

Blue Pencil

Newsletter of the Society of Editors (NSW)

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January 1991

Next meeting

Annual General Meeting – Tuesday 5 February 1991

The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 5 February at the Bowlers Club in the City. None of the current committee is standing for re-election, so it will be necessary to elect an entirely new committee. Aspiring committee members please note – now is your chance to make a name for yourself in connection with the Society! Please, everybody, do make an effort to come along.

Our AGM speaker will be Jacki Kent, who was president of the Society in the early 1980s. For further information see the enclosed notice.

Final 1990 meeting

Christmas dinner 1990

The Society's Christmas dinner – a Chinese banquet at the Bowlers Club – was a great success. The meal was excellent and Jim Bebbington's talk on his experiences in marketing and the book trade was most entertaining.

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Future meetings

Dates and venues for future meetings in 1991 will be organised by the new committee.

Victory from the jaws of defeat

Nineteen ninety began most inauspiciously for the Society of Editors (NSW). Fewer than 10 people attended the AGM on 7 March at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre. They elected four committee members, out of the total seven required by the constitution. After a frantic few weeks, during which we were convinced that we would be compelled to wind up the Society, we managed to rope in the required number.

General meetings

The inauspiciousness continued. Meeting topics during 1989 had been aimed largely at those in the publishing industry. Since many Society of Editors members are not full-time employees within that industry, we decided to try to cater for freelancers and for those working in other areas. This turned out

to be a mistake. Our first meetings, "Changes to the Book Editors' Industrial Award", "The role of an agency", and "Technical editing", were all very poorly attended, leading us to the conclusion that freelancers have so much work and are so well-paid that they have no need of such information. Dispirited, the committee concluded

Society of Editors (NSW), PO Box 254, Broadway 2007

Committee 1990

Michael Wyatt (President). Ph 281 0460 (Keyword Editorial Services)

Kim Anderson (Library and Immediate Past President). Ph 888 4111 (Angus & Robertson)

Jeane Balcombe (Newsletter). Ph 212 4600 (Community Child Care) or 713 9696

Garry Cousins (Membership Secretary). Ph 955 1525

Lesley Dow (Minutes Secretary). Ph 906 7122 (Sydney University Press)

Valerie Marlborough (Publicity). Ph 417 4288 (McGraw Hill)

Kathy Metcalfe (Treasurer). Ph 888 4111 (Angus & Robertson)

Anyone wishing to know more about the Society may write to PO Box 254, Broadway 2007 or telephone any committee member.

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that the work involved was not worth such meagre rewards, and decided that if the next meeting was not well attended we would resign, putting the Society into suspension. A notice to this effect was placed in *Blue Pencil*, and lo! the next meeting, on "What publishers want from freelance editors", was packed out.

As a result of a survey of members sent out in May and reported in the August issue of *Blue Pencil*, we decided to try changing the meetings' venue (Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre), date (Wednesdays), time (7.30 pm) and format (wine and nibbles). The forum "Desktop publishing in the publishing industry" was held at the Bowlers' Club in the city at 6.30 pm on a Tuesday, and preceded by drinks and finger food of main-meal proportions. It was so successful that the following meeting, "Editing magazines and journals" and the Christmas party were held at the same venue with equal success, as we expect future meetings to be.

Blue Pencil

The Society's newsletter, *Blue Pencil*, is now issued monthly (instead of irregularly) except in November and December. As well as reports and notices of meetings, it has included reports of activities and training courses of other editors' societies throughout Australia and of related organisations in New South Wales. The format has gradually been upgraded.

Other societies

One of our major initiatives has been to formalise relationships with editors' societies in other States and with related organisations in New South Wales. We exchange newsletters with

and report on the activities of societies of editors in Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Queensland. We exchange newsletters and consult on such matters as training with the ABPA, Galley Club, Australian Society of Authors, Fellowship of Australian Writers, Australian Journalists Association, NSW Society of Technical Communication, Society of Business Communicators, Australian Society of Indexers and Women in Publishing.

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Working Writers' Exhibition

As a result of this initiative, we have been working with the ASA, the AJA and the Australian Writers' Guild on an ambitious Working Writers' Exhibition to be held later in 1991. This will consist of a trade exhibition of computer-related equipment aimed specifically at those who deal in words for a living, and will be accompanied by a series of related seminars.

Industrial

The AJA has been working with the ABPA spasmodically on an award for book editors, unfortunately with little consultation with this Society. However, the Society and the AJA are working jointly to promulgate recommended rates for freelance editors.

