

# Blue Pencil

**Newsletter of the Society of Editors (NSW)**

**ISSN 1030-2557**

**April 1991**

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**Next meeting 7 May 1991**

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## **New awards for book editors**

The Australian Journalists Association has recently negotiated a new agreement with book publishers, and a new award for editors is now in effect. The award provides for professional salary levels, a classification structure for pay rates, and a career path for editors linked with training-based promotion.

Jacqueline Park, Federal Industrial Officer, AJA, will speak on this new award and about training for editors at our next meeting on Tuesday, 7 May. Jacqueline, together with Paul Murphy, AJA (NSW Branch) Industrial Officer, will answer your questions about these important developments.

**This is of vital interest to all editors - make sure you attend!**

**When:** Tuesday, 7 May 1991 at 6.30 pm.

**Where:** The Bowlers Club, 95 York Street (across from the York Street Entrance to BBC Hardware). Parking is available under the Bowlers Club at a cost of \$5. The carpark entrance is in Clarence Street.

**Cost:** Wine, soft drinks and Chinese finger food will be served.  
\$5 for members; \$10 for non-members and members who do not book by May 3.

**RSVP:** Friday, May 3 to Jo Avidgor - phone 289 7723.

**\*The Society books and pays for catering for all those who say they are going; if you can't make it, please let us know! Thank you.**

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## Annual General Meeting

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### 1991 Committee

At the Annual General Meeting, 5 March 1991, after much persuasion and light coercion, a new committee of seven members emerged (see below) - we hope you come along to the Society meetings and get to know us. Preceding the AGM was an entertaining talk on the early days of the Society given by Jacki Kent, past president.

We would like to give a huge thank you to the 1990 Committee: Kim Anderson, Jeane Balcombe, Garry Cousins, Lesley Dow, Valerie Marlborough and Kathy Metcalfe for all their efforts in running the Society. Special thanks to Michael Wyatt, who has kindly agreed to continue as President for six months.

### Society of Editors (NSW) Committee 1991

<b>Michael Wyatt</b>	<b>President</b> Ph 281 0460 - Keyword Editorial Services
<b>Jo Avigdor</b>	<b>Training and Freelance Co-ordinator</b> Ph 289 7723 - Dept of Technical & Further Education
<b>Derek Barton</b>	<b>Membership</b> Ph 929 5677 - Weldon Owen
<b>Janine Flew</b>	<b>Publicity, Catering and Library</b> Ph 887 0177 - Law Book Company
<b>Shalom Paul</b>	<b>Administration</b> Ph 264 3299 - Australian Federation of Travel Agents
<b>Sharon Paull</b>	<b>Newsletter</b> Ph 344 5691 - Editorial Connection
<b>Pamela Smith</b>	<b>Treasurer</b> Ph 887 0177 - Law Book Company

Anyone wishing to know more about the Society may write to PO Box 254, Broadway 2007 or telephone 901 9033 and leave a message. Members are welcome to call committee members.

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## Diploma in Editing and Publishing

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At the Society's April meeting, Pam Peters presented a very interesting and lively discussion on the Graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing at Macquarie University. Pam is a senior lecturer in Linguistics at Macquarie with active research interests in editorial style; she is on the editorial committee of the Macquarie Dictionary and has contributed to the *AGPS Style Manual*.

The course began in 1989, and 1991 has seen its second student intake. The aim of the course is to professionalise the existing editorial skills of the students. As it is only open to people who have three to four years' experience in publishing, students already have skills and practical knowledge from their own work. This knowledge is, however, often fairly specialised. The course is designed to widen the knowledge of publishing practices and increase awareness of editorial skills and how to deploy them. It also develops students' critical skills and encourages them to analyse their reasons for making certain editorial decisions.

The course is run over two years with four hours of classes per week. The classes are held in the evenings as the course is designed for working people.

The structure is approximately 50% editing and 50% production and publishing. There are elective options in the second year, and one week's practical

experience in a publishing house. Students are encouraged to choose a publishing house that is very different from their own. Placements are available in Brisbane, Melbourne and Canberra as well as in Sydney.

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The practical experience is designed to broaden each student's experience of the publishing world as a whole. People from small houses are sent to large ones and may see for the first time how a multinational company works. Students often glimpse new technology, such as desktop publishing, through the work experience, and while a week is too short a time to learn in depth, it allows them to see how such technology is applied.

