

Blue Pencil

Newsletter of the Society of Editors (NSW)
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March 1989

Next meeting 5 April 1989

The speaker at the next meeting of the Society of Editors, on Wednesday 5 April, will be Margaret Coombs, author of numerous short stories and a work of fiction called *Regards to the Tsar*.

Margaret grew up in Mudgee and Rose Bay, and was educated at Sydney University, graduating with an M.A. in Government. She has also studied clowning, mask work and Commedia dell 'Artes.

Regards to the Tsar contains eleven narratives, each representing a slice of a woman's life, from early childhood to adulthood. The book explores the theme of compliance and spiritual isolation. Copies will be available at a 40% discount at the meeting.

Margaret is known for her entertaining and often provocative discussion, so we look forward to hearing her talk and hope you can join us at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli, on 5 April 1989 at 7.30 pm. Wine, soft drinks and eats will be served at a cost of \$3 if you ring and book by Tuesday 4 April and \$5 if you turn up without booking.

RSVP by telephoning Shirley Jones on (02) 86 3927. Please leave a message with her answering service if she is not in.

Hello, I must be going! Yet one more crowded hour

Our first meeting of 1989, held at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre on 1 March, was the Annual General Meeting. It was rather well attended, and much Society business was discussed and/or transacted in the course of a crowded evening.

It was, I think, a happier occasion than last year's; a judicious combination of hand-wringing and arm-twisting, applied before and during the meeting, produced a sufficiency of people willing to serve a

term for the Society. Although we didn't have the luxury of any contested positions, at least we had the satisfaction of closing the evening with a full committee.

Treasurer Anne Sahlin presented a Financial Statement and reported on the Society's fortunes; at the end of 1988 we had a paid up membership of 180 and a bank account in the pink of condition. However, the account wouldn't be looking quite so healthy if it wasn't for the benevolent neglect practised on us by the

printers at Nepean CAE; to Our Man in Nepean – much thanks!

Interesting reports or comments were also made by Jeane Balcombe (newsletter) and Shirley Jones (freelance register).

This year we may no longer avail ourselves of Nepean CAE's generosity as Dallas Cox has left, and so Jeane is making trial of a commercial agency to lay out and print the newsletter; the February issue of four pages was done by this method, and cost \$125.

Throughout the year Shirley Jones and Kim Anderson have wrestled with problems to do with the freelance register, concerning definition and worthiness for inclusion. For instance, Shirley cited the

difficulty of defining a freelance editor (as opposed, for example, to a commercial business or a packaging house), and fixing the scope and objectives of the register. It was decided during the year that non-members must pay considerably more than in the past to insert an entry since they are using it simply as a vehicle for advertising their services.

But the major difficulty is the rather large number wanting to insert their names that are NOT editors, such as research assistants, and cookery 'editors' (who collect and test recipes), and new graduates without appropriate training or experience. Despite our printed disclaimer, some clients persist in regarding inclusion in the

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Committee 1989**

Kim Anderson (President). Ph 406 9222 (Weldon-Hardie) or 969 6853 (Impresa)

Anne Sahlin (Treasurer). Ph 660 2425 (freelance)

Christine Mackinnon (Minutes).

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

Jill Wilson (Catering). Ph 439 3307 (freelance)

Sue Butler (Library). Ph 805 9810 (Macquarie Dictionary)

Michael Wyatt.

Ken McGuire.

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register as an implicit recommendation or at least an endorsement.

The question of accreditation was raised and discussed. Our immediate concern was to protect the register, but at some point we must bite the bullet and tackle the whole question of accreditation – and, if possible, do better than simply hand the task over to an institution or make it dependent upon some qualifying course.

Discussion then passed to the Graduate Diploma Course in editing at Macquarie University; it was felt this will certainly establish a benchmark of some value. Twenty-five students were accepted this year, the numbers being drawn evenly from government, industry and the ranks of freelances. The total cost to the student is \$1800. The possibility was canvassed of the Society awarding a prize (perhaps \$200) for outstanding achievement, at the end of either the first year or the full course; this idea was well received. For any member wishing to know more about the course, Kim Anderson has a copy of the course structure and will supply it upon request.

The final topic raised for discussion was the Society's library. Like diggers on the fields of Bendigo, we're all convinced there's gold, lots of gold, stashed away in their book-boxes. But it's real pick and shovel work getting it out. In fact the treasure might soon begin to dwindle, for Anne Sahlin in her report commented that "Subscriptions to journals and so on, are way, way down" – evidently just from failure to renew, rather than any deliberate policy decision. As a first step to giving members better access to whatever goodies the library contains, Shirley Jones volunteered to catalogue the contents, and Kim Anderson and Jeane Balcombe to put it on disc. The list will then be circulated to all members.

Before the election of a new committee, Kim Anderson gave generous praise to all the members of the old, and Kim herself received a tribute of applause. Then the following were duly elected:

President, Kim Anderson; nominated by Shirley Jones, seconded by Jill Wilson

Treasurer, Anne Sahlin; nominated by Shirley Jones, seconded by Kim Anderson

Minutes, Christine Mackinnon; nominated by Josephine Bastian, seconded by Anne Sahlin

Newsletter, Jeane Balcombe; nominated by Anne Sahlin, seconded by Kim Anderson

Catering, Jill Wilson; nominated by Kim Anderson, seconded by Jeane Balcombe

Library, Sue Butler

Committee, Ken McGuire; nominated by Shirley Jones, seconded by Anne Sahlin

Committee, Michael Wyatt; nominated by Shirley Jones, seconded by Jill Wilson

No doubt either Ken McGuire or Michael Wyatt will find himself volunteering for the job of compiling the freelance register.

Maureen Colman will represent the Society on the Steering Committee of Macquarie's Graduate Diploma course, in succession to Juliet Richters and Margaret Olds.

Congratulations and best wishes for a happy and successful year.

Goodbye.

Josephine Bastian

Thank you, Josephine, for doing such an excellent job with the minutes over the past few years. From the next issue, Christine Mackinnon will be acting as minute taker.

Editor.

ABPA training courses, 1989

The Australian Book Publishers Association will be running the following courses in 1989.

Middle Management Skills, 27-28 June, Melbourne

Independent Publishing and Packaging, 13-16 August (residential), University House, Australian National University, Canberra

Copy Editing, 12 September, Sydney

Typography and Design, 26 October, Sydney

The Use of Computers in Book Production, date to be announced, Melbourne

For further information contact Judy Vago at the ABPA on (02) 29 5422.

Membership renewals

Time, ladies and gentlemen, please. It is true that our membership year is odd: neither fiscal nor calendar; but would those of you who have not yet sent your annual fees please do so today. For your convenience, a form is enclosed with this issue of *Blue Pencil*.

How to be more creative – seminar



Valerie Parv, lecturer and author of 35 books, will conduct a seminar on this topic at the Oxford Koala Hotel, Sydney on Saturday 20 May.

Subjects include:

- how to encourage inspiration to strike
- four basic skills that will help you to generate ideas
- overcoming common blocks
- creative problem solving

Cost: \$85, which includes coffee, light lunch and full day seminar.

To book, contact
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