Constitution

As our previous president stated in her presidential report, the 1989 committee had made several attempts to alter the constitution to permit a wider range of people (including many who were al-

ready members) to become members legally. In 1990 we made a last-ditch attempt. The constitution, last amended in August 1987, stated that membership was open to "any employer/employee who is engaged... in any aspect of book editing; any self-employed book editor; any former editor in either of the above categories". Our proposal was to change this to "any person who is engaged in full or part-time editing; any person interested in promoting the purposes of the Society". The motion was voted on at the meeting of 4 April, and once proxy votes had been received we just scraped up a quorum. The motion was at last passed, with only one vote against. At the same time, we changed the clause on the purpose of the Society by deleting the term "book editors" and replacing it with "print editors". (A full report appeared in the April issue of *Blue Pencil*.)

Information leaflet

An information brochure on the society has been produced for prospective members, and is kept up to date.

Register of Freelance Publishing Services

Because of the committee's experience that freelance editors were not interested in the Society's services, we suspected that future editions of the *Register of Freelance Publishing Services* were unnecessary. Having surveyed all those who had advertised in the previous edition, we concluded that in spite of its flaws there was enough interest to keep it alive. The survey made it clear, however, that many changes were necessary. Production of the next edition is currently being carried out by an outside contractor.

The committee

Despite its early vicissitudes, the committee has worked together harmoniously and effectively. Considering that we are all such busy people, each member has worked conscientiously and extremely hard. I thank each one of them for their magnificent effort.

Education

Going freelance and staying there (in the UK)

The Society of Freelance Editors and Proofreaders in the United Kingdom is running this seminar in London on Wednesday 6 March 1991. Topics will include strategies for making contacts, organising your work effectively, keep-

ing to deadlines, coping with loneliness, and keeping work and home life separate. The cost is £70 (about \$145) for the day.

Contact Lorraine Hamilton on 0344 420067 (UK) for further information.

Communications – not all black and white

This is the topic of the Society of Business Communicators's annual conference, which is being held in Adelaide on 16, 17 and 18 June 1991. The conference will cover all areas of communication from planning and strategy to implementation and evaluation of effectiveness.

The cost of the conference, two nights at the Adelaide Hilton and all meals and drinks, is \$499 (for SBC members). For further information write to:

Society of Business Communicators National Conference
Adelaide Hilton International
GPO Box 9841
Adelaide SA 5001

SBC courses in 1991

April 15–19: Introduction to graphic design

May 27–31: Introduction to printing

Oct 24–28: Advanced business writing

Nov 27–Dec 6: Editing small publications

Dec 9: Evaluation of advanced business writing assignments

Writers' tour, West Coast USA

The Council of Adult Education in Melbourne is organising this 20-day tour of the West Coast, departing 14 June 1991, to take in the Santa Barbara Writers Conference. The conference includes daily workshops in fiction, non-fiction, juvenile literature, romance, poetry, humour, screen writing, drama and book marketing; "outstanding literary figures" will be daily guest speakers

The cost (\$3,240) covers airfares, conference fees and sightseeing as per itinerary, three special dinners, portorage and local taxes, and tutor/es-

cort from Australia. For further information contact CAE Tours (03) 652 0680.

Grammar course (Melbourne)

The Society of Editors (Victoria) is running a grammar course over four Monday evenings from 18 March to 15 April 1991. The course will introduce and explain the main analytic concepts of grammar and help participants to understand, formulate and judge the rules. There will also be discussion of the meaning of grammatical correctness in a changing language and society.

The course leader is Dr Nick Evans, lecturer in linguistics at the University of Melbourne. Course fees are \$120 for full members and \$140 for associate members and others.

For further information, contact

The Training Officer
The Society of Editors (Victoria)
PO Box 176
Carlton South 3053

Indexing

The School of Librarianship at the University of New South Wales is running the following courses on indexing in 1991.

Introduction to book indexing: Feb 12 to March 19, and August 1 to Sept 5. Held from 6 pm to 9 pm one night a week for six weeks. Cost: \$250.

Indexing technical material: April 24 to May 29. Hours and cost as above.

Computer-aided indexing: March 21 to April 18 and May 30 to June 27.

Designed for people who have experience with the theory and practice of indexing. Held between 6 pm and 9 pm one evening a week for five weeks. Cost: \$380.

For further information please contact Maureen Henninger on 697 3589 (fax 313 7092).

Editors' Societies around Australia

Tasmania

The November newsletter of the Society of Editors (Tasmania) carries an article by Jean Weber on technical editing, a report of Philip Blake's talk on the artfulness of the copywriter, a book review of *The Penguin Australian*

Encyclopaedia, and a list of society members offering freelance editorial services.

