

Blue Pencil

Newsletter of
The Society
of Editors
(NSW) Inc.

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April 1998

The New York experience

At our February meeting, Bernadette Foley, recipient of the Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship, spoke about what it's like to be an editor in the world centre for English-language publishing.

The Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship is named in honour of Beatrice Davis, who in some ways was the first editor to make editing in Australia a profession. She worked at Angus and Robertson for a very long time, and then at Thomas Nelson, and then freelanced.

Some people think that the fellowship is a bequest that she left. In fact it wasn't; it was named in her honour. She died, unfortunately, just a couple of months

before the first fellowship winner was announced, so she knew the fellowship had been set up in her honour but she never actually knew who won it.

The fellowship's been running since 1992. The first fellow was Roseanne Fitzgibbons, who's the fiction editor at University of Queensland Press (UQP). Then there was Sue Hines, who's now a publisher at Allen & Unwin; Bryony Cosgrove, who was at Penguin and

who's now freelance; and Jacquie Kent, a freelance editor in Sydney. And then I went last year.

The fellowship is sponsored by the Australian Publishers Association (APA) and the Literature Fund of the Australia Council, and also by Allen & Unwin, the Galley Club, Hodder Headline, Penguin, Scholastic, Transworld, and UQP. DW Thorpe, the editors' societies here and in Tasmania and Victoria, Melbourne University Press and Women in Publishing contribute as well.

The idea of the fellowship is to send an editor to New York to work for three months. All accommodation, travel and other expenses are covered. Because of the involvement of the Literature Fund, applicants have to have some bent towards literary, or at least trade, publishing. An educational editor could apply, but it's mainly directed towards trade editors.

Whereas London was once the centre of publishing for the English language, everyone now looks to New York. [The main centre for publishing in the world appears to be Germany.] For a long time, editors in Australia have followed a British style and a British approach to publishing. The idea of the fellowship is to give editors here some idea of the New York scene, because what's happening there is all reflected here in our own industry.

The criteria of the fellowship are to be working in trade or literary publish-

Next meeting: Tuesday 7 April 1998

Our ethics

Yvonne Miles, Education Manager

Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)

Ethical issues affect us all every day, in our work and in our lives generally. Our ethics survey results show that members want the Society of Editors to provide leadership in ethics. But what do we really mean by that? Could we—should we—adopt a formal code of ethics? Or would we rather simply discuss ethical issues at the occasional evening meeting? Or include a regular column on ethics in *Blue Pencil*? And if we do want a code of ethics, what would it cover? How would we use it?

Drawing on her experience with other groups confronting similar issues, Yvonne Miles will help us examine our views and decide on a course of action. Don't let others make these important decisions for you. You don't need a fully fledged philosophical position. Just come prepared to share and develop your ideas.

6.30 pm for 7 pm in the Rooftop Function Centre, 4th floor, Australian Museum (enter from William Street). Drinks and light refreshments provided. Please **RSVP by Friday 3 April** to (02) 9294 4999 (voicemail). Members \$12; non-members and those who don't RSVP, \$15.

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ing, be a senior editor or equivalent, and to have worked in the industry for about six years. Personally, the point is to help your own career by gaining this experience, but also to see what's happening in America and how it affects us in Australia and to come back and do talks like this. The fellowship winners are then a resource for publishers and others to draw on.

Recently, the fellowship has been on a fairly shaky ground because it costs a lot—it was \$28,000 last year. It is a big commitment by publishing companies, but it's been proposed that the fellowship should continue. The APA is supporting it and so is the Literature Fund. It will go ahead as long as a sufficient amount is given by the sponsors and supporters. It will be offered only every second year, so applications would have to be made for next year.

In the alternate years a week-long residential course for about 10 experienced editors is proposed. A lot of courses, like some of those offered by the Society of Editors and the Writers' Centre, are for editors who are just starting out. The idea is to offer a training or discussion group for editors who already know how to copyedit and so forth to get together and talk about problems they have with structural editing or working with agents or building their way to becoming publishers, etc.

It's aimed to run that workshop around October. Like the fellowship, people will have to apply for it. The Literature Fund will sponsor the speakers and pay a lot of the miscellaneous costs. Each company will have to pay for their own editor to go along, and it has to be worked out how we're going to accommodate freelancers. Obviously freelancers have to be there because they are doing so much of the main work.

