

Blue Pencil

July 1988

Newsletter of the Society of Editors (NSW) ISSN 1030-2557

Next meeting 3 August 1988

The guest at the next meeting of the Society of Editors, on Wednesday 3 August, will be Tim Bowden, writer and broadcaster with the ABC.

Tim will be talking about his latest book, *One Crowded Hour*, a biography of well-known war photographer, Neil Davis. Tim was a long-time friend and colleague of Davis' and he persuaded him to collaborate on this biography in 1984.

Born in Tasmania, Tim was an ABC correspondent based in Singapore between 1965-1967. In recent years he has specialised in radio documentaries, which have included a 24-part series on 'The Australian Colonial Experience in Papua New Guinea' and a 16-part series on Australian prisoners of war in WWII, entitled 'POW Australians under Nippon'. Tim is also co-author of *Changi Photographer*, George Aspinall's

record of captivity, and host of the ABC program 'Backchat'.

For those of you interested in reading Tim's book, if you haven't already done so, copies will be available for sale at the meeting, and I am sure Tim would be happy to sign them.

We look forward to hearing Tim speak and hope you can join us at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli, on 3 August 1988 at 7.30 pm. Wine, soft drinks and eats will be served at a cost of \$3 if you ring and book by Tuesday 2 August, or \$5 if you turn up without booking.

RSVP by ringing Shirley Jones on 86 3927. Please leave a message on her answering service if she isn't in.

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Committee 1988

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'Taxing matters'

At our last meeting at the Kirribilli
Neighbourhood Centre the versatile
Mr Peter Eastway addressed us on
one of his areas of expertise - what our
friend the Deputy Commissioner calls
'Taxing Matters'. And if taxing
matters to the Deputy Commissioner,
we'd be damn' fools if we didn't take
it seriously!

As a tax accountant and there-
fore accountable for any advice he
gives, Peter prefaced his remarks by
emphasising that he was not giving
advice but simply making some
general comments. Understandably,
he indicated that he would prefer not
to be reported at full length and in
staggering detail in *Blue Pencil*, as is
my wont, since it's easy for words in
print, even when accurately reported,
to carry a misleading emphasis or an
interpretation that differs from the
one intended by the speaker.

Needless to say your Minutes
Secretary was only too happy to
oblige with a brief report, and thus
husband her fire, or vice versa, for
more creative work.

This word juggling leads me by
one or two crablike lurches, hardly to
be dignified by the name of lateral
thinking, to reflect on the title of our
newsletter. Why *Blue Pencil*? Can
someone enlighten me? I've met many
choleric authors who can only stand
editing if it is done in green pencil;

others less flammable get the treatment in red; but in my experience of both the real and the literary world, it is only pornography that brings out the blue pencil. So would the mind that mistress/mastered the title care to explain it?

Mr Eastway's remarks were addressed to 'The Organised Freelance', although editors working for a boss would not be wasting their time by paying attention. Here is a list of the topics he dealt with. My apologies to any members who may have been anticipating more explicit information - yez'll just have to fork out and come to the meeting next time, wontchez.

1. Paperwork

- Keep simple books of account, showing all payments and expenses.
- Make it a habit to ask for a receipt so that you have a record of your purchase. Such records are the basis of substantiation.
- Substantiation of claims for deductions is required in virtually all circumstances. The only exception is in the case of employee expenses (for example meal or travel allowances) that are part of your award and shown on your group certificate.
- Car expenses: if you use your car (for work) for under 5000 km per year there is only one method of substantiation - to keep a 'contemporaneous diary'. If you use your car for more than 5000 km per year you have a choice of how you claim deductions: the 12 per cent method, the one third method or the log book method. It pays to examine these and and

use whichever works the best for you.

- Travel expenses: keep a travel diary and receipts.
- #### 2. Business entity - which is best?
- There are several possibilities you need to examine before making a choice: sole trader - business name; partnership; trust; company.
- #### 3. Cashflow for self-employed
- Freelances/ers don't always have a steady source of income. You need a nestegg to allow you to ride out tough times.
 - Plan your big payments and save for them.
 - You need to account for personal expenses as well.
- #### 4. Be businesslike in your organising
- Use letterheads, business cards.
 - Use official invoices.
 - Have a means of tracking invoice payments.
 - Generally treat freelancing as a business - go after the right sort of clients, eventually move away from the jobs you don't like, but don't sacrifice security.

