

# Blue Pencil

Newsletter of  
the Society  
of Editors  
(NSW)

Patron: Hazel Hawke

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MAY 1994

## Political correctness, the topic of the moment — and of the meeting on 7 June

When, at short notice, the speaker arranged for the April meeting was unable to be with us, society president, Robin Appleton led a most stimulating discussion of a subject that seriously concerns both authors and editors — the politically correct use of language.

A number of members gave examples of how in their work they are required to apply guidelines for non-discriminatory language which restrict the use of particular words or phrases seen to be prejudicial or offensive or to improperly discriminate against certain people or groups of people. These guidelines have been written. Universities and other institutions have developed such guidelines to eliminate gender, disability, or ethnic discrimination from their publications. Often the present policy goes beyond non-discriminatory language.

The National Book Council has advised the society that while it has no such formal guidelines, certain publishers have, and the Council views the use of them as a 'basic infringement of free speech rights'.

Discussion at the meeting ranged around particular aspects of the political correctness, including: the effect of gender-biased terms such as 'actress', 'tea lady', and 'waitress', upon the determination of work classifications and remuneration; rights of authors freely to express their views and have them read; the potential loss of literary nuance by the use of currently 'acceptable' words and phrases; the problem of maintaining grammatical correctness while avoiding the use of the gender-specific 'he', 'she', 'he/she', and

s/he; and the importance of language context to the political correctness or otherwise of a word or phrase.

Some of the questions which arose from the discussion are:

- Just what is 'politically correct language'? Does it only apply to people and not to things? Can we say 'disabled parking' and 'disabled toilet', but not 'disabled person'?
- Who is expected to be politically correct? Should it only be required of specialist users of language or of all members of society, many of whom would see the subtle differences between 'tribe' and 'group', 'fireman' and 'fire officer', or 'diabetic person' and 'person with diabetes' as irrelevant to their daily use of language.
- Where does political correctness stop? Will it be applied to reprints of previous literary classics, so destroying their literary merit and the ideas and attitudes they portray?
- How widespread are some of these prescriptions about political correctness in language? Are editors experiencing their intervention into their work?
- What might be the effect upon the uniqueness of writing, if publishers' policy is to apply political correctness guidelines to manuscripts?
- Will authors be asked to replace their words with current politically correct expressions, thus restricting their freedom of expression?
- Is the motive behind the movement towards political correctness purely to protect people's feelings or perceived 'rights', or has it some other political purpose. Is there a hidden agenda?

The discussion at the April meeting resolved few of these questions, but members and non-members alike can pursue further these and other issues at the society meeting on 7 June, when a panel of prominent persons whose business is language will give their views and discuss your questions. Representatives from many societies and institutes, as well as students of journalism, editing, and publishing will be in the audience.

Turn to the booking form in this issue of *Blue Pencil*, and use the tear-off slip to book now for that meeting.

## NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the society will be held on Tuesday, 3 May at 6.30 pm at the Rooftop Function Centre, 4th Floor, Australian Museum. Enter from William Street.

Debbie McInnes will be our guest speaker. From her wide experience in public relations and publicity management, Debbie will talk about the role of the publicist in the publishing industry.

Drinks and light food will be provided.

RSVP by 1 May by phoning Robin Appleton on 560 1017.

Members \$10; non-members and those who forget to notify us before the RSVP date, \$12.

## To Talk of Other Things

In mid-March the *Leipzig Book Fair* was held. For the first time, Lithuanian, Russian, and other Eastern European publishers took part. The newcomers hope to have established a way for publishers from these countries to reach Western markets. Participants were given the opportunity to meet other publishers, and to exchange technical information and ideas. Readings by authors, a children's nook for story-telling, and a readers' area for browsing all proved popular. There was a special display of 'beautiful books'.

The *Australian Book Fair* will be held at the Sydney Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour, from 22 to 24 June. Industry awards will be announced at a dinner to be held on Friday, 24 June. Mark your diaries and be prepared to give a whole day to this event; there is much to look at, and many people to talk to.

*Robin Appleton*

## Letters to the Editors

### Macquarie University's Graduate Diploma

Dear Editors

As Convenor of Macquarie University's Graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing, may I add a few details to the article published about it in last month's *Blue Pencil* and correct some points which were misrepresented then.

The course enjoys support from many quarters of the publishing industry, in the readiness of senior publishing people to come as guest lecturers, and in the provision of practicum placements which give our students a taste of working in a company other than their own.