The course attracts a mixture of students: most have editorial backgrounds, but some work in production and graphics, whilst others are in marketing and sales.

The teaching is an even combination of industry practitioners and university staff. Each industry practitioner brings a specialised knowledge of a particular area, but collectively they represent a wide range of publishing. There are also magazine contributors who have a lot to

teach about production and market research, and at least one speaker from the newspaper industry. Others include representatives from the retail trade, both from large chains of bookshops, such as Dymocks, and from smaller independent bookshops.

The course also examines the latest research findings in areas such as economics, linguistics and cognitive psychology. Editorial tradition is another topic - there are many points in editorial practice that cause controversy such as hyphenation and the use of capitals.

By drawing attention to editorial problems in a broader context, the course aims to increase students' appreciation of

editing as a craft, to acquaint them with technology, to demonstrate that both technology and style are dynamic rather than static, and to make students aware of editorial choices and to be able to justify their reasons for stylistic decisions. It also helps them make contacts and widen their acquaintance of the publishing industry.

Following Pam's talk was a lively discussion on editorial style and the significance of 'academic' research to practical editing. Many members felt that research findings would be highly valuable in supporting stylistic decisions.

**Janine Flew**

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### **Book list for editors**

A reference book list for editors has been developed by the Society of Freelance Editors and Proofreaders (UK) using contributions from society members.

The principle is that if a book is listed it is recommended, although opinion is divided about one or two (e.g. Fowler's *Modern English Usage*).

For interested members there is a copy of the list available from our library.

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### **State Print seminars on writing and editing (SA)**

State Print's editorial manager, Jenny Walker, will be conducting a series of seminars for all interested persons:

- Basic grammar, spelling, punctuation and letter writing  
29 May and 13 August
- Basic editing techniques  
19 June and 30 July
- Report writing and advanced editing techniques  
2 July

#### *Information:*

Fran Brixius on (08) 226 4672 or fax  
(08) 226 4726

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## March meeting (Annual General Meeting)

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### The early days of the Society

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The Society's guest speaker at the March meeting was Jacqui Kent, a well-known editor and writer, and a founding member of the Society of Editors (NSW). Jacqui spoke to us about the early days of the Society, greatly entertaining us with her revelations and anecdotes.

The Society was largely the brain-child of Bruce Champion, and held its first meeting in March 1980. Barbara Carr-Wilson (first president), George Morrison (first treasurer) and Jacqui (first secretary) were also instrumental in establishing the new society, which was initially known as 'The Editors'.

In those days, rivalry with the Victorian society was almost fierce, and the choice of a name other than the 'Society of Editors (NSW)' reflected the fledgling group's desire to be seen as independent from the Victorian society. This caused considerable resentment in the Victorian society, and relations between the two societies seem to have smouldered for some time.

The Editors held its first meeting in a restaurant amid great enthusiasm, and thereafter moved to the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, where it continued to meet until 1990. In those days, it was really the only society for editors and its establishment coincided with a boom in the publishing industry. Early meetings were well attended and discussions were passionate.

Great controversy surrounded the drawing-up of the Society's charter, particularly concerning affiliation with trade unions. Those not in favour of unionization prevailed.

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The industry perception of editing was very different from today: editing was seen as a 'nice change' for librarians or school teachers, or as a 'nice thing for ladies to do'.

#### Early meetings

The early meetings of the Society reflected social and technological mores which have changed considerably since that time. Jacqui gave several instances of these.

At one meeting Michelle Field, a past literary editor of The Sydney Morning Herald, caused a scandal by announcing that it was part of her job to sell the newspaper. One editor was so outraged by this that he claimed Michelle was unfit to be a literary editor - he had to be ejected from the meeting for obstreperous behaviour.

At another meeting Beatrice Davis also caused a stir by announcing that she

would, for the sake of convenience, refer to editors in her talk as 'he'. She was unfazed when feminists in the audience pointed out that the overwhelming majority of editors were women.

### **Technological changes**

Jacqui also pointed out the the technical process of editing has changed dramatically. With the advent of word processors, authors have become more inclined to consider their initial submission as a first draft.

### **Going freelance**

Freelance editors were a much rarer breed in the early 1980s, and those brave enough to make the move to freelance work were regarded with awe. Generally, rates for freelance editing were agreed upon by word of mouth, and as the number of freelance editors was small enough for them to keep in touch with one another this seemed to work well.

