

# Blue Pencil

Newsletter of  
the Society  
of Editors  
(NSW)

ISSN 1030-2557

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March 1992

## **Next meeting 7 April 1992: Editorial multi-skilling**

In his spare time, Peter Newton – scientific editor, technical writer, jazz historian and broadcaster – is cataloguing and archiving the papers of linguist William Capell, the doyen of Australian Aboriginal and South Pacific language studies. As deeply committed to the use of plain English in writing as he is to its use in modified Cockney speech, Peter will draw on his wide and varied experience to illustrate his theme for the next meeting: "Editor Agonistes", subtitled, for the non-Latinate, "Universalism Revisited", and further subtitled, for the still mystified, "The Editor in a Multiplicity of Jobs".

**When:** Tuesday, 7 April 1992 at 6.30pm

**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, sandwiches and Chinese finger food, \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members and members who do not book by 3 April.

**RSVP:** Friday, 3 April to the society's answering service (phone 901 9033 – leave a message) or to Janine Flew (phone 887 0177).

*The society books and pays for all those who say they're coming. If you can't make it, please let us know.*

## **Future topics**

Proposed topics for the rest of this year's meetings include romantic fiction publishing, the effect of changes in copyright laws on book-selling, small publishers, AGPS Style Manual, experiences of an editor-in-residence,

impact of computers on design and the designer-editor relationship and children's books.

## **Meeting calendar**

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month. Write these dates in your calendar now and remember to RSVP no later than the preceding Friday:

April 7

May 5

June 2

July 7

August 4

September 1

October 1

November's meeting is usually a Christmas get-together. Watch this space for further details.

## **Beatrice Davis honoured**

Beatrice Davis, credited by playwright Douglas Stewart with "having kept Australian literature alive for more than a quarter of a century" was awarded an honorary doctor of letters degree at Sydney University on February 28. Stewart's was one of 82 tributes in a volume presented to Beatrice Davies when she left Angus and Robertson in 1973.

Other tributes included one from Ruth Park who wrote that Davis' mind was as elegant as her looks. Thea Astley wrote, "Beatrice has taught me more about writing than anyone else". After leaving A&R, Miss Davis worked as NSW editor for Thomas Nelson until 1986. Now retired, Miss Davis denied that she was influential. "I just have friends," she said. Elizabeth Webby, Sydney University's Professor of Australian Literature and editor of the literary magazine Southerly, told Blue Pencil that the Victorian Society of Editors' recent publication of a book about Beatrice Davis prompted her to nominate Miss Davis for the award.

### **March meeting: How a photo library works**

The guest speaker was Nick Brooke, co-proprietor of Horizon Photo Library (the other proprietor was unable to attend due to the demands of their five month old daughter). Nick began by explaining that a stock library was not a place to put a Brahman bull, but was in fact an edited collection of photographic transparencies. Each week Horizon receives hundreds of submissions from photographers of which some 10 to 15 per cent are selected, largely on the basis of clarity.

The subject range of this library covers cities, the environment, scientific material (Nick felt that Horizon is particularly strong in this area), medical procedures, and countries and geographical features around the world.

Ninety per cent of the pictures are colour, but a recent addition to the library is files of 'Movietone News' film, from which Horizon will be able to supply freeze frames.

All stock is stored and retrieved by a computer system which incorporates a 'rights control program' to prevent such occurrences as the same shot being sold for use on two different front covers, and so on.

Material in the library is definitely not 'castoffs'; much of it, including set-up shots, is specifically taken with stock in mind. But the pictures have to be good to be in the library, which is being continually culled and upgraded.

Nevertheless, there is a reluctance to throw out all 'dated' shots as clients might start asking for nostalgia pictures, such as '70s scenes and fashions.

By next year the library will be stored on video disc. This means users will be able to call by modem and browse through numbered visual images displayed on their own screen. The numbers are noted so that the transparencies can then be dispatched.

Library users include advertising agencies, who are always in a hurry and make quick use of the material and turn it around in less than a week, creative artists and book publishers, who seem to be very slow and can take months and months to choose and use.

To take full advantage of a photo library it is most important to brief clearly. If you brief well you will be sent the best of what the library has in that specific area.

Nick illustrated this point with an example of a client who requested pictures of restaurants and then was surprised that all the pictures supplied showed empty eateries. Time would have been saved had the client mentioned that people were wanted too — restaurants with customers are kept in a separate file!