New York, New York

I was awarded the fellowship in July 1996, and it was presented at the Book Fair. Then I had to come up with ideas about where I'd be working and what I'd be doing. When I applied I said the main thing I wanted to look at in New York was how editors were trained, and that ended up being quite a good focus.

Thinking of publishers to approach was hard because, if you think about it,

if you work in-house it would be very difficult having somebody you didn't really know tag along for three months. I obviously didn't want to do photocopying for three months, so it was quite a big ask.

Fortunately, I had done a structural edit on a book being published in New York a couple of months after it was published here, so a New York editor had seen my editorial notes and my report on it. She agreed with what I had proposed to do on the manuscript and that enabled us to meet. We knew that we were following the same lines about how we were working on the book. Her name is Cindy Spiegel and she's what is called in America a senior editor. She works at Riverhead Books, which is a very small, very new division of Putnam.

Before I went over in October, Putnam was bought out by Penguin. I thought there was no way they would take me on because of the upheaval of being bought out and becoming the second-largest English language publisher. But Cindy said yes, that she had a lot of work for me to do. I had written to her beforehand and sent her my CV, and she sent me a book that she had worked on, so we knew a little bit about each other before I went there.

It was planned that I'd work at Riverhead four days a week for two months out of three, and so I went along and actually worked as if I was a staff member. On the fifth day, I'd go around and see as many people as I possibly could. Then in the last month I went to the Chicago Book Expo, visited Boston and Washington, and saw lots of people in New York—Cindy more or less went through her address book for me.

Structure

The structure of the company there is different from the way a lot of trade houses work here. You might want to read an article in *Publishers Weekly* from 5 January. It's about many of the people I met over there who are editors about my age—in their mid-30s or younger—and about how they work and commission and so forth. People we would call commissioning editors or acquisition editors or even publishers over there are called senior editors. Many editors in their mid-30s are building up lists of very interesting and very beautifully produced books.

There are publishers, and they do a

similar job to our publishers here, but they also oversee the lists published by the senior editors. If books are not selling they find out why. They're very involved in the sales and marketing side of things and they acquire some of the major titles.

Under them, there are three ways you can go if you're an editor.

Managing editors are what we might call production editors here. They traffic many books through, making sure things are running on time and to budget, etc. If you don't want to commission, that's a way you can go. It's not quite as prestigious as being a senior editor, but it's well respected within the house because the senior editors rely on the managing editors to get their books out on time.

Then there are copyeditors. One in-house editor said that copyeditors in New York are like waiters; they'll do it while they're waiting for their real job to come along. Whereas here, if you're a copyeditor that's your career, and books live or die on good copyediting.

Putnam, where I worked, had an in-house copyediting department with a fantastic woman—an Australian—running it, but that was very unusual. Mainly it's all freelanced out. If you're a copyeditor you'd probably never have any contact with the author, and you might not even have any contact with the senior editor. I must admit I didn't like that part.

Then there are the senior editors. They are the ones who commission books, do all the deals with the agents, groom authors. Everything about the book is their responsibility, and they make or break their careers on what they put into a book. Cindy's success story was *The Color of Water*, which Hodder Headline has published in Australia. It's the memoirs of an African-American with a Polish-Jewish mother. It's a pretty good story, but it need not have been. Cindy worked hard with the author to structure a book that she thought would be successful. She was out to get a good book, and she got it. It was on the *New York Times*' bestseller list for about 22 weeks. After that, agents were happy to send books to her and people knew her, and whenever I said I'm working with Cindy Spiegel they'd all get excited.

What I really liked is that the senior editors were expected to do all their own editing, which I think is something that

we're moving away from here. A lot of books here are commissioned by one person then handed on to somebody else. I think that's a pity. American senior editors were meant to have a very good idea of not only how to commission books but also how they were to be marketed, how they would sit in the bookshops. The senior editors would have lunch with major booksellers.

Very briefly that's the structure of the editorial department, except for one very important person. That is the assistant.

In the usual career path you'd begin as an intern, which means you'd do the photocopying and the filing and maybe get your travel expenses paid for you. You'd do it over the summer holidays or maybe for a year. It gives you an 'in' and you can decide whether or not you want to work in publishing.