We are further indebted to Reader's Digest, for its generous sponsorship of a full tuition scholarship, as well as prizes awarded annually to the two best students overall. The Galley Club has also recently made a welcome offer to establish an additional two prizes, to be awarded to the best student in either Science or Literary editing, and the best in

either Marketing or Desktop Publishing.

Admissions to the course are not restricted to an arbitrary number, but applicants must be able to demonstrate significant experience in publishing, editing, or comparable work. Those who are graduates are expected to have had at least 3 years experience; those without a degree must have 8–10 years experience.

*Pam Peters*

## As Others See Us

Rejoining the Society of Editors last year, after an absence of some ten years or so, it was good to see a regular newsletter (even though it was some time before I actually began to receive it regularly!).

It was also very pleasant to find editors and meetings so friendly, where those early ones (editors and meetings!) were so reserved!

Having said that, I must now say that I think we have a long way to go, if we want people to take us seriously. As things are, the Society seems to act largely as a reporting body and a social occasion. All that's fine, whether it's just to keep in touch or serious networking, it's very important. But it's equally important that as a society of professional people we take a more active role.

And that's where we should first look at the newsletter.

First, what about the name — it sounds so indefinite, old-fashioned — and it looks so diffident in that handwritten style of font! Let's have something that looks and sounds positive — perhaps we could have a competition to find a name?

Having done that, let's take a long hard look at the contents. The newsletter of any group should contain much more than a report of what the speaker at the last meeting said and what's coming up at the next.

It should be an ideal venue for the use of publishers when seeking staff. It should provide all editors with news about changes in publishing houses, salary structures, etc. It should have up-to-date news of action by related unions regarding salaries and conditions.

Relevant books should be reviewed. There should be newsy stuff about who's moving where within the publishing world.

There should be plenty of information about seminars, conferences, book shows, etc (Australia-wide, world-wide if possible) preferably presented in calendar form.

Reports and reviews about literary festivals, news from other societies and organisations connected with writing and publishing — these are just a few of the things that would make the newsletter so lively, so interesting, and so valuable that membership would increase and it would also be possible to charge publishers and others for their advertising!

We need to know about all the many things to consider in regards to tax, particularly for freelancers. (And by the way, you'd also get advertising from tax specialists!)

Come on, it's time for a new image for a new breed of editor!

*Brenda Pittard*

*You have mentioned a number of items, Brenda, that the committee and the editors would like to see as regular features of Blue Pencil. The newsletter is put together by three very busy people who would dearly appreciate other members writing reviews, soliciting copy, generally reporting, and keeping their ears open within the industry for those things that we should be telling members. I hope your letter prompts them to come forward; they certainly weren't at the annual general meeting.*

*John Fleming*

## BULLETIN BOARD

### Video Recorder

A video recorder is needed to record the panel discussion on Political Correctness on 7 June. If you can help with this, we will refund costs incurred. Please contact Robin Appleton before 31 May on ph/fax: 560 1017.

### Microsoft Support/ Discounts

Join Microsoft Communiqué and receive:

- monthly magazine full of latest information on products, pricing, upgrades, special offers, and training
- quarterly tips and techniques supplement
- discounts on training
- reductions on computer products, reference books, and magazines.

Joining fee: \$40.

Enquiries: ph: (02) 870 2100, fax: (02) 870 2285.

### FOR SHY MEMBERS

There is a suggestion box on the table by the door at every society meeting. If you have an idea for improving any aspect of society activities, drop a note about it into the box. Of course, you'd have to come to the meeting.

### THINK AGAIN

The closing date for applications for the Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship, 13 May 1994, is fast approaching. If you haven't thought too much about applying, think again. If you can't find the guidelines sent to you by the Australian Book Publishers Association, contact Robyn Lowe at ABPA on (02) 281 9788. It would be fitting if the successful applicant were a member of the society.

### Feedback

We want your feedback about training resources and requirements. Please fill in and return the Feedback form sent out with the April issue of *Blue Pencil*.

### Wanted to Buy

If you're looking for secondhand office equipment, advertise in *Blue Pencil*.

### For Sale

Find a buyer for your early model computer or fax machine by advertising in *Blue Pencil*.

## The Australian Institute of Professional Communicators

The Australian Institute of Professional Communicators (AIPC) originated in 1977 as the Society of Industrial Editors which five years later became the Society of Business Communicators and remained so until 1991 when it was born again as the AIPC.

