

Blue Pencil

Newsletter of
the Society
of Editors
(NSW)

ISSN 1030-2557

PO Box 254 Broadway NSW 2007

Telephone: (02) 901 9033

July 1991

Next meeting 6 August 1991: Computers and editors

Would you like to get to know computers better? Come along to the August meeting to find out just what computers can do for editors.

An introductory talk on computers for editors will be presented by Leon Krek, a senior lecturer from Educom. Leon has worked in computing since 1978 and, until recently, ran his own computer training company.

Leon has promised to keep the talk non-technical and will discuss such topics as wordprocessing and desktop publishing packages, IBM compatibles compared with Apple Macintosh, new software and the user-friendly environments such as 'Windows'. Leon will also give some useful hints on buying computers.

When: Tuesday, 6 August 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 2 August.

RSVP: Friday, 2 August to Jo Avigdor (phone 289 7732), or to Janine Flew (phone 887 0177).

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.

Editor-in-residence — Australia Council

The closing date for receipt of applications from Universities for a 1992 editor-in-residence attachment is 15 August 1991. In order to compile a register of names from which it may choose suitable editors, the Literature Board invites editors with appropriate experience who are interested in possibly taking up a residency in 1992 (or any other year) to send their curricula vitae. These should also be lodged with the Literature Unit by 15 August 1991.

Further information:

Program Officer
(Editor-in-Residence)
Literature Unit
Australia Council
PO Box 74
Chippendale NSW 2008

Register of Freelance Publishing Services

Work on the latest edition of the freelance publishing services register is about to start. Members will be receiving registration forms in the next few weeks.

Hobsons Press, in conjunction with the Society of Editors (NSW) and Rank Xerox, will be producing the register. The register will be redesigned with a larger format for ease of information access and greater display of freelance details.

Success depends on a large response from freelance workers.

Watch your mail box for further details and application forms.

July meeting: The business of freelancing

Introducing speakers at the 2 July meeting, Society President Michael Wyatt remarked on the large attendance (over 30) compared to last year's seven, including committee members.

The two main speakers' freelance experience showed the spectrum of activity — Maureen Coleman, sole trader, and Claudia Findlay, company principal. Beverley Barnes, who has freelanced in the country, joined the panel at question time.

Maureen earned her living as a freelance editor for six years, largely in non-book editing (environmental impact statements, examination papers and government publications). Key points she made were as follows: though self-employed she was in business and had to keep accounts; income and cost records are needed for reliable quoting and for tax returns; setting up requires little capital unless you have to use existing funds to live on until established. No separate office is needed, there are no suppliers to deal with and you may need a typewriter. Most essential is a reference library, whose cost is well repaid by not having to visit libraries. Maureen provided no book list, suggesting the Society could take on the project. Having a car may help, but publishers seem unconcerned about distance and courier costs.

Industry contact must be kept up-to-date; a source of work may suddenly disappear for reasons unrelated to your performance. If possible, make personal contact with clients by picking up or delivering work occasionally and attending society meetings, even those of fields in which you work. Advertise in registers. Some believe our freelance register favours those whose names appear first alphabetically. (Michael Wyatt confirmed this from a recent survey — the design of the next register will take this into account.)

The amount of work you accept can be a problem. Some say never refuse — but it is not good business practice to accept work you cannot do in a reasonable time. Maureen has made a point of finishing work on time. However, be prepared: there will be slack periods and your rates should take this into account.

Claudia Findlay of Puddingburn Services, now with a staff of six, set up eight years ago as a company with associated high costs and offers

full services in book editing, much of it indexing, especially legal work. She agreed with all of Maureen's points, except that she accepted too much work and had to expand. She employed students, updated her typewriter, bought a second-hand computer and software for indexing, and expanded from the front bedroom.

Claudia does not quote in advance, charges an hourly rate and believes that editing and indexing in Australia are very undervalued. Nevertheless, she finds her business entirely self-satisfying. Staffing a company brings involvement with an accountant, Corporate Affairs and the Taxation Office, as well as full insurance, worker's compensation and a superannuation trust. She said that competent staff are hard to find and cannot be hired under \$15 per hour. As to technique, more than half the work is on-screen but complicated indexes are handled better on paper. Expansion will involve a new computer and more staff.