If you decide you like it you usually go in as an assistant. This is an amazing position. The best assistant I met would read manuscripts and write intelligent reports on them. She would also make hairdressing appointments for the authors. They do absolutely everything, and they do it for a pittance.

Many of the assistants also have a Saturday morning job because New York is so expensive, but that's the way they get trained. They're literally at the door of the senior editors who they're working for so they can see all that person's correspondence, listen to all their phone conversations, look at their editing, and if they're working with a good senior editor they're able to discuss it all. Their training is all through that one-to-one working relationship.

Cindy pointed out that this system only works if you have a good senior editor who knows how to edit and knows how to pass on that information, but it was quite inspiring to see how people came up through the ranks. If I asked somebody about their background and training, they'd always give the name of the editor they worked for first, then the company.

Agents, scouts and authors

Two other groups that are extremely important in New York are the agents and the scouts. Agents in Australia are becoming increasingly important, and much more involved in the acquisition of books than they ever were before. In New York they're absolutely essential.

If an agent doesn't like you, they're not going to send you a book. You really do have to go to lunch with every agent in town to try to make a name for yourself. That's why Cindy was so lucky and had worked so hard on getting her book into the bestseller list; agents would then realise that she was worth considering. Unless you're respected by the agents, you have no career at all. They will quickly move an author to another company if they're not happy with you. You have to establish a career and you have to keep it going.

When I was working there I was doing structural editing on their first thriller. Before I did that Cindy had to ring the author and agent and explain who I was, and ask them if they minded me working on it. So, unlike here where it would be sent out to a freelancer, that had to be approved, and not just by the author but also by the agent.

The other wonderful group in New York is the scouts. We have no need in Australia for scouts because we're too small. I worked for two days with scouts, and it was like working in the stock market or the futures exchange. I worked for one scout company which scouted for publishers in Australia, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands and a couple of other places. The moment they heard that an interesting manuscript was being auctioned they would somehow get a copy of that manuscript, by fair means or foul, then overnight fax a chapter to their clients.

And then there are authors. Many authors are treated differently there than they are here, although I think we're starting to follow that line. If they're a best-selling author or being groomed to be, they can almost have whatever they want. You have to make sure your book is competing very well with the hundreds of other books that are published. Something like 50,000 books are published in America each year, and many of those are trade titles, so you have to make sure yours is going to be on the main table at Barnes & Noble. A good author really is able to name their price.

Question: Do you think the standard of copyediting in America is lower because it's generally done by less experienced people?

It's very hard to compare it because it's so different. Whereas I could do the structural editing on this thriller, there's

no way I would've done the copyediting because their style is so different. I believe our style is much more minimal. They have lots of punctuation and lots of capitals. Editors there would say that British editors don't do any editing.

Some companies like Putnam have a very high standard because they have in-house copyeditors and they have a copyediting manager who oversees the standard of everything. She would take somebody on as her assistant and then train them to be a copyeditor. She would send the pages out to be proofread, and they would go back to the copyeditor who'd worked on them to look at what the proofreader picked up that they hadn't. We're used to training in-house, but copyeditors over there who work out of house never get that follow-through so they don't see what they've missed.

Question: Who does the proofreading and how are they trained?

I could never quite work out who did the proofreading. They were freelance. Everyone said that if they could find a good copyeditor and find a good proofreader they were overjoyed, because then they didn't have to sift through a lot of people who weren't taking it very seriously.

Question: How is a senior editor trained?

They are usually trained by being an assistant and then working their way up.

Question: Not as a copyeditor?

Some are. Cindy, for example, could copyedit because she had trained at an academic house. But a lot of editors simply aren't trained in copyediting; nor do they need to be. It's very unusual for someone to do both the structural editing and the copyediting.

Question: Are there formal courses as well?

Yes, there are. I looked at most of the courses, either through material sent to me or by talking to people who run them. I teach at the Macleay course, and there was nothing quite equivalent to that. That course brings you up to speed on copyediting and at least you come away knowing the terms and knowing what's expected of you. The main American courses were at Radcliffe and Denver, and they really groomed young white girls to be publishers. They're very very

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expensive. They're quite intensive, three weeks I think, and they're residential. You work in groups and you put together your own book or your own list or your own magazine company. The people I spoke to who did that course said it gave them a fantastic overview if they wanted to go straight into being a publisher, but it didn't help them to copyedit, and it didn't really help them to do the structural editing; it was much more the big picture.