This raised the tricky question of releases for use of pictures with people. The library has releases for all posed close-up and small group shots, but this is not possible for crowd scenes. Obviously, if such a scene is used, an individual should not be singled out, especially if captioned along the lines of 'one in twenty people smoke', 'wear fur coats' and so on.

If the subject requested is not in the files (but if you want a man in a red poncho dancing beside a llama you can forget it), the library will take the shot for you and for its files. But if that's not possible, Horizon directs you to another source who may be able to help.

The price of specially taken pictures depends on the situation, but seven times out of ten it is the same as for stock. In general, charges depend on how the shot will be used, and increase in proportion to the amount of exposure the shot will receive.

Other factors are the size of reproduction, type of media, the number of copies or number of times the picture will be shown, and for how long the picture will appear.

Nick said several times that the price is always negotiable!

Margaret McPhee

### **Letter to the editor**

#### **Hobsons choice**

I was most disappointed, as I am sure were yourself and many others, to learn of the problems of the Register of Freelance Services (last issue: Feb. 92, p 2).

On a more personal level, I note from my cheque stub and a subsequent bank statement that the cheque I wrote for inclusion in mid-September was cashed a mere three days later. (This including time to wing its way to the Evil City from gentle Armidale.)

Whilst admiring the alacrity of Hobsons' accountants in their banking of my payment, it occurs to me that they must have had some

considerable suspicion of their parlous state at that time. In this context their cashing of my cheque, while undoubtedly pragmatic, strikes me as mildly dishonourable.

To compound this, the society's last newsletter states that Hobsons "went into receivership just as the publication was ready to go into typesetting". Does this not actually translate as "At this time Hobsons had not actually done any production at all on the Register — not even keyed in the entries"? The only evidence of production having been to cash the contributors' cheques.

I am irked further by the statement "We are unable to get hold of the material for publication". What exactly does this mean? Are our entries 'owned' by the takeover-person-to-be? We've had our money taken but can't, under the auspices of the society, retrieve the material?

I am irked one stage further by the final sentence: "The firm's buyer has undertaken to publish the register as a matter of urgency ...". This raises two issues:

1. In real terms, what does "as a matter of urgency" mean?
  2. What actual guarantee is there of this?
- Finally, the concluding phrase is perhaps the most unfortunate of all: "... no takeover date has been set". Not *publishing* date — but *takeover* date. The follow-on questions are:
3. Will such a takeover in fact necessarily occur? and
  4. Where are we when it doesn't?

While commiserating with the owners and employees/ex-employees of Hobsons, I nonetheless find — as both a client entering his name in the register for work and a potential employer of others so registered — these events somewhat frustrating.

Can anything more be done than leave matters at their present juncture — one which seems to offer some fair chance of the register not appearing in good time — or even at any time at all this year?

Alternatively — is there a chance of getting my money back or is this an unfortunate case of Hobsons' choice?

Yours faithfully,  
Paul Cliff  
Armidale NSW

PS In the same newsletter (p 6) Anne Sahlin queries whether the society had lost some money last financial year, receiving the reply that "there was insufficient time to have the accounts audited before the AGM".

My understanding is that tabling of audited accounts is fundamental to any AGM — is indeed of its essence. Whilst acknowledging the voluntary nature of the society's office-bearers and their own hectic professional duties (as well as my own appalling record of inactivity on this count), could I nonetheless have the temerity to suggest that in the event of a repetition, the AGM be postponed until the receipt of properly audited accounts.

### Replies to Paul Cliff

#### *1. No choice but Hobsons*

After the February meeting, I was asked by the Society's president, Shalom Paul, to try to find out what was happening to Hobsons and our freelance register. I called the liquidator's office a number of times and was told the new owner was expected to take over the company soon. Eventually I was asked to put everything I had said in writing. The letter below was faxed to Hobsons liquidator on March 19. At the time of going to press, no reply had been received nor were any of my subsequent phone calls returned.

