

Blue Pencil

Newsletter of
the Society
of Editors
(NSW)

Patron: Hazel Hawke

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AUGUST 1995

CREATING THE WRITE IMPRESSION

Members who missed the June meeting of the society also missed an opportunity to take stock of the professional skills they can provide for their clients and to assess how best they can market their services.

Led by marketing consultant Camille Abbott, members and visitors set about identifying the benefits that editors provide for clients, defining what are 'good' and 'not so good' jobs, identifying what our individual market may be, and considering how to expand our client base.

The meeting decided that we save authors embarrassment; assist them to understand their readership; give structure to their text and lift its literary level, and indirectly, increase their sales and their royalties.

Readers benefit from the accuracy, conciseness and readability we bring to the text and the enjoyment and use we enable them to get from the text.

Apart from the more obvious tasks of structuring and correcting copy, our long list of the benefits we bring to publishers included: providing a legal security check of the text; acting as a representative of the potential reader; increasing the sales potential of a book -- making it more saleable; and increasing the publicity potential of the product.

We then recalled the features that we liked or disliked about recent jobs and compiled a list of good and no-so-good features of

both jobs and clients. Features such as a clear and complete brief, a realistic time-frame, contact with the author, serious consideration of the editor's comments, and prompt payment were common to most of our lists.

Putting these activities together the meeting came up with the following strategy for marketing yourself to the best advantage:

- * establish in your own mind the benefits and individual skills that you can provide for clients, the value you can add to a publishing project
- * identify your individual niche in the overall editing market
- * write your own definition of a 'good' job
- * classify your existing clients, into good ones (those from whom

you receive good jobs) and not-so-good ones

- * cultivate the good clients
- * make known your skills to other potential clients needing your niche services.

As a group, we editors have a clear understanding of what we do and how valuable it is to others in the publishing industry, but we appear to have some difficulty expressing this to others. As a result of the workshop and as a first step towards making our importance clear throughout the industry, the committee has taken on the task of producing a document that outlines the important functions of editors in the publishing process. A draft of this document will be published in *Blue Pencil* to give members the opportunity to comment on it.

Next meeting: Tuesday 1 August 1995

NEGOTIATING A BRIEF

A joint function with the Society of Indexers, this meeting will be a workshop to explore ways to ensure clear and complete client briefs. Come and help develop some negotiating guidelines for editors and indexers.

Arrive at 6.30 p.m. for the meeting at 7.00 p.m. in the Rooftop Function Centre, 4th Floor, Australian Museum. Enter from William Street. We'll provide drinks and light food. **Call Robin Appleton on (02) 560 1017 by 30 July to book.**

Members \$10; non-members and those who forget to notify us before the RSVP date, \$12.

TO TALK OF...seeing you and your friends at the workshop on:

NEGOTIATING A BRIEF

Negotiating (adapted from *Macquarie Dictionary*) 'arranging for or bringing about or discussion and settlement of terms'.

Brief (ibid.) 'a short concise writing or statement'.

Some people in publishing might not question another definition of brief (ibid.) 'of little duration', when they think of some of the briefs they have received from publishers. Using few words can be a skill but it can lead to time wasted if not enough information has been given.

On referring to the *AGPS Style Manual I* found an entry for briefs in the index but only for designers, illustrators, and indexers. Maybe the next edition will include briefs for editors?

The August society meeting will be a workshop. Everyone will have a chance to contribute their knowledge (as suppliers or recipients of briefs), experiences, expectations, and misadventures, and to comment on their negotiations with publishing staff about briefs. Everyone, visitors as well, can add to our knowledge. This is your chance to air your views and needs.

From the workshop the society committee hopes to develop an editors' general checklist of what tasks editors expect to have been completed in-house and of what editors require in briefs. Such a checklist could be circulated to ABPA members. Maybe then editors will receive typescripts which are paginated and for which rights and permissions are complete and captions have been written (or at least some indication as to where illustrated material is to fall is included in the work). Each brief varies according to the task and features will need to be added or

amended for each specific project.

The workshop is for in-house and freelance people. There are two sides to every story and freelancers need to be heard by in-house people and also need to hear the in-house story. In-house staff need briefs too.

Each production person in publishing needs clear-cut instructions of their duties to produce the best work possible, efficiently, within the time constraints and budget. A good brief can help this become a reality

Robin Appleton

COMMITTEE AFFAIRS

Meeting quorum

Members will recall that at the AGM in February, the meeting set the committee the task of conducting a postal vote on the matter of changing the quorum for meetings. The voting material will be enclosed with the next (September) issue of *Blue Pencil*.