Membership in 1991 numbered over 500 from such areas as corporate communication, corporate affairs, publications, media, journalism, graphic arts, and print production in private, government, and non-profit organisations, and community groups. Members include salaried and self-employed people working in or hoping to obtain work in the areas listed.

In addition to a monthly newsletter — members receive notices about events including free Members' Nights, for example, on 8 February at designer Sandra Blackburne's McMahons Point offices — and luncheons with interesting guest speakers (e.g. ABCTV's Quentin Dempster) usually at a city location at about \$30.

Other events sponsored by the AIPC include courses in writing and editing. However, the highlight of the AIPC calendar is the Serif Awards. These are awarded for innovation and/or excellence in a number of divisions, for example, Division 1 — Communication Research; Division 2 — Communication Management with categories for customer communication, community communication, business communication, and government communication; and Division 3 — Communication Media with categories including audio-visual, event media, newsletter, and magazine.

If you want to meet and mix with people working in similar areas to yours, or if you want to expand your range of contacts, consider joining the AIPC. Call the secretariat on (02) 241 5451 for more details, application forms etc.

*A personal note: I have been a member of the AIPC for four years. For the first two years, I was working as a salaried employee in the corporate affairs department of a city-based organisation. I found AIPC luncheons not only a welcome and often entertaining break from an otherwise relentless round of deadlines but also a useful forum to swap industry information and whinge about editorial and other matters people in the corporate world don't appreciate the importance of.*

*During the third year of my AIPC membership I became a freelancer (after my city-based organisation decided to move to another city). Naturally, I networked in earnest. The AIPC, Galley Club, Society of Editors, WiP— none was spared in my efforts to tell the world what I had done, could, and would do.*

*Alas, in the fourth year I have been too busy to attend any functions, except of course EdSoc meetings. I have maintained my membership and, like many EdSoc members, really appreciate the newsletter and other correspondence as a way of keeping up-to-date.*

*Margaret Foster*

## Publicity in Publishing

Debbie McInnes is a publicist. She has worked in public relations for the past eight years producing campaigns for Australian and internationally known authors and celebrities such as Jackie Collins, Steve Waugh, Kay Cottee, Robert Ludlum, Julian Barnes, Robert Drewe, and Clive James, to name but a few. She also handles the Australian management of Kathy Lette and Suzanne Chick.

In the role of Publicity Manager, Debbie has devised publicity strategies for Grafton Books (an imprint of HarperCollins) and Pan Macmillan, handling promotions in the areas of the arts, sport, entertainment, business, health, education, and leisure.

Her services for clients are many and varied. They include planning campaigns; obtaining national, metropolitan, and regional TV and press coverage; arranging serial and extract sales; organising press confer-

## New members

We welcome the following new members to the society and look forward to their sharing experiences with us each month at our society meetings.

Jean Cooney; Jon Forsyth; Leonie Draper; Catherine Duncan; Flavia Hodges; Penny Martin; Phillip Ross; Jane Whisker.

ences, launches, and speaking engagements; accompanying national and regional tours; and copyrighting.

At the next society meeting on 3 May, Debbie McInnes will share with us some of the experience she has gained working as a publicist in the publishing industry. Turn back to page 1, read the 'Next Meeting' box, and book now.

## The Sub-licensing Guide

The Australian Book Publishers Association has kindly donated to the society library a copy of *The Sub-licensing Guide: A Handbook for the Most Commonly Requested Uses of Copyright Material*. Published by the ABPA, the guide outlines the issues and processes that publishers dealing in copyright need to consider. Topics treated include: free use and fair use, first and second serial rights, anthology and quotation rights, photocopying, radio and/or television rights, and electronic rights.

Editors involved in the use of copyright material would find the guide extremely helpful. Copies can be obtained from the ABPA, 89 Jones Street, Ultimo NSW 2007, phone: (02) 281 9788, for \$20 each.



## How to Use Type

The Society of Editors (NSW) was represented at the March dinner meeting of The Galley Club, where the guest speaker, Colin Wheildon, discussed the validity — or otherwise — of some elements of typographic design. Colin is the Managing Editor of *The Open Road*, the magazine of the NRMA in New South Wales. As a journalist-typographer, he has studied newspaper and magazine design for more than 30 years.

Colin discussed some of the 'rules' of typography that have evolved, with, as he sees it, 'very little empiricism to support them'. The bottom line is legibility.

The results of Colin's research are available in booklet form. *Communicating — Or Just Making Pretty Shapes* is highly recommended for editors with an interest in or responsibility for design and layout. It covers subjects such as serif versus sans serif body type, headline type, the use of colour and tints, italic type, justified versus ragged type, inserts, widows, etc.