Comment: And you said in your report that they still had to start as an assistant and wouldn't use many of the things they had learnt until they had finally worked their way up.

Yes. I heard somebody describe it as a very high-class employment agency. Radcliffe, for example, only aims at New York trade houses and only aims at big ones, so you're a failure if you get into a house that's not on Manhattan. One course that I was interested in was being run at a university in Harlem to train ethnic groups and African-Americans. There are very few African-Americans working in publishing, so I thought that course had a real purpose.

Question: You haven't mentioned the publicist at all. I was wondering what the coordinating factor might be with the editorial department.

Obviously publicity is as important as getting the books and putting them together, and the publicity department has an absolutely huge job. It's growing that way here, but over there it's amazing. There was one book that Putnam did to re-launch someone who'd had a good first book, but their second book had bombed, and they knew his third book was good. There was an embargo on his name; they publicised the title and the publishing house. The author was in San Francisco, and the book was set in certain locations in San Francisco, so they bought advertising space on the buses that went between those two locations with the name of the book on it. They made sure, like Gideon, that a copy of the book was in every hotel in that area as well as on every flight from New York to San Francisco at the time of publication.

There was a film festival running

around the time of publication. They weren't going to sell the book there because it hadn't been released, but they made sure that all the festival organisers had read the book because it was assumed that they'd talk about it. That was only part of it. Weekly postcards with different quotes from the book were sent out to bookshops and so forth weeks before the publication date so everyone was really hyped up.

That's only what I can remember. I heard all of this in a breakfast meeting the company had every Thursday morning. The managing director said, 'Oh yes, that sounds fine. So we've got to repeat the whole thing in New York too.' It was staggering. They send huge quantities of advance copies or bound proofs out to booksellers and newspapers and anyone who's going to review a book.

Question: Do the publicity staff have contact with the editorial department, though?

Oh yes, they have regular meetings.

Question: Do they listen to the editors?

Oh, yes. One thing I really liked about New York was that editors are on a different standing—unless you're a copy-editor—than we are here. There, the general community is interested in the publishing industry, not just in books. One clothing company even used a publisher to model their clothes. Good editors are absolutely prized, whereas here it might be good marketing people or sales people or accountants.

Comment: But the editor is doing much more than what editors do here. The fact that you are looking for a book to make your career means you're focused on the whole process, not just a part of it, and in that sense you are more accountable for the book as a whole.

Yes. At that breakfast meeting I mentioned, the managing director said, 'Our senior editors have to have much more contact with reviewers, and much more contact with magazines.' So not only are you expected to lunch a few times a week with agents, but you also have to lunch with and smooch up to reviewers and get contacts in the media. It's entirely your responsibility.

Comment: But you imply that they're not paid well.

Publishers are paid well, but a senior editor who's doing all this work and getting books on the best-seller list is paid what a senior editor here would be paid, maybe a little bit more. It varies a lot, from the 30s up to the mid-50s, but they're paying Manhattan rents. I found everything in New York to be very expensive.

Question: So do senior editors aspire to be publishers?

Oh yes, it's the next step.

Comment: But when you become a publisher you lose the connection with the product; you're then making it all happen the same way as here.

Yes, you do, there's no way around it. Although there are exceptional people like Susan Peterson, the publisher at Riverhead/Viking Penguin. She started as an editor and she has an absolutely eagle eye. She can read one chapter of a book and know what should be on the cover. So although she's no longer doing the editing, she is able to comment on how a book should be packaged.

She said that the thing which helped her make that jump from being a very good senior editor to being one of America's top publishers was when she realised that she wasn't going to get anywhere until she took a really educated interest in the financial side of things: how money was being spent, how money was being made, how the company was being run. Once she did that, people looked at her differently, and now she's running some very successful lists. But still she can go into a cover meeting and say, 'No, that cover's no good for the content of that book.'

Question: What we keep hearing here is that publishers are now coming up through the money side, not the editorial side.

In America the editorial side is definitely still the way up, which I liked very much.

