.

See the flyer in this issue for more details and to make a reservation. Space is limited.

Don't miss a night of good food, good fun and good company.

Order form: Editorial Services Directory 2009-10

The *Editorial Services Directory 2009-10*, published by the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc., is now available. It includes freelance editors listed under categories such as Services Offered; Types of Published Material they have worked on; Subject (or Genre) specialities; together with an individual directory entry for each freelance editor. The price is \$21 per copy, which includes postage. A 25% discount applies for orders of 10 or more directories.

I would like to buy.....copy/ies of *Editorial Services Directory 2009-10* @ \$21 per copy (postage within Australia included) for a total of \$.....

Name:.....

Organisation:.....

Address:

.....

Cheque/money order, made out to Society of Editors NSW, enclosed for \$.....

Or please charge \$.....to my credit card:
 Bankcard MasterCard Visa

Credit card number:
.....

Expiry date:.....

Name on credit card:
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Cardholder's signature:
.....

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Please return the form and payment to the society at PO Box 2229, Rose Bay North, NSW 2030 or by fax to (02) 9337 4126.

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



Follow the Society of Editors (NSW) on Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/SocEdNSW>

NEW MEMBERS

Victoria Morgan
Greg Murphy
David Gardiner
Keith Fryer
Karen Miller
Bronwyn Mehan
Elise Young
Marie Dunn
Martine Magers
Nigel Tunnell-Jones
Adriana Martinelli-Sciacca
Louis Allen
Laura Davies

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

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<www.editorsnsw.com>.

Blue Pencil

Editor: Denise Holden

Assistants: Moira Elliott, Catherine Etteridge, Lachlan Jobbins, Julie Harders and Nicky Shortridge.

Printer: Complete Design, Marrickville

Published: 11 issues a year (including combined January/February issue)

Your comments and contributions are welcome. Mail them to the Editor, *Blue Pencil*, Society of Editors (NSW) Inc., PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007, or email the Editor at <bluepencil@editorsnsw.com>.

Copy deadline for the December issue is Tuesday, 10 November 2009.

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

Advertising rates

Full page, \$375; half page, \$200 (horizontal only); one-third page, \$125 (vertical or horizontal); quarter page \$100 (horizontal only); one-sixth page, \$75 (half of one column). Inserts: \$200 per hundred for DL-sized or A4 pre-folded to DL size. Circulation: approximately 400. Please note that the committee reserves the right to decide whether advertisements are appropriate for this newsletter.

Membership

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

Membership runs for a calendar year. The 2009 fees are \$70 for ordinary member or professional member renewals; \$75 for new professional members (\$45 if joining after 30 June); \$50 for associate member renewals or \$55 for new associate members. Interested organisations can become corporate associates for \$400 per year.

To obtain a membership application form go to the Society of Editors (NSW) website <www.editorsnsw.com>, phone 02 9294 4999 or write to PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007.

Listing in the Editorial Services Directory

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

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

Committee meetings

All members are welcome to attend the society's committee meetings, generally held on the second Tuesday of each month. Please contact a committee member for details if you wish to attend the next meeting.

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Email: <catering@editorsnsw.com>

Regional members

Regional members living more than 200 km from Sydney may receive a 40 per cent discount on the cost of the society's workshops (excluding computer-based workshops).

Professional development

InDesign for Editors (CS4) MEMBERS ONLY

Date: Friday, 27 November 2009

Time: 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

Presenter: Alpha Computer Consultants

Venue: Level 3, 123 Clarence Street, Sydney

Cost: Members only \$350 (lunch and refreshments included)

Editors are increasingly being asked to use InDesign for text revision and copy fitting, and may also find more opportunities available to them if they are adept in desktop publishing. This course is designed specifically for editors and will cover everything you need to know from creating a new document to outputting to PDF. The course will include:

- working with InDesign and setting preferences
- managing text and type
- importing Microsoft Word files and managing images and tables.

If you have no knowledge of design terminology or familiarity with design issues, we strongly recommend you read the relevant sections of part 3 of Snooks & Co's *Style manual*, 6th edition.

Special note: The workshop on 20 November filled very quickly so we recommend early application, with payment, to secure your place. Reservations without payment will not be accepted.

Please register by Thursday, 5 November 2009.

Regional members: Unfortunately we cannot offer our usual discount for regional members as the cost is set by the supplier.

PLANNED WORKSHOPS in 2010:

Manuscript Assessment and Reader Reports

Date: To be advised

Plain English

Date: To be advised

Punctuation

Date: To be advised

Advanced copy editing

Date: To be advised

Copy deadline for the December issue of

Blue Pencil

Tuesday, 10 November 2009

Payment for workshops

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

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

For more information about the workshops, email Meryl Potter at <education@editorsnsw.com>.