Josephine Bastian

'I am a freelance'

'Freelance' is correct usage, as Maureen Colman shows (and as Shirley Jones conceded). The two bare syllables sound pleasing, and have a clipped spareness that sorts well with a profession not unacquainted with risk, at least of the financial variety. 'I am a freelance' sounds amateurish and 'made up' to me; you might as well say, 'I am a go-it-aloner'.

Whether *The Macquarie Dictionary* is advocating the usage or is merely sitting inscrutably on the fence, that work of reference is neither so venerably nor so felicitous in its choices as to deserve our unswerving support.

Surely we see at work here the curious popular desire to lengthen words, as if adding another syllable gives fuller measure and better value; so that we no longer orient people by the sun but orientate them, and (even more disagreeable I should think) no longer pressure people into taking a certain action but pressurise them. It's the belt-and-braces approach to language, an application of the belief that there is safety in numbers.

Josephine Bastian.

Off-the-leash metaphor

The *Mercury*, Hobart, 27 June 1988, page 9, reporting opposition, from Britain's Conservative Women's Conference in May, to Government plans to increase development in the 'Green Belt' round London:

'He [Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley] gives Stg10 million for replacing trees lost in the hurricane with one hand, and then gives carte blanche to money-grubbing developers to bulldoze our woodlands with the other,' one speaker said.

Sent in by Professor Adrian Colman, Head of Department of English, The University of Tasmania.

Book review: Editing Canadian English

Nine years in gestation, *Editing Canadian English* is the work of a committee formed by the Freelance Editors Association of Canada. It is a style guide that bravely addresses the confusion of conflicting and changing requirements in an English language publishing context as influenced by a British educational heritage and American mass media - both historically overwhelming the local national ethos in a pattern all-too-familiar to Australians.

In Canada, of course, the pressure to absorb United States standards is intensified by the proximity of neighbouring marketing, media and business practices. Reflected on the editorial desk, *Oxford* competes with *Webster's*, along with a number of attempts at national variations now dated by anti-discriminatory issues that have gained legitimacy in recent times.

Confronted then with a daunting clutter of information, the editorial committee proceeded to survey what, in fact, were established editorial practices. They used a questionnaire funded by grants from government and industry. The analysis showed considerable diversity. Predictably, there were general tendencies towards American practices in newspapers and magazines, and towards British practices in book publishing. This pattern also varied regionally, with the Alberta market, at one extreme, tending far more to American usage than

did the British loyalists of Nova Scotia.

When a Canadian editor is required to 'Canadianise' a book for the local market (which occurs frequently, particularly with many Canadian houses being subsidiaries of United States companies), national standards also operate. Canada, for example, has, like Australia, truly adopted metric standards, unlike the British, who pretended they would, and the Americans, who would not. And then there are the issues of names and italics in a non-discriminatory environment where French speakers have equal language rights with English speakers.

In some areas addressed by the very admirable chapter 'Avoiding bias' the Canadian experience has direct parallels with the Australian. 'New Canadian' is a direct equivalent to the now dated 'New Australian'. In Canada, 'Indian' has, it seems, the offensive connotations we associate with 'native'. In Australia, non-discriminatory language issues had a major impact on the formulation of style guides, particularly for Bicentenary projects when editors were forced to reflect on the racist connotations of terms such as 'prehistoric' or 'native' in a context where 'settlement' has often been a euphemism for 'invasion'. Currently, the equivalent issue for Canadians has lost some immediacy since the implementation of language rights of the French minority has gained intensity.