For information about how to apply for the Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship, contact Meredith Hall at the Australian Publishers Association: fax (02) 9281 1073, or e-mail: mhallapa@publishaust.net.au

Bernadette's talk was transcribed by Kylie Lawson.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Opening and apologies

The second Annual General Meeting since incorporation of the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. opened at 7.15 pm, Tuesday, 3 March 1998, with 27 members present. Apologies from Carey Martin, Robert Stove, Meredith Hall, Josephine Bastian.

Correspondence

The president tabled correspondence from the Australia Council asking for biennial financial support of \$500 for continuance of the Beatrice Davis Fellowship. Joe Beaumont put the motion to accept the request. John Fleming seconded. Passed.

Minutes

Minutes of last year's AGM tabled. Isabel Partridge put the motion to accept. Kylie Lawson seconded. Passed.

1997 reports

It was noted that reports on the society's activities during 1997, and the financial situation as of 31 December 1997, had been published in the March issue of *Blue Pencil*.

Bruce Howarth put the motion to accept the reports. Jo Healy-North seconded. Passed. Discussion followed.

Meeting costs: These were discussed with reference to the financial reports, noting that fees had remained the same for many years while costs had increased. Bruce Howarth put the motion to increase meeting fees to \$12 for members and \$15 for non-members. Joe Beaumont seconded. Passed.

Accreditation issues: It was felt that one of the meetings during the year should be devoted to discussion of this issue, but that background material should be published in *Blue Pencil* prior to this meeting to encourage informed debate. Juliet Sheen moved that an accreditation subcommittee be formed to investigate problems, options, models, etc. and report back to main committee and membership. Robin Appleton seconded. Passed.

Register of Editorial Services: There was discussion about whether or not the register should be published every two years, with an update in intervening years. It was decided to publish the 1998 edition as normal, spend more time and money promoting it, and reassess the results next year. Jo Healy-North moved that the 1998 committee should report to the membership within three months on a plan to promote the register, including how much establishing a database would cost, and what the time frame to create it would be. Isabel Partridge seconded. Passed.

Other ideas were put forward for promoting the society and the use of editorial services generally. It was decided to investigate the possibility of sponsoring a session at the May Sydney Writers' Festival (or being involved in some other way), as well as at the NSW Writers' Centre Spring Festival. It was suggested that the committee investigate Society of Editors T-shirts that people staffing booths could wear.

Thanks

The president thanked the 1997 committee for their hard work during the year. She felt the society owed particular thanks to Michael Giffin and Robin Appleton, who were not standing for the 1998 committee. Their contributions had been substantial and the society had benefited from their energy,

enthusiasm and experience in innumerable ways. Those in attendance concurred with applause.

Election of the 1998 committee

The four specified office bearers are:

President	Catherine Gray
Vice President	John Fleming
Secretary	Tim Badgery-Parker
Treasurer	Alicia Thompson

The non-specified office bearers are:

Membership Secretary	Rhana Pike
Newsletter Editor	Merry Pearson
Newsletter Assistant	Kylie Lawson
Publicity Officer	Terry Johnston
Catering Officers	Carey Martin (wine) Merry Pearson (food)
Website development	Julian McAllan Jean Weber
Unattached	Catherine Hockings Isabel Partridge Robert Stove

General business

It was agreed that the society would sponsor a prize for a student in the Graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing course at Macquarie University, worth \$250 plus one year free membership. Details are to be worked out by the committee with the course convenor, Pam Peters.

It was noted that the second issue of the national magazine *The Australian Editor* was still due to be published and would be sent free to all members of the state societies. This would be the last 'free trial' issue. Regarding future funding of the magazine, various points were made:

- Simply adding the cost of a subscription to the state society's membership dues may not be a good idea;
- 'Value for money' was hard to assess without seeing how the magazine was going to develop under a new editor (yet to be appointed);
- The future value and viability of a national magazine may be related to the existence or otherwise of a national body.

The committee will keep the membership informed of developments and ensure that some feedback on the magazine's future would be solicited with publication of the next issue.