Task groups

The committee is addressing a number of society matters, allocating each to a member of the committee to proceed with personally or by convening a small group of members.

The tasks and convenors are:

To produce the 1996 *Register* . . .

Catherine Gray

To report on incorporation of the society John Fleming

To draft a statement of the role of the editor Robin Appleton

To draft the 'for' and 'against' cases for changing the quorum for society meetings Michael Giffin

Each of the convenors would welcome volunteers from the membership to assist with these tasks.

The 1996 committee

Now is the time to start thinking about your commitment to the society in 1996. Not all of the

committee members will be standing for the positions they now hold, so the society will need others to take their places.

Committee work is not onerous if it is shared and the society constitution allows the committee to co-opt an unlimited number of members. If you can do one small but significant job well for the society next year, you should speak up and be nominated as a committee member. You don't have to be the president to organise one meeting, don't have to be the secretary to draft discussion documents, don't have to be editor to make a major contribution to the newsletter. Think about what you will be doing in 1996 and think about standing for the committee or letting us know that you can be approached to help with specific tasks that might arise.

MEETINGS TO COME

1 August Negotiating a Brief
A workshop to explore ways to ensure clear and complete client briefs.

5 September
Punctuation & the Editor
Yes, another workshop, to look at the vexed question of where to put those marks.

3 October & 7 November
We're working on it!

5 December Christmas Dinner
6 February 1996 AGM

GET WELL, GARY

Former *Blue Pencil* editor and committee member, Gary Hayes, is recovering from a recent, major heart operation. We have missed his cheerful presence at meetings and look forward to seeing him as soon as he can join us.

Our best wishes to you, Gary, for a speedy recovery.

BULLETIN BOARD

ABPA Training Seminars

The 1995 calendar of the Australian Book Publishers Association one-day and twilight (4pm to 8pm) training seminars can be obtained from Robyn Lowe on (02) 281 9788.

The Sydney seminars for July to September are:

- Monday 31 July twilight
Building a List
- Wednesday 2 August . . . twilight
Introduction to Publishing
- Thursday 10 August . . . twilight
Editors and Designers
- Monday 28 August twilight
Schools Publishing
- Friday 8 September . . . one-day
Sales and Marketing.
- Wednesday 4 October . . twilight
Business Skills for Small Publishers
- Wednesday 25 October . twilight
Job-sharing
- Wednesday 1 November twilight
Introduction to Production
- Monday 13 November . . one-day
Direct Marketing

Society Weekend Workshops

Scientific and Technical Editing

Saturday 23 September at the NSW Writers' Centre, Rozelle Hospital Grounds, Balmain road, Rozelle, , 9.30am -4.30pm.

Traditional Grammar

4 November at the NSW Writers' Centre. Watch *BP* for details.

Note: The Punctuation workshop listed in the last newsletter will be conducted at the September society meeting. It is not a weekend workshop.

Spring Writing Festival

Don't miss it, the Spring Writing Festival at the NSW Writers' Centre in the Rozelle Hospital grounds, Rozelle, on **Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 September.**

The society will have space on one of the stalls to bring our activities to the notice of the many writers and members of the public who will attend. Put the dates in your diary now, come and participate in the sessions, and give some of your time to staffing the society stand. Let Robin Appleton know (560 1017) when you will be going to the fair and when you could spend some of the time on the society stall.

WiP Training Program for 1995

Women in Publishing welcomes all women working in publishing or related fields to its training program for 1995. Topics that will be dealt with are:

- Publishing for the Young Adult 8 August
- Freelancing 18 Sept
- Negotiation in Publishing 10 Oct
- Finance 8 November

For details of times, locations, and costs, write to:

Women in Publishing
PO Box 1515
North Sydney NSW 2059.

Beatrice Davis Award

The society congratulates Bryony Cosgrove of Penguin (Melbourne) who is the recipient of the 1995 Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship.

Register of Editorial Services 1996

A task group of the society committee is being convened by Catherine Gray to produce the 1996 edition of the society's *Editorial Services Register*.

Watch the next issue of *Blue Pencil* for details of how to apply for listing in the register.

Publishing and Editing Seminars

Robin Appleton will again present her Publishing and Editing Seminar Series at the NSW Writers' Centre, Rozelle Hospital Grounds, Balmain Road, Rozelle.

The intensive six-day series of seminars will be held from 9.30am to 5.00pm on three successive weekends: 7 & 8 October, 14 & 15 October, and 21 & 22 October.