The most communally contentious aspects of bilingual policies applied to every federal jurisdiction are those requiring bilingual proficiency

in federal administrative positions and French language education for French speakers throughout the country. These issues are not, of course, the domain of a style guide. English language editors are, however, legally bound to prefer French placenames to English translations, unless an English version has genuinely passed into the language, as in 'Montreal' and 'Quebec'. As a result decisions need to be made about accents and italicisation (When is another language a foreign language? Do we distinguish between Old French, Canadian French and modern French? etc). Fortunately, there is also a federal government style policy statement to assist with such problems.

Editing Canadian English also addresses familiar problems of capitalisation, punctuation and the like. On the spelling issue, the committee resolved the dilemma of how to provide signposts to consistency while avoiding prescriptiveness - essential in varying editorial environments - by grouping information. Contentious spelling styles are grouped in patterns, as -or/-our, -ise/ize and so on, advising consistency within each category but leaving the choice or combination of choices to the editor.

The book also offers solid professional support, such as in the substantial section entitled 'How much should be changed'. And 'Avoiding bias' is the best guide to non-discriminatory language in gender areas as well as in cases of race and ethnic

minorities that I have encountered so far.

Editing Canadian English is impressive for its design and structure and for the ambitious and courageous initiative that produced it. It is practical, supportive and wonderfully accessible and certainly has a place of interest (especially in times fraught) on any Australian editor's bookshelf.

Editing Canadian English is available from Douglas & McIntyre Ltd, 1615 Venables Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, V5L 2H1 Canada.

Suzanne McGrath

Computer for sale

Amstrad PC 1512, still in boxes

The Society has decided to buy a different computer so that it can use the Ventura desktop publishing system. As a result it is selling its nearly new Amstrad PC.

The Amstrad PC 1512 is described as 'a powerful 16 bit personal computer that can be used both to prepare letters and to carry out routine office tasks'. It is supplied with:

- Microsoft MSDOS version 3.2
- Digital Research GEM version 2.0
- Locomotive Software's Basic 2
- Digital Research's DOS Plus version 1.2

The package consists of a monitor, computer, keyboard and mouse and is under guarantee until late August 1988.

Price: \$1800 o.n.o.

Phone Jeane Balcombe on 212 4600, or 713 9696 (a.h.)

Bestsellers

Week ending 15 July 1988.

Angus and Robertson, Imperial Arcade

1. *Tiger Men*, Barry Peterson, h/c.
2. *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*, Douglas Adams, p/b.
3. *A Perfect Spy*, John le Carre, p/b.
4. *Donny Brasco*, Joseph Pistone, h/c.
5. *Moon Walk*, Michael Jackson, h/c.
6. *Garden of Shadows*, Virginia Andrews, p/b.
7. *Out of the Line of Fire*, Mark Henshaw, p/b.
8. *Rock Star*, Jacki Collins, h/c.
9. *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, Paul Kennedy, h/c.
10. *The Shiralee*, Darcie Niland, p/b.

Gleebooks, Glebe

1. *The Radiant Way*, Margaret Grabble, p/b.
2. *The Road Less Travelled*, M. Scott Peck, p/b.
3. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Milan Kundera, p/b.
4. *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*, Douglas Adams, p/b.
5. *Life; a User's Manual*, Georgess Perce, h/c.
6. *A Perfect Spy*, John le Carre, p/b.
7. *Out of the Line of Fire*, Mark Henshaw, p/b.
8. *'If You Lose, You're Dead' and other stories from the Sydney Morning Herald 'Young Writers of the Year Competition'*. p/b.
9. *Spy Catcher*, Peter Wright, p/b.
10. *My Place*, Sally Morgan, p/b.

Desktop publishing demonstration

The Society of Editors will be holding a desktop publishing seminar on Saturday, 13 August 1988 at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, Kirribilli, commencing at 1.00 pm. Cost \$5.00.

Terry Ryan from Collins Desktop Publishing will be demonstrating how Ventura and Pagemaker can revolutionise the way in which publications are typeset and laid out.

John Stewart, from The Art Machine, will demonstrate computer-aided design, keeping us up-to-date with state-of-the-arts graphics and computer technology.

Please RSVP to Kim Anderson on (02) 406 9222 or (02) 969 6853 AH by 9 August 1988.



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NB: The accounting year is from 1 February to 31 January.