**Garry Cousins**

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### **A celebration of women as writers and readers**

The second Australian Feminist Book Fortnight will be held this year on 6-22 September. The AFBF seeks to foster interest in and knowledge of women's books in Australia.

There will be a national promotion of feminist literary events around the country, including capital cities and regional and rural centres. The AFBF would particularly like young people and schools to participate in this year's events. There are many ways of getting involved, especially for teachers and librarians.

#### *Information:*

AFBF National Co-ordinator  
308 Victoria Street  
Brunswick VIC 3056

Ph: (03) 387 7436 Fax: (03) 387 1249

### **Proceedings: expressions of interest**

The NSW Society for Technical Communication is holding a two-day seminar on 19-20 October 1991. An editor is required to compile and produce the seminar Proceedings. There will be approximately 18 papers. Speakers are being requested to provide their papers in both disk and manuscript form; however, not all speakers comply with the request.

#### *Information (and/or sample of previous Proceedings):*

Jean Weber  
7 Nicholl Avenue  
Ryde NSW 2112  
Ph: 809 4610 (6-9.30 pm. weekdays)

#### *Expressions of interest should be sent by 1 June 1991 to:*

Seminar Sub-committee  
NSW Society for Technical  
Communication  
PO Box R812,  
Royal Exchange, NSW 2001

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## Editors' societies around Australia

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### Victoria

The February newsletter of The Society of Editors (Victoria) contains a report on Tom Shapcott's talk in November.

The guest speaker at the February meeting was Peter Pearce a distinguished writer and academic, author of *The Oxford Literary Guide to Australia* and fellow of the National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University. The subject was making a living from freelance writing.

A printing workshop will be held on 25 May 1991, which will include a tour of Globe Press, Brunswick and lectures at Trinity College, Parkville.

### South Australia

The Society of Editors (SA) February newsletter (...*the word*) has a report on the talk given by Christobel Mattingley, Australian writer for young people, at the December meeting.

At the February meeting, George Turner, editor of the *Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary*, spoke about the kinds of decisions that dictionary editors have to make in the compilation process.

The Register of Freelance Publishing Services is now at the printing stage.

### Tasmania

The Society of Editors (Tasmania) is launching its 'Dinners with a difference' by a workshop on writing on 24 April. These meetings take place midweek and are designed to take attendees through every stage of communication from getting original concepts on paper to laying out a finished product.

'Dinners with a difference' program:

- Writing: 24 April
- Copy editing: 22 May
- Techniques for proof readers: ?June
- Preparing copy for electronic typesetting: ?July

Guest speaker at the February meeting was Geoffrey Lea, photographer and publisher of The Picture Company.

### Queensland

The Society of Editors (Queensland) is 'truly up and running': it has 90 members, is considering a membership drive, and has started a freelance register.

It is planned to have about 10 newsletter issues per year. The name of the newsletter '*Offpress*' was explained in the March newsletter (for the benefit of southern readers who seem unfamiliar with the expression) as 'that wonderful moment when the publication on which you have been working ... is finally *off press*, published in all its glory'.

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## **Important message to freelance editors**

The AJA is currently preparing a submission for the introduction of award rates for freelance editors. For Society of Editors (NSW) members to be able to contribute, the Society will be direct mailing a questionnaire to all our freelance members.

The questionnaire will seek information, in confidence, on expenditure, income, hours worked and, in particular, non-chargeable hours worked.

Please complete and return the questionnaire to the Society as soon as possible.

## **Varuna - Writers' centre**

Varuna is the former home of Australian writer Eleanor Dark. The house was donated to the Eleanor Dark Foundation Ltd for use as a writers' centre.

Varuna is described as a large comfortable house situated on two acres of established gardens in Katoomba. It offers a writers' retreat where writers may take up residence from three weeks to three months to work intensively on a project. As a writers' centre it offers workshops, seminars and readings.

Applications for Fellowships for residencies at Varuna close 30 April.

### *Information:*

The Eleanor Dark Foundation Ltd  
141 Cascade Street  
Katoomba NSW 2780

Ph: (047) 825 674 (Wed-Fri)

## **Future meetings**

Meetings of the Society are held on the first Tuesday of the month.

- Business management for editors (tax returns, costings etc.)
- Careers in publishing and editing
- How to freelance successfully
- The latest in software packages for editors and publishers
- Layout and design - panel of guest speakers