The purpose of the book 'is to warn of the horrible damage some typographical elements, if used in the wrong context or thoughtlessly, can do to our creations.' To put it bluntly, Colin says, 'it's possible to blow away more than half our readers simply by choosing the wrong type'.

*Communicating — Or Just Making Pretty Shapes* is available for \$10 (including postage and handling) from Newspaper Advertising Bureau of Australia Ltd, PO Box 314, Milsons Point NSW 2061 or Level 10, 80 Alfred Street, Milsons Point, phone: 955 8599.

The Galley Club holds regular meetings and seminars on topics such as desktop publishing, colour separation, and other aspects of print production. Enquiries: Liz Goodman, phone: (02) 973 1970.

**Deadlines for 1994  
Blue Pencil issues:  
10 May, 14 June, 12  
July, 16 August, 13  
September, and 11  
October.**

## Bon Voyage, Rhana!

On 2 May, society committee member and membership secretary Rhana Pike will leave for Quebec City, Canada, to attend the annual conference of the Council of Biology Editors, an American society of which she is a member. The conference is from 13 to 17 May, after which Rhana will attend a short, two-day course for journal editors.

She also plans to contact the Canadian Society of Editors and take the opportunity to see some of Canada other than Quebec, before returning to Australia on 26 May. Rhana will report to us about the conference and the course at the society meeting on 2 August.

## ABPA Training Events

The Australian Book Publishers Association will present the following training events in the coming months.

23 May: Public Sector Publishing (Canberra)

26 – 29 May: Two-day Education (Gold Coast)

June: Small and Regional Publishing (Brisbane)

Twilight seminars from 4 to 8 pm will also be held in Sydney in May (Special sales for small publishers) and June (Economics — tertiary publishing).

For details of any of the courses, ring Robyn Lowe on (02) 281 9788.

## Your Committee 1994

### President and Publicity

Robin Appleton  
Ph: 560 1017  
Fax: 560 1017

### Secretary

Val Phillips  
Ph: 697 4345 (w)  
918 7031 (h)

### Treasurer

Charles Beelaerts  
Ph: 388 1456 (w)  
327 6273 (h)  
Fax: 371 8635

### Catering

Terry Johnston  
Ph: 805 7465 (w)  
Fax: 805 7480

### Membership

Rhana Pike  
Ph: 569 7831

### Newsletter

John Fleming  
Ph: 529 8638  
Fax: 529 9764

Robyn Flemming  
Ph: 326 2925  
Fax: 327 2963

Carol D'Costa  
Ph: 954 0711

A short item of about 250 words from each of four of our members (about 2% of the society) would have filled this page with news or views for all members to share.

# Political Correctness

## Panel Discussion for All Communicators — June

Most communicators, and many organisations, have adopted the use of non-discriminatory terms in spoken and written communications. This policy is generally acknowledged as 'fair'.

Fewer people are promoters of the more extreme forms of 'political correctness', or 'pc', but a vocal minority would like all communicators to accept its validity and use it in all media and training.

The multiplicity of 'pc' will be discussed on 7 June at a panel discussion to be chaired by Wendy Bacon (Director of the Australian Centre for Independent Journalism [DACIJ], lecturer, and lawyer). If you have comments or questions on 'political correctness', this is your opportunity to put them to the panel.

The panel includes:

- Sasha Soldatow (author)
- Lynne Spender (author, Executive Officer, Australian Society of Authors)
- Robyn Lowe (Australian Book Publishing Association, Training Officer; Women in Publishing, Training Officer)
- Joshua Dowse (author, editor, non-practising lawyer)
- Peter West (senior lecturer in Education, University of Western Sydney)
- Judith Curr (Publishing Director, Transworld Publishers [Australia] Pty Ltd).

Food and drink provided.

*Venue:* Level 4, Australian Museum (William Street entrance)

*Date:* Tuesday, 7 June

*Time:* 6 pm (for 6.15 pm)

*Cost:* \$15 (\$5 for full-time students)

*Booking deadline:* 31 May

*Enquiries and registration:* Robin Appleton. Phone: 560 1017, Fax: 560 1017.

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Send your cheque/money order made payable to The Society of Editors (NSW) to:

The Society of Editors  
PO Box 254  
Broadway NSW 2007

**by: 31 May 1994**

Name: -----

Address: -----

Phone: -----

Fax: -----