In the lively question time, differences of opinion were revealed. Maureen prefers advance quoting, Claudia finds quoting on an index difficult and Beverley likes to know the client's assessment of likely cost. As to a new starter canvassing, Maureen would send a card and Beverley would not call 'cold' on a publisher. Claudia first sent letters but they took three years to bear fruit.

Maureen estimated chargeable hours at 30 per week; Claudia, 35 to 38 hours per week. No clear advice on optimum number of clients was given. Maureen had no call for a computer with modem transfer, but advised keeping the matter under review. Claudia and Beverley, and many in the audience, were pro-computer, especially if writing *and* editing.

Taxation was a vexed question, the feeling being that taking a strong line, backed by an accountant's opinion, should obviate tax deduction from payments if the freelance editor so wishes. In this context, Maureen and Beverley saw no need to register a business name.

Your reporter, as a freelance editor, found the meeting a great success. I have given the highlights — those present learnt more in post-meeting discussions. So, you were not there, why not come next time?

Ken Tate

Editors' societies around Australia

The Society of Editors (SA) held an editing workshop on 18 May. Nineteen people attended, each carrying prepared homework (an editing task) to be discussed in the morning session. The workshop was considered successful and everyone found this form of continuing education worthwhile.



The Society of Editors (Victoria) is inviting entries for its next *Register of Freelance Publishing Services*. The society's Annual General Meeting (AGM) and election of officers was held on 27 June. Voting was to take place on the committee's recommendation to incorporate the society. We are waiting to hear what happened.



The Society of Editors (Tasmania) held its AGM on 26 June followed by dinner and guest speaker John Rozentals. The society is contemplating a name change to something that reflects a wider range of publishing activities, such as 'Society of Publishing Professional'.



Jan Whelan, President of The Society of Editors (Queensland), reminded members that the inaugural 'year' for the society had come to an end.

'What with the first meeting in October 1990 and the interruption of Christmas and New Year, we haven't managed a full year's trading yet, and many things are still on the drawing board.

'However, with over 100 members, and systems slowly coming together, the society now has a base of sorts on which to build and improve. And there is room for improvement, as the committee is only too aware. There have been venue problems, which we hope may now be solved; we've had some glitches with newsletter timing (some insurmountable problems which we are attempting to surmount — unfortunately, few of us are equestrians!); and suddenly June has arrived with a vengeance. But we've made it through the first year with just superficial scars, and with continued support from members I am confident that the society will expand and improve.'

Book publishers agree to audit

Excerpt from The Journalist (July 1991)

The AJA and the Australian Book Publishers Association will conduct a skills audit and training needs analysis to establish much needed training.

This is an important first step towards award-linked training which is the key to the new classification structure implemented last July.

The analysis will be done through the joint AJA/ABPA training committee over the next few months. It will focus initially on editors and publicists and then designers and illustrators as the award is extended to cover these groups.

AJA representatives on the training committee are federal industrial officer Jacqueline Park, NSW branch industrial organiser Paul Murphy and AJA members Anita Ray, Valerie Marlborough and Janet Mau. Other members will be co-opted as required.

The committee was set up by last year's award restructuring agreement which also documented both party's commitment to providing better career opportunities for members through nationally standardised training.

Members will be given paid leave to attend courses and successful completion will be a major factor.

The parties may also seek funding assistance from the Federal Government for the analysis or at a later stage to set up a training centre once the syllabus has been designed.

The analysis will use questionnaires, interviews and the training needs of members. Federal secretary Christopher Warren said: 'As the people who do the work, members working in the book industry are in the best position to know what they do and what skills they have and need.

'That's why we'll be relying on them to provide the training committee with accurate information and direction. Their participation is vital.'

Public Lending Right

Public Lending Right means the right of creators of Australian books to receive compensatory payment when their books are available in public lending libraries. PLR payments are made annually through the public lending scheme. If you are an Australian author (writer, editor, illustrator etc.) or Australian publisher, you may be eligible for a PLR payment.

The main requirements for eligibility are: the author must be an Australian citizen or ordinarily resident in Australia, and the book must have an International Standard Book Number (ISBN).

Further information:

The Public Lending Right Scheme
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: (06) 274 1364
Fax: (06) 274 1357/1354

(Condensed from *Writers Voice* Issue No. 117)

Managing Editor

Redfern Legal Centre Publishing is an innovative publishing company specialising in the production and distribution of a variety of legal resources. We are looking for a Managing Editor to join a small team to continue developing this work.

Qualifications and skills must include a degree in law, plain English editing, management experience and a demonstrated commitment to community values.