Michael Giffin, Secretary (1997)

New members

A warm welcome to all those who joined the society from 6 February to 18 March:

Virginia Savickis, Jane Inglis, Liina Meiusi,
Peter Fuller, Linda Farrell, Anna Sukas and
Margaret Glowacki

And welcome back to:

Jo Avigdor and Penny Martin

Accreditation for science editors

The Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) in the United States has developed a process for testing and evaluating proficiency in editing in the life sciences. It provides an opportunity for editors to obtain a certification that attests to their ability to edit scientific material. The aims of this certification are:

- to provide qualified manuscript editors in the life sciences with a way to demonstrate their editorial proficiency;
- to provide employers and clients of manuscript editors in the life sciences with a way to identify proficient editors; and
- to establish a standard of proficiency for editing in the life sciences.

There are two stages of assessment: the first is for certification, and the second is for diplomate status. They focus on the principles and practices of scientific editing in English.

You don't need to have an academic background in science, although you do need experience in editing scientific material. Many general editors have taken the exam and passed it.

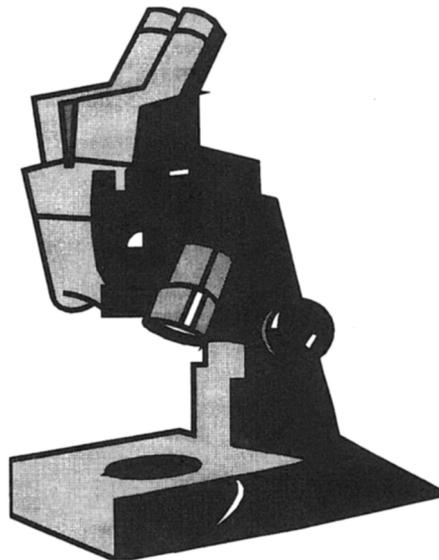
Currently, there are a few hundred certified members, but the number is growing rapidly as this qualification becomes better known. Those who pass the first examination are designated editors in the life sciences and may use the letters *ELS* after their names.

Members of BELS receive and can contribute to a newsletter (aptly named BELS Letter) and join an Internet mailing list, which includes notices of job vacancies around the world, most, unfortunately for us, in the United States.

Eligibility and registration

To be eligible for the certification exam, you must have a bachelor's degree and at least two years of experience as a manuscript editor in the life sciences. Some substitution of education and experience is allowed.

To register, submit your academic tran-



script, CV and three letters attesting to your editing experience to the board. When this has been approved, your registration lasts for three years, during which time you may apply for any of the scheduled examinations.

Australian examination

For the first time, the board has agreed to hold a certification examination in Australia. We have not set a date as yet, and whether it goes ahead at all depends on the number of people applying. BELS will undertake to hold an exam if we have 10 candidates, although it might go ahead with fewer. If there are not enough candidates, we will postpone it until next year and in the meantime try to recruit more people.

The examination will be held in Sydney in a central location on a Saturday. Registration costs US\$25 and the examination costs US\$100.

Further information

To find out more, you can contact me by e-mail at rhanap@ozemail.com.au; by phone at (02) 9569 7831; or by mail at GPO Box 574, Sydney 2001. I'm happy to talk about it. I expect to have a supply of information booklets and application forms by early April.

Rhana Pike, ELS

Former AGPS is now known as AusInfo

When Lindsay Mackerras spoke at the society's October 1998 meeting, she told those assembled that the Australian Government Publishing Service logo and acronym had been sold to a consortium of Canberra printers. She said a name change was in the works for that department, but didn't know yet what it would be. We now have the following information from the former AGPS:

Ausinfo is a newly established agency within the Department of Finance and Administration. AusInfo's primary role is to disseminate government information. AusInfo also advises on style and standards as they relate to Commonwealth documents and

facilitates on-line access to government information.

AusInfo's operations are divided into four areas:

- Policy and Corporate Relations;
- Advice and Education;
- Information Management; and
- Information Access.

The Advice and Education Section's role is to build and maintain relationships with author agencies and to ensure that they are aware of and satisfy their obligations regarding information distribution, access and consistency.

In addition to providing individual advisory support, the education program is designed primarily for Commonwealth officers with publishing and information

management responsibilities in either print or electronic formats. The program contributes to professional development by increasing awareness and understanding of government information access responsibilities, giving key advice to achieve consistency, and building practical skills in the application of style and standards.

