

# Blue Pencil

Newsletter of  
the Society  
of Editors  
(NSW)

Patron: Hazel Hawke

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DECEMBER 1995

## A RESOURCE

For those enquiries you receive about editing, proofreading, and writers' dilemmas

Members of the Society of Editors (NSW) receive many enquiries re-directed from the Australian Book Publishers Association, the Society of Authors, other allied societies and associations, societies of editors in other states, in-house publishing staff, the NSW Writers' Centre (NSWWC), and from other members of our own society. The samples (given below) of those enquiries reinforce the fact that the society provides an important service to the broader community. Societies of editors in other states and the ACT probably address similar enquiries. Here is a list of comments and questions frequently directed to the society and some suggested responses that might help you deal with those you receive.

**On careers in editing and proofreading, in-house and freelance**

*The hourly rate for editors please, and proofreaders?*

To this frequently asked question, this is often the response:  
Are you from a publishing house?  
*No. I've been asked to edit something for a friend and I need to know the hourly rate. You are an editor then? No. but I know what to do. I've proofread a friend's thesis before.*

The problem is that many such requests indicate the number of people who are 'editing' but are not editors. Seldom is the name given.  
*How do I become an editor or*

*proofreader? Is there in-house training?*

CCH, the Law Book Company, and Butterworths train editors in a six-week course in-house (see also On training, below). Pan Macmillan gives people wishing to proofread a trial run. McGraw-Hill holds examinations for editing and for proofreading before freelancers can receive work for the company.

*I want to leave my present position and I am going to be a freelance editor/proofreader. How much do I charge and how do I get work?*

This question is often accompanied by the comments: 'I am a teacher/legal secretary/public sector employee/ I pick up all the mistakes in everything I read and I know I

would be a good proofreader/ I am a speed reader and want to proofread and edit/ I am a graduate with a major in English/applied linguistics and want to be an editor/ I am a published writer and want to try my hand at editing. To the question, 'What experience do you have?' The answer, frequently, is 'none'.

Other enquirers have found themselves proofreading or 'correcting' other people's writing and grammar for documents in corporate or government sectors.

**On training**

*What training is there in editing/proofreading in New South Wales?*

Very few of these courses are

**Next Meeting: Tuesday 5 December**

**CHRISTMAS DINNER MEETING**

**Emad's Restaurant**

**298 Cleveland Street, Sunny Hills**

**6.30pm for 7.00pm**

**\$25 per head**

**BYO**

**Book NOW by Voicemail (02) 552 0039 if you haven't already. You can pay on the night.**

**Good food, wonderful company,  
and a door prize as well!**

long-term. Participants need practical experience to gain confidence and acquire 'know-how' as well.

- Macleay College course in Book Production and Editing (64 hours)
  - Macquarie University course for people already working in the industry (two-year part-time, evenings)
  - Bill Smith's course in clearer writing (The Australian Institute of Professional Communicators) (5 days)
  - New England University Continuing Education course (3 days)
  - Australian National University Continuing Education course in Sydney (2/3 days)
  - University of Sydney Continuing Education course (weekend)
  - ABPA seminars
  - NSWWC: writing courses; publishing process/principles of editing (42 hours)
  - A proofreading course at Petersham Town Hall (1-day)
  - Fellowship of Australian Writers (FAW) occasional editing courses
  - Arts Training Australia is looking at skill needs in publishing.
- Details of cost, length of course, and applicant's suitability is for the enquirer to pursue. If you do not have the answers to specific questions on training, refer the enquirers to the course organisers or a member of the society's committee.
- Further plans for training editors in Victoria, Queensland, ACT**
- Monash University is introducing a Graduate Diploma of Publishing course (details on p. 5).
  - Griffith University and the Society of Editors (Qld) are working on a course.
  - Canberra University and Canberra Society of Editors are also

working on a course.

- The University of Southern Queensland is offering postgraduate studies in editing and publishing (details on p. 5).
- The RMIT (Vic) course is still available.

If you have more information about courses available or about to become available, please send the information to the editor of *Blue Pencil*.

#### **Job opportunities which arise from enquiries to the society**

Public and private sectors, writers, DTP managers, other editors, and publishing houses (both magazine and book) call the society number asking for long- and short-term contract editors/proofreaders. Some members have been able to take up these positions or pass them on to others.

It is surprising how many organisations refer to the *Register of Editorial Services* or enquire to buy copies. The next edition will be available in early 1996.

#### **What would-be writers ask society members**

*Where can I take courses in writing?*

Ring the ASA, NSWWC, and FAW and ask about courses available.

*How do I 'get' published?*

Go through the procedures and explain that unsolicited MSS are received by the thousands in publishing houses each year but that some publishing houses do assess all MSS received. The ASA has a number of resources on this matter for sale.

*Do I stand a better chance of being published if I use a literary agent?*

Some literary agents do look at work by new writers. It is hit-and-miss.

*What should I send a publisher? All the work, a synopsis and a few chapters?*

Many publishers prefer to have the whole work.