The next meeting of the Society will be on Wednesday 20 February 1991.

South Australia

The November newsletter (...*the word*) of the Society of Editors (SA) carries a report on a talk by Brian Matthews, senior lecturer in English and Australian literature at Flinders University. The Society had invited Christobel Mattingley, author of several children's books, to speak at

their December meeting. Plans for meetings in 1991 include an open forum in February to discuss directions for the year, a look at dictionaries in April, a workshop on production in June, desktop publishing in August and editing fiction in October.

Queensland

The newly formed Society of Editors (Queensland) published its first newsletter in November. The newsletter is called *Editio princeps* and the first issue carried information about the Society's committee, membership fees

(\$35 per year), and constitution. The planned speaker for the November meeting was Barbara Ker Wilson, consultant editor with the University of Queensland Press.

Victoria

In October The Society of Editors (Victoria) held their twentieth anniversary meeting. Their guest speaker was John Curtain, Senior Lecturer in Editing and Publishing at RMIT Victoria University of Technology. In November the Society invited Tom Shapcott to speak at their meeting. Tom Shapcott is a novelist and poet and was, until early last year, the director of the Literature Board of the Australia Council. The Society's November newsletter con-

tained a report on publisher Bruce Gillespie's talk in September, an article on usage and style by Arthur Delbridge, and an article on editing *Meanjin* by Jenny Lee. The January newsletter carried several reports on the twentieth anniversary meeting, a list of Society members, a list of committee members from 1970 to 1990, and a directory of editors' societies and related organisations in Australia and overseas.

Other groups

News from other societies

Newsletters were also received from the Australian Society of Indexers (September and December), the Fellowship of Australian Writers (October-November and December), the Australian Society of Authors Limited (November), and the Society of Business Communicators (December). The last publication carries a report on Gareth Powell's November talk on the

problems of communication, a report on who does the printing (who provides most printing work—newspapers and magazine publishers, book publishers, or general and commercial organisations?), an article on buying a computer, and a letter about the disadvantages of appearing “over qualified” when applying for editing jobs.

1991 Committee

We need a new committee

All members of the 1990 Society of Editors committee are resigning at the AGM, so please consider nominating or standing yourself for a position on the new committee.

The vacant positions are:

- President
- Treasurer
- Membership Secretary
- Newsletter Editor

- Librarian
- Minutes Secretary
- Publicity and/or Training Officer

Being on the committee does involve some time and effort, but it is an excellent way of getting known in the field

and keeping in touch with what is happening in publishing, both here and in other States. One committee member (in the past it has been the newsletter editor) is given custody of the Society's Amstrad computer – another perk.

If you wish to nominate a member for a committee position please telephone

Michael Wyatt on 281 0460 or come along and make your nomination at the AGM.

Remember, we need your support in electing a new committee – without one the Society cannot continue to operate.

Rebels mourn the circumflex

The following article from the Guardian Weekly of 6 January 1991 was sent to us by a member with the note, "Editors working on French cookbooks especially may be interested in this".

Rebellious members of the Academie Francaise have joined the ranks of the new Free French resistance movement that has promised to save the circumflex from a government decree altering more than 500 common spellings. The circumflex will disappear on many words as part of a series of often illogical changes published by the Journal Officiel which switch round acute and grave accents, banish hyphens and invent some teeth-grinding franglais.

Changes were recommended by the Conseil superieure de la langue fancaise, which is linked to the French Academy, and approved by the Minister for Francophonie, Alain Decaux, and the Education Minister, Lionel Jospin. But writers, publishers and teachers have joined in a national protest because the changes will result in a divided nation, much of it putting an "i" in oignon and the rest spelling it ognon. Thousands of school textbooks will have to be scrapped but it is estimated that it will be ten years before the work is completed so that only pupils just entering the system will learn le nouvel francais.

The Free French movement was set up by an opposition MP, Francois Bayrou, who accused the government of "totalitarianism".

The changes have been divided into thee categories, compound words, foreign expressions and anomalies. The circumflex, which usually indicates a missing S, will be dropped from words like huitres, aout and voute. Hyphens will be abandoned in formerly compound words like bainmarie, while plural forms will be dropped for words like essuiemain, hand towel.

But the official Superior Language Council implicitly admits that it has lost the long battle to hold back Anglo-Saxon words by inventing an official version of franglais in which imported expressions like squatters gain a letter to become squatteurs.

[Original] Editor's note: all accents have been omitted from this story to avoid confusion.