The course has been designed to meet the requirements for a structured program as provided under the Training Guarantee (Administration) Act 1990.

For further details contact the Writers' Centre, phone (02) 555 9757 or fax (02) 818 1327.

Society Annual Dinner

Write it in your diary now:

- * Tuesday 5 December
- * Emad's, Cleveland Street (near Elizabeth Street), Surry Hills
- * \$25 per head
- * BYO.

Watch *Blue Pencil* for further details.

MORE BULLETINS...

Member Feedback

A feedback sheet has been included with this newsletter for recent and not-so-recent members to let us know about themselves and their expectations of the society. If you have not sent us a feedback sheet at some time during 1995, please complete this one and post it to the society or, better still, bring it to the next meeting. Thanks.

HQ/Dymocks Short Story Contest

The HQ/Dymocks Short Story Contest will be held again this year. The contest is for any story of less than 3500 words that has not been previously published in any form.

First prize is \$5 000 cash plus publication of the story in the Australian magazine for men and women, *HQ*. The six runners-up will receive a \$50 book token from Dymocks and a gold-nibbed fountain pen valued at \$275 from Waterman.

Anyone who has not had a novel published by the contest closing date can enter

To enter, complete the entry form in the July/August or September/October issues of *HQ Magazine*. There is no limit on entries, but an original entry form must accompany each entry. Entries close on 16 October 1995.

For further details contact Sara Burns on (02) 282 8267.

Freelancers

Engineering and Sciences are two areas UNSW Press will be publishing. Diane Quick, (02) 398 4982 is the contact if you have special experience in these subjects

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

A Tip For the Internet

Joseph Beaumont, in his 'Notes from the Net', in the July issue, mentioned that he had not been able to find editors' groups yet.

For Joseph and others of you who are interested in communicating with editors around the world (with an American bent), I recommend Copyediting-L. It provides discussion on usage, grammar and style, freelance issues, negotiation, specialised editing, advice about books and other resources, and occasional jokes and trivia. It's helpful for those times when you need an answer that can't be found in your reference library and when there is no-one to ask; the worldwide panel out there is eager to offer advice and opinions.

To get on the list, send a message to

listproc@cornell.edu

containing this single line of text:

SUBSCRIBE COPYEDITING-L.

Rhana Pike

BLUE PENCIL

Copy for *Blue Pencil* and letters to the editor should be posted direct to The Editor, 49 Evans Street, Sans Souci NSW 2219.

It should carry the author's name in the form preferred for publication, telephone number, and fax number, if any.

Printed hard copy (and even legible handwriting) faxed to (02) 529 9764 is acceptable, but is preferred on 3.5" MS DOS compatible disk in unformatted WordPerfect or saved as ASCII (DOS) text. Disks will be returned.

SOCIETY OF EDITORS (NSW)

Membership of the Society of Editors (NSW) is open to any person who is engaged in full- or part-time editing or who is interested in promoting the purposes of the society. They are:

- * to maintain and develop standards of editorial skills;
- * to hold meetings, the purpose of which is to discuss subjects of particular interest to print editors;
- * to promote the exchange and dissemination of information and ideas among print editors.

THE 1995 COMMITTEE

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FEEDBACK

Please take a few minutes to read and fill out this sheet. It is *not* necessary to include your name.

- Are you a publisher's editor? Yes/No (Circle the correct answer.)

In-house (part-time)
In-house (full-time)
Freelance (part-time)
Freelance (full-time)

- How many years have you been in the editing profession? _____

- Have you received or are you currently receiving training? Yes/No

In-house?
Through a college?
Through a university?
Other?

State where, giving contact names and details where possible. Include courses, workshops, and overseas training.

- Did you have to pay for the training or were you funded?

- Did you find the course(s) useful? Yes/No

- Did you need more information? Yes/No

- Do you have specialist knowledge in a field of editing you wish to share with the Society of Editors (NSW)?
Yes/No

If yes, give details.

- Suggest how you would like to see the society help you.

- Do you have suggestions for topics you would like discussed; problems you have with work; workshops you think might benefit you and other members?

•Do you belong to any of the following organisations?

- Australian Book Publishers Association Limited
- Australian Institute of Professional Communicators
- Australian Society of Authors
- Australian Society of Indexers
- Australian Society of Technical Communicators
- The Galley Club
- Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance
- Women in Publishing

List any others:

Hand in this sheet at the next meeting you attend, or send it to the Society of Editors (NSW), PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007. The information is intended to help this and future committees and members provide appropriate speakers and workshops, and to negotiate with training groups.