*How do I improve on my work when the publisher indicates that it is 'good' but needs more work? I don't now what to do to meet the publisher's needs and there are no other comments in the letter to guide me.*

Sometimes an editor does look at the MS and possibly do a sample editing job, pointing out weaknesses in plot or grammatical structure, and talks to the writer.

*I haven't signed a contract with a publisher yet. What should I look out for?*

Before signing the contract speak to the ASA or have a solicitor look at it to check that it is in your interest. Do not sign a contract without another person looking at it first.

*If my book is published, who pays for the cover, index, and artwork?*

The terms are in the contract. The publisher decides on the jacket design and pays for it. Often the title of the MS is changed. The index is usually prepared by the writer, or the writer pays an indexer; the cost of artwork usually comes out of the writer's royalties.

*Do I have to proofread my work?*

Yes.

*I need an editor. Someone suggested the Society of Editors. Can you help?*

Often we can, but writers have money problems and the cost of editing must be indicated early in the conversation. It must be understood that editing is your profession and so standards of charges and quality of editing must be maintained.

*I have a PhD thesis which I want to turn into a book. A publisher is interested.*

A PhD thesis is written for a supervisor and examiners and to meet certain academic criteria. Seldom is it suitable without being rewritten. The writer needs to become authorial, reducing academic references and assessing

the pertinence of the case studies for the new market. The language and form of argument may need to be made accessible to non-specialist readers. Talk to the prospective publisher.

*Robin Appleton*

## HOURS OF WORK

*These details of the working hours for full-time editors were supplied for the Society of Editors (Vic) by the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance. They are reprinted from the society's October 1995 newsletter.*

The basic working week is 38 hours, but by agreement between employers and members, this can be worked in any one of four ways:

- 38 hours over five days Monday to Friday, or
- 19 days in a 28-day cycle, where members work 40 hours for three weeks and then 32 hours in the next week i.e. a monthly rostered day off (RDO), or
- a 9-day fortnight, where members work 42 hours in one week and 34 hours in the next week i.e. a fortnightly RDO, or
- a 4-day week working 38 hours over 4 days.

The award provides that the negotiations between members and employer over how to arrange hours of work can be on a unit-by-unit basis, or a section-by-section basis if the employer and the majority of members agree. Alternatively, the majority of members and the employer may agree to a work method that applies to the establishment as a whole.

Members who work full-time must be offered at least one meal break of at least 30 minutes' duration every day; meal breaks are not counted as hours worked.

### Overtime

Members can work reasonable overtime as requested by the

employer without additional payment, but the member is then entitled to time off in lieu. This time off in lieu must be taken at a time agreeable to both the member and the employer and must be taken by the end of the month following that in which the overtime was worked. If the time off is not taken according to these requirements, then the employer must pay the member overtime at the rate of time-and-a-half for the first eight hours of overtime in any week, and double time for any overtime in excess of eight hours in any one week.

The only members to whom these provisions don't apply are those classified as Senior Editor Level 3, Grade 3, who are, however, entitled to receive at least two days off work each week.

Under the award, the employer is required to keep a time book but it is also a good idea for you to keep your own records of when you work. At the end of each month, make sure you've been able to take off any time you were entitled to, and if you haven't, make sure your employer is paying you the right amount of overtime payment.

If you have any queries about these issues, call Janet Dalglish on (03) 9279 0500.

## 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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## TO TALK OF...

### Traditional grammar workshop, 4 November 1995, NSW Writers' Centre

My thanks go to Diana Brown, John Fleming, Flavia Hodges, and Executive Director of the NSWWC, Irina Dunn, for their contributions as presenters at the workshop. Eighteen participants from various backgrounds and the four other presenters were welcomed by Irina Dunn, a person passionate about grammar. She states that 'writers can't break the rules of grammar without first knowing them'. Irina treated the participants to a collection of ill-considered sentences given in answer to questions in history papers, and a few examples from national newspapers. Sadly, the newspaper gaffes were missed by the subeditors.

### More on projected workshops for 1996

Irina Dunn (NSW Writers' Centre) suggested a series of workshops on traditional grammar could be a possibility in 1996. Such workshops are helpful to communicators and wordsmiths. Do you want a day-long workshop on punctuation?

### *Blue Pencil*, January/February 1996

That issue of *Blue Pencil* will have important information in it so please don't put it aside with your Christmas cards and unanswered letters. The January/February issue will include a draft of new rules to replace the present society constitution, a requirement for **incorporation** of the society. At the AGM on 6 February 1996, members have to vote on the acceptance of these rules and other matters related to incorporation, so make sure you read the rules carefully and come to the meeting ready to discuss them.

### Members' new year resolutions

Send the committee your ideas. Write a letter to the editor of *Blue*

*Pencil*, fill in the Feedback forms, place advertisements and items of interest in the publication. Keep making your contribution to the society. Have your say.