Lindsay is assistant director of the Advice and Education Section and is still editor of the Style Manual. You can reach her on (02) 6295 4719, fax (02) 6295 4176, or by e-mail at lindsay.mackerras@dofa.gov.au The section's homepage is found at: <http://www.agps.gov.au/whatsnew/seminar.htm>

AFR taken to task for sexism

Dear editor:

The following letter which was published in the *Australian Financial Review*, 30 January 1998, may be of interest to some members:

'So, sexist editors are alive and well and thriving in the *AFR*. The caption beneath the photo of two women having a discussion at a political conference in Hobart (Rear Window, 20 January)—one a former premier of Victoria and the other a former leader of the Democrats who many regard as a possible future prime minister—stated that the former was giving the latter girl a lesson in how to accessorise for the conference. The heading of the caption was "View from Abroad".

'Needless to say, neither woman was given the courtesy of an honorific. In contrast, in the captions of 18 other photos in the same issue, 13 men were referred to as Mr (including three politicians at the same conference); four men were referred to, respectively, as Reverend, Dr, Professor and Sir; one woman was referred to as Ms; and only four men (two of whom were Asian political leaders) were not conferred with an honorific in the caption but were in the associated article.

'No man was lampooned in the captions—not even the man apparently engrossed with the rear end of a horse.

'Do *AFR* readers believe that it is good marketing to denigrate women, especially successful leaders? Is the alienation of female readers part of the *AFR*'s strategic plan and, if so, when does it intend to inform its shareholders?'

*Dr Vere Drakeford
McMahons Point NSW*

In reproducing the letter in *WEL-Informed*, newsletter of the Women's Electoral Lobby (NSW), the editor, Jane Gardiner, added the following footnote:

'The *AFR* could take a leaf or two out of the new style book just put out by its fellow Fairfax publication, the *Sydney Morning Herald*. "The *Herald*'s read-

ers are not predominantly male", the book instructs its editors, "and we should not give the impression that they are. We should not use such descriptions as woman doctor, woman architect or woman pilot as if the very fact was a cause for wonder. On the other hand, readers are interested in people, and we should not turn those we write about into neuters. There is no objection to spokeswoman or chairwoman. Do not use the

word girl when the correct word is woman. Do not use poetess, authoress or editress, although some -ess words are in common use: headmistress, actress (although actor is increasingly used to include female thespians), governess, hostess, abbess, duchess." '

From *WEL-Informed*, Issue 286, February 1998.

Catherine Hockings

Writer struck by near-miss

Dear editor:

I have for some time shared Bob Pearson's curiosity about 'backflip'. But the term which strikes me more often is 'near miss'—usually in relation to traffic, aircraft and so on—when logically it should be 'near-hit', shouldn't it?



Jean Cooney

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007; Voicemail: (02) 9294 4999

Membership

Membership of the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. is open to anyone working as an editor in the print media, and anyone who supports the society's aims.

Membership runs for a calendar year. 1998 fees are \$45 for new members (\$25 if joining after 30 June) and \$40 for renewals.

For a membership application form, phone (02) 9294 4999, or write to PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007.

Blue Pencil

The society's newsletter, *Blue Pencil*, is published monthly, except for a combined January/February issue. We welcome your comments and contributions. Please mail them to Merry Pearson at 55 Collins St., North Narrabeen, NSW 2101, or fax or e-mail them to her as per the committee list on the back page.

Deadline for the May issue is Monday 13 April.

Committee meetings

All members are welcome to attend the society's committee meetings. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 15 April at 6 pm at the Graphic Arts Club, 12-26 Regent Street, Sydney. You are also welcome to join those committee members who stay on to enjoy a fine Chinese meal.

1998 COMMITTEE

President: Catherine Gray

Phone/fax : (02) 9130 8331 (w & h)

E-mail: cgray@mpx.com.au

Vice President: John Fleming

Phone: (02) 9529 8638 (w & h)

Fax: (02) 9529 9764

Secretary: Tim Badgery-Parker

Phone: (02) 9518 7225 (h)

(02) 9954 8645 (w)

Fax: (02) 9954 8699 (w)

E-mail: timbp@rpi.net.au

Membership Secretary: Rhana Pike

Phone: (02) 9569 7831 (h)

Fax: (02) 9569 1641 (h)

E-mail: rhanap@ozemail.com.au

Treasurer: Alicia Thompson

Phone: (02) 9909 3346 (w & h)