*Daniel Civil, Love and Rodgers, Liquidators*

*Re Hobsons Press and the Editors Society of NSW Freelance Register*

*Dear Daniel,*

*I am writing on behalf of the members of the Editors Society Of NSW to ask you, on behalf of Hobsons (in receivership) whether the above will be published, and if so, when?*

*I understand Hobsons went into liquidation after our members submitted their details and fees to cover both listing and, in some cases, separate advertisements.*

*For the past two months or so, we have been advised of the possibility that Hobsons will be sold.*

*Is this likely is this to proceed and if so, when?*

*Obviously the ideal solution for the Society of Editors is that a new owner be found soon for the company and that he or she print and distribute*

*the register free of charge as originally agreed with Hobsons' Melody Lord.*

*If however, as you seem to suggest, the likelihood of a sale and prompt publication of the register is low, can the fees paid by our members for listing and advertising be refunded to them?*

*In any case, if either Hobsons is not sold, or a new owner will not be bound to undertakings given by the company, can the information, which we understand is presently held as an asset of Hobsons, be returned forthwith to the Editors Society so we can examine ways of printing and distributing it without further inconvenience or embarrassment to all concerned?*

*If the information is returned to us it should be at no cost to the society for several reasons:*

- 1. Our members have already paid fees and obtained nothing in return, and, more importantly,*
- 2. If the information is regarded as an asset of the company, then it is of diminishing value because of the considerable updating it is now likely to require before publication whether by a purchaser of Hobsons or anyone else.*

*Please fax your answers to the above questions as soon as possible so our members will know exactly where they stand.*

## **2. Auditors report**

Pamela Smith expects to have the auditor's report available shortly. It will be printed in the next issue of Blue Pencil.

Margaret Foster, Editor Blue Pencil

## **Industrial Relations Commission to decide AJA claims**

The Industrial Relations Commission will hear the AJA's claims for higher pay rates and a special VDT allowance in the book industry award in the first week in April.

The AJA asked the commission to arbitrate these matters after the Australian Book Publishers Association finally rejected the association's long-standing claims last November. Any increases which may flow from the case will be back paid to 1 February 1992.

Both claims were part of the AJA's original award restructuring agenda. At the time of the agreement in July 1990, however, the AJA and

Grade	Current rate of pay (\$)	AJA claim (\$)	VDT allowance (\$)
Level 1	417.20	479.80	508.60
Level 2	six per cent VDT allowance only		
Level 3			
1	625.60	667.50	707.55
2	667.50	730.10	773.90
3	771.80	834.40	884.50

ABPA were unable to agree on the final rates of pay for Level 1 and Level 3 editors.

The AJA has always argued that, because the overwhelming majority of editors have professional training through tertiary education, they should receive rates of pay that reflect both their duties and professional qualifications. The ABPA argues against professional rates of pay for editors.

The finding last year in a survey conducted by the AJA that about 95 per cent of employed editors have tertiary qualifications will be central to the argument for higher pay rates. The AJA will argue in the commission that the work editors do is undervalued and the professionalism is not currently recognised in the pay rates.

### **VDT allowance**

In 1990 the AJA and the ABPA agreed in principle on a VDT allowance but left the actual amount to be worked out in further negotiations. In November, however, the ABPA told the AJA it would not agree to any allowance.

The AJA has claimed that this allowance should be an all-purpose six per cent allowance paid to any member using VDTs in the creation or editing of work.

The AJA and the ABPA inspected some workplaces last year to determine the use of VDTs in editing. The inspections at Lonely Planet and DW Thorpe in Melbourne found that the use of VDTs in editing was the same as that in journalism and public relations – which pay six per cent.

Jacqui Park, AJA

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***More of an appendage than an editorial, but there might be the odd pontification, this column will appear in Blue Pencil when there are enough items to warrant it. Send your contribution to the Society's PO box or fax it direct to the editor at (02) 528 6315. It can be news, views, shop-talk, an amusing snippet or just gossip — non-libellous of course.***

&Thanks to Kevin Halpin who answered the call for someone to represent the Society on the steering committee of Macquarie University's Graduate Course on Editing and Publishing. Kevin will attend his first committee meeting in June and is happy to liaise between the committee and the Society. You can reach him on (043) 241 416.

&Applications forms and guidelines for the Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship should reach members soon. Under the fellowship, which is jointly sponsored by the ABPA and the Literature Board, a senior editor will be placed with a US publisher for eight or twelve weeks. Applications close on April 23. If you're interested and need to know more call Anneke Baeten at the ABPA on 281 9788.

&Note some changes to committee members' phone numbers:

President Shalom Paul can be reached during business hours at Jamiga Consultants on 743 6255; and

Blue Pencil editor Margaret Foster can be phoned or faxed on 528 6315.