Further information:

Lynne Spender
Ph: (02) 698 3066
Fax: (02) 698 3077
Written applications close 26 July 1991.



Courses and conferences

Australian Book Publishers Association

Management development program: communicating and negotiating skills
One-day seminar
Sydney: 8 August 1991
Melbourne: 19 August 1991

Finance for non-financial staff
Two-day seminar
Sydney: 22–23 August 1991

Further information:

Ph: (02) 281 9788
Fax: (02) 281 1073

Society of Business Communicators

Principles of writing and editing
15–19 July 1991

Further information:

Bill Smith
SBC Education Director
Ph: (02) 450 1342

Correction

Please note that an incorrect telephone number was given in the June issue for Society member Lesley Dow.

Lesley's correct number is 487 3515.



Are you visiting the UK in September?

The Society of Freelance Editors and Proofreaders (UK) will be holding its second annual conference at Sheffield, 17–18 September. The topic will be 'Standing up for standards' — how to attain them, how to define them, how to maintain them.

Kathleen Lyle, conference coordinator, says that the schedule will be fairly leisurely allowing for plenty of discussion and informal contacts.

Tapton Hall of Residence, where the SFEP conference is to be held, belongs to the University of Sheffield. It is two miles to the west of the city centre and only five miles from the boundary of the Peak District National Park.

Conference fee for non-members:
£117.50 (resident); £102.50 (non-resident)
Resident fee includes one night's accommodation and meals at Tapton Hall during the conference.

Bookings (to be made ASAP with cheque payable to SFEP):

Ms Kathleen Lyle
(SFEP REG)
43 Brighton Terrace Road
Sheffield S10 1NT
UK

(N.B. If you would like a copy of the registration forms, you can contact me, Ed)

Correspondence

Dear Editor
We recently read the May 1991 edition of *Blue Pencil* and noted the summary of a talk given by the AJA at the Society's May meeting.

A number of facts surrounding the issue of award restructuring in the book industry need to be clarified.

1. The new Journalists (Book Industry) Award is an updated version of the pre-existing Journalists (Book Editors) Award.

The ABPA and the AJA have been working on the new award for more than two years and certain clauses are still to be negotiated.

2. The Journalists (Book Industry) Award covers only book editors. Negotiations are under way to determine the appropriateness of coverage of book publicists under the same award.
3. The ABPA does not agree with the AJA's view that there is no clear cut way of moving from one category to another in house and promotion is usually obtained by changing jobs. Any company employing a trainee book editor who is performing well would promote him/her when the need arose.
4. The new award is not known formally as the Journalists (Book Editors) Award 1989. This is the old award that has recently been replaced by the Journalists (Book Industry) Award 1990.
5. The AJA and ABPA have set up a joint training needs sub-committee which has met once.

No agreement has yet been arrived at by the ABPA other than an agreement to form the joint committee to look at training needs for award-covered employees in the industry.

We do hope this clarification gives you a clearer understanding of what is happening with regards to award restructuring in the book industry.

Susan Blackwell
Executive Director
Australian Book Publishers Association
(Dated: 31 May 1991)

Society of Editors (NSW) Committee

Michael Wyatt Ph: 281 0460	President Keyword Editorial Services
Jo Avigdor Ph: 289 7732	Training and Freelance Co-ordinator Dept of Technical & Further Education
Derek Barton Ph 929 5677	Membership Weldon Owen
Janine Flew Ph: 887 0177	Publicity, Catering and Library Law Book Company
Shalom Paul Ph: 264 3299	Administration Australian Federation of Travel Agents
Sharon Paull Ph: 344 5691	Newsletter Editorial Connection
Pamela Smith Ph: 887 0177	Treasurer Law Book Company

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

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Blue Pencil is published monthly, except November and December, by the Society of Editors (NSW).

Copy deadline for August issue: 9 August 1991

Printed by Posh Printing, Surry Hills.

Correspondence from readers is welcome!

Future meetings

3 September Layout and design

8 October An excursion to the printers

A tour of a pre-press graphics art house has been arranged for the October meeting — Photoset Computer Service, Cnr Elizabeth Street and Park Street. Note that 8 October is the *second* Tuesday of the month.

After the tour, we will be dining at a nearby restaurant — details to be revealed in the next newsletter.

This will be very popular, so book your place for the tour and restaurant early.

Contact person: Shalom Paull.

November Christmas dinner