Catering:

Merry Pearson (food, see newsletter editor)

Carey Martin (wine)

Phone: (02) 9816 3684 (h)

E-mail: cmartin@brw.fairfax.com.au

Newsletter Editor: Merry Pearson

Phone/fax: (02) 9913 7799 (w & h)

E-mail: mmripear@ozemail.com.au

Newsletter Assistant: Kylie Lowson

Phone: (02) 9560 5636 (h)

(02) 9518 6777 (w)

Fax: (02) 9518 6888 (w)

E-mail: k_lowson@hotmail.com

Publicity Officer: Terry Johnston

Phone/fax: (02) 9337 4126 (w & h)

Website Development:

Jean Weber

Phone: (02) 9809 4610 (w & h)

Fax: (02) 9809 0323

E-mail: jean_weber@compuserve.com

Julian McAllan

Phone/fax: (02) 9972 7030 (w & h)

E-mail: sciencedesk@msn.com

General Members:

Catherine Hockings

Phone/fax: (02) 9568 2618 (w & h)

E-mail: chocki01@postoffice.csu.edu.au

Isabel Partridge

Phone: (02) 9544 4389

Fax: (02) 9544 4398

E-mail: bigpic@bigpond.com.au

Robert Stove

Phone: (02) 9953 2614 (h)

(02) 9929 0099 (w)

Fax: (02) 9264 3906

E-mail: rjstove@acay.com.au

NOTICE BOARD

Scientific and technical editing

The Society of Editors (NSW) will present a day-long workshop on scientific and technical editing on Saturday, 16 May from 9 am to 5 pm at the State Library of New South Wales. In shaping the workshop, we have attempted to respond to comments made by those who attended the 1997 workshop. Generally, you wanted to explore tables and figures in more depth, and to cover some more specialised, advanced skills. This is what we've come up with:

- Writing and editing technical and abstract language, presented by Robert Veel, BA DipEd, MEd, editor and language education consultant
- Tables in scientific publications, presented by Greg Heard, BScAgr(Hons), PhD, consultant in biomedical, scientific and technical communication
- Figures in scientific publications, presented by Rhana Pike, MA, ELS, freelance scientific editor
- Substantive editing, presented by Matthew Stevens, BScAgr, MAppSci, MAIAST, CPAg, freelance scientific editor

The cost is \$75 for members and \$90 for others and includes lunch and morning and afternoon tea. Use the enclosed form to book by Friday 8 May. For more information contact Rhana Pike on (02) 9569 7831, fax (02) 9569 1641, email rhanap@ozemail.com.au

1998 register

The society's *Register of Editorial Services 1998* is here! If you're in it, you've probably already received your copy. If you want to order one, use the enclosed order form.

In accordance with the wishes expressed by members at the annual general meeting, a subcommittee has been formed to look at how to market the register more widely. Subcommittee members are Cathy Gray, Catherine Hockings, Terry Johnston and Merry Pearson. General members are welcome to join the subcommittee or to contribute ideas and suggestions. (See contact details at left.)

Introduction to structural editing

A seminar introducing the elements of structural editing and covering relatively complex copyediting exercises will be given by the Australian Publishers Association on Wednesday 22 April. The presenter will be Jacqueline Kent, an experienced editor, lecturer in publishing and Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship recipient. The workshop-based seminar emphasising the practical aspects of editing will be held at the Lawson Hotel in Bulwara Road, Ultimo, from 8.30 am to 5.15 pm. The cost is \$275 for APA, Society of Editors, Galley Club and WiP members and \$320 for others. For further information, contact Meredith Hall at (02) 9281 9788, fax (02) 9281 1073, or e-mail mhallapa@publisheraust.net.au

Freelancers' lunch

Women in Publishing will hold a freelancers' lunch on Friday 24 April at the Marigold Restaurant, George Street. You are invited to enjoy a yum cha lunch and meet other freelancers to discuss such topics as how to charge and how to quote. Maggie Aldhamland, a successful freelance editor in both the UK and Sydney, will give practical tips and talk about how she finds herself in the position of sometimes having to turn work away. For bookings and enquiries, contact Maggie Way at (02) 9954 1438 or e-mail waym@oup.com.au