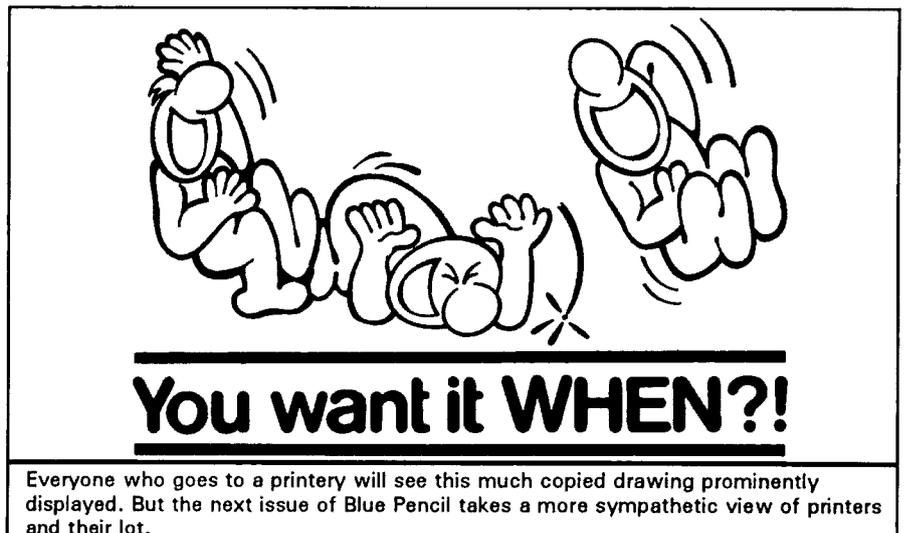
&Spell programs are not only a blessing for bad spellers but some of the substitutes they suggest make even an editor smile. However, a gentleman by the name of Simon Tregonning might not be amused at Word 5.5's suggestion for his name "Simian Trepanning". Others equally dis-

respectful were "Shallot" for Shalom and "Boatrace" for Beatrice. While "Derrick" for Derek was predictable, it led to a look in the Macquarie 2nd Edition, and the discovery that the original Derrick was a hangman at Tyburn, London, about 1600.

&The Australian Society of Indexers is sponsoring courses in indexing at the University of NSW, School of Librarianship. The first, Introduction to Book Indexing, runs from April 22 to May 27 for one evening a week from 6pm to 9pm at a cost of \$265. Other courses to be held later in the year cover indexing technical material and computer-aided indexing. A four-day indexing workshop will also be held, possibly in June. For further details and application forms, call Maureen Henninger at the School of Librarianship UNSW on 697 3589.

&The Australian Society for Technical Communications has set up a special interest, relatively informal group consisting of technical editors, people who work with them and others who want to know more about technical editing. Still in its formative stage, the group has met twice to share ideas and information. It will meet again at 6.30 on Wednesday April 1 in the snack bar on the 3rd floor, NSW Sports Club, 10 Hunter Street. For more details call Suzanne Wood during business hours on 936 1159.

&Contributors to Blue Pencil who send copy on disc will be welcomed with opened, if busy, arms. BUT they should save it to an IBM formatted disc, bug-free of course, in ASCII form.



**The Australian Book Publishers Association Limited**  
and  
**The Society of Editors (NSW)**

*Present*

**EDITORS AND THE PUBLISHING TEAM**  
*The Editor's Roles and Relationships in the Publishing Team*

**Sydney, 30 April 1992**

**Elizabeth Bay Room, Hotel Nikko, Potts Point**

This one-day seminar will be addressing the pivotal role the editor plays in the publishing process. The seminar will focus on how the editor can build more effective working relationships with:

- the Author
- the Production Team
- the Marketing Department
- the Accountant
- your Computer

The speakers will include freelancers, authors, representatives from the production, editorial and financial departments of various reputable publishers. They include; **Margaret Olds, Rob Pullen, Sean Semmler, Rhonda Black, Richard Smart, Paul Donovan, Carol Dettmann.**

This seminar will be extremely beneficial for editors (both in-house and freelancers) wishing to have a clearer understanding of the impact of their work and their relationship with all related departments. It will be most relevant for newcomers to the publishing industry.

Fee: Member \$195.00 , Non-Member \$225.00

*For more information on this seminar please ring Anneke Baeten at the ABPA on 02-281 9788 or fax on 02-281 1073. As usual, Members of the Society of Editors, the Galley Club, and Women in Publishing will be eligible to pay ABPA member fees.*