### The Society of Editors (NSW) AGM, 6 February 1996

An important matter to vote on will be the election of your new committee. It is hoped that out of the 180-plus members there will be a large committee. The Galley Club has 120 plus members and more than 13 on their committee, and they run the Galley Awards and support the Macquarie editing course. You can be elected to the committee without a specific position and be an 'ideas' person. Two subcommittees were formed this year, with members co-opted from outside the committee to help in the preparation of workshops and the *Register of Editorial Services*. The committee meets once a month for about two hours to discuss business, plan events, and deal with correspondence.

As well as electing the committee, other matters to be discussed at the AGM are:

- incorporation of the society
- the size of the quorum for society meetings
- the society's training program for 1996
- promotion of the *Register of Editorial Services*
- guest speakers for 1996.

Do you want to be a speaker? Do you have some ideas for topics? Speak up early please. Now that many speakers have agents it is sometimes difficult to invite speakers we would like to hear. A speaker can ask for \$2 000 for forty minutes.

### Guest speaker at the AGM, 6 February 1996

Teresa Ransom, a committed researcher and a published author, took publishing and editing courses as well as a proofreading course to prepare herself before approaching

a publisher in England. Her book, entitled, *Fanny Trollope*, is a revealing biography of Frances Trollope, the unorthodox and immensely popular nineteenth century author and mother of Anthony Trollope. Teresa researched her subject in Australia and England, returning to England to speak to the publisher, and again to proofread her work and be available for the release of the book. It was very favourably reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Teresa Ransom will share some of her experiences with society members at the February meeting.

The February AGM will be free for those members who book by the RSVP date, but the usual \$12 charge will apply to those who don't.

Robin Appleton

## WANTED, in fact

### DESPERATELY NEEDED:

a President  
a Catering officer  
a *Blue Pencil* editor  
and some active committee members.

The present incumbents of these positions in the society will not be standing for them in 1996. Give some serious thought now to who shall take their place. Consider standing for one of the positions or nominating someone who will.

Also think about joining the committee as a non-executive, but very active member.

**Please!**

*Blue Pencil*

# UNIVERSITY COURSES IN EDITING AND PUBLISHING

Monash University, National Centre  
for Australian Studies (NCAS)

Graduate Diploma of Publishing: a  
one-year full-time or two-year part-  
time course

This is a newly established course  
being offered for the first time in  
1996. It has been designed for those  
interested in scholarly, commercial,  
and educational publishing; and the  
design, production, and marketing  
of publications. The course  
examines the processes involved in  
the transformation of text from  
manuscript to published format and  
provides a critical introduction to  
the publishing industries and  
Australian publishing today.

Entry into the course is open to  
candidates who hold a good pass  
degree in any discipline or who are  
deemed by the faculty board to  
have the equivalent experience.

Core subjects of the course are:

- History of Publishing and the  
Impact of the Book
- Authorship, Editing, and Text
- Publishing Forms and Processes
- New Convergent Media
- Publishing Research Project.

Students must select a sixth  
subject from any fourth-year unit  
offered by the NCAS or, with the  
Director's approval, other  
appropriate subjects offered within  
the Faculty of Arts or by the  
Department of Librarianship,  
Archives and Records in the  
Faculty of Computing and  
Information Technology.

Further information from Dr  
David Dunstan, phone: (03)  
9 9 0 5 1 6 9, E - m a i l :  
david.dunstan@arts.monash.edu.au.  
University of Southern Queensland,  
Faculty of Arts

Master/Graduate Diploma of  
Editing and Publishing: a two/three-

year part-time external course.

The Graduate Diploma of  
Editing and Publishing consists of  
eight one-semester units: seven  
units of major and one approved  
elective. Students intending to apply  
for enrolment in the Master of  
Editing and Publishing should take  
the unit Theory and Method in  
Social Research as an approved  
elective.

The Master of Editing  
and Publishing consists of twelve  
units of study, the first eight of  
which are common with the  
Graduate Diploma. To complete the  
remaining four credit points of  
study for the Master's degree  
students may choose:

- a 12,000 - 15,000-word disserta-  
tion, or
- a 10,000-word dissertation plus a  
practical project, or
- two units of multimedia  
management studies.

Applicants must have at least a  
Bachelor's degree or its equivalent  
in any discipline.

For further information contact  
Dr Bruce Horsfield, phone: (076)  
31 2239, fax: (076) 31 2598.

## DID YOU BUY THAT PROOFREADING BOOK?

The *Financial Review* in its issue of  
1 November reported that after an  
investigation by the Trade Practices  
Commission, Buyers Network  
International Pty Ltd, trading as  
Willow Press, has agreed to an  
undertaking to offer refunds to the  
9,000 consumers who bought a  
book on proofreading advertised by  
Willow Press.

The release from the Trade  
Practices Commission noted, 'Few  
people, if any, would have been  
employed solely on the basis of the  
book, and pay rates would have  
been much less than \$80 an hour'.

## A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

to all our members, their guests to  
our meetings, and our speakers who  
brought such interest to the society.  
And a festive welcome to our  
newest members:

Kate Allaburton  
Lynette Bradley  
Wendy Custance  
Tom Gotsis  
Robert Lindsay  
Trish Luker  
Robin Mitchell.