

# Blue Pencil

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

October 1989

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The next monthly meeting will be held in March 1990. Details of the speaker and venue will appear in a *Blue Pencil* nearer that time.

The Society's Christmas get-together will be on Thursday 30 November at the Safari Restaurant in Newtown. Further details and a booking form are enclosed with this issue of *Blue Pencil*.

## Last meeting – Kathy Gerrard

The guest speaker at our October meeting was picture researcher Kathy Gerrard. Kathy is experienced in researching diverse subjects ranging from natural history to cookery. According to Kathy, no matter what the subject, the same skills are required.

Kathy explained that a picture researcher is responsible for obtaining photographs and illustrations suitable for the particular manuscript in hand. After reading the manuscript, the picture researcher consults the editor and author so that ideas for illustrations can be pooled. Then the sources of the necessary photographs are traced and pictures formally requested. If an illustrator is required, he or she needs to be briefed.

Once the photographs have been obtained they need to be edited, that is, selected on the basis of aesthetic, factual or technical suitability for reproduction. These pictures are then keyed into the text at galley proof

stage, then the galleys and the pictures are passed on to the designer. The picture researcher also obtains reproduction rights, checks camera-ready art, in particular the picture credits and, after printing, returns the photographs to their sources.

A good picture researcher has an enquiring mind and a retentive memory and is always looking for possible sources of material for future projects. A clippings folder is useful for magazine or newspaper articles.

### Photographic sources

Photo sources are difficult to track down; often it is easy to find the name but not the address. Kathy finds the following publications valuable.

*British (with international contacts):*

- British Association of Picture Libraries and Agencies Handbook
  - Mary Evans' Picture Researchers Handbook
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- Freelance Photographers Handbook
- The Creative Handbook
- Photo Marketing Handbook

*American:*

- Literary Market Place
- Black Book
- American Society of Photographers
- Readers Digest Photographers Source Book
- National Geographic Index

*Other sources*

Picture credits in published books; international magazines and journals; museums, libraries and art galleries, universities and specialist organisations such as CSIRO, NASA, World Heritage

Council, other organisations specific to the subject being researched, embassies and consulates, in particular to aid in identifying the existence of museums and galleries.

Authors are good sources of information. Often they supply photographs or are able to provide contacts. They should always be consulted so that they can approve the choice of illustrations, particularly where scientific or technical accuracy is important.

It is essential that pictorial material is up to date and accurate and, obvious though it may seem, relevant to the text.

If an illustrator is required, the picture researcher needs to supply accurate and comprehensive reference material on which illustrations can be based.

**Society of Editors (NSW), PO Box 254, Broadway 2007  
Committee 1989**

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Anyone wishing to know more about the Society may write to PO Box 254, Broadway 2007 or telephone any committee member.

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*Blue Pencil* is published irregularly by the Society of Editors (NSW). Typesetting and layout are done on an Apple Macintosh computer by The Creative Computer Company. Printing is done by The Paper Plate. Both companies are located in St. Martins Tower, Sydney and at 432B Church Street, Parramatta.

## Requesting photographs

Kathy explained that the procedure for requesting photographs is not as simple as one might think. At least seven distinct steps are involved.

1. Prepare a detailed, specific list to send to various agencies or photographers.
2. If suitable pictures have been identified in other books, send photocopies of them with the list. Also state that the photocopies are to serve as a guide for the type of picture required and that if something similar or better is available you would like to see it.
3. Indicate the shape of the picture required; vertical or horizontal, close up, general or specific scene.
4. Explain any peculiarities such as why a particular shot is required, particularly if this helps to locate specific pictures. Perhaps include a copy of the relevant section of the text.
5. Specify the rights required (ie, world, Australia and New Zealand, UK, US), the print run and the size of reproduction, and request itemised price rates.
6. Give the date you require the pictures. Ask them to notify as to whether they can supply any material.
7. Follow up the request by fax or telephone call.

## Other factors

According to Kathy many Australian agencies have international contacts and local photographers often have collections of international photographs. However, because pictures are important selling points of a book, a thorough worldwide search is advisable to ensure best results and a fresh look. Many photographs are

“done to death”, so it is important to avoid using merely the most accessible, the most beautiful or the most common.

Price is a major consideration. Kathy negotiates the price before camera-ready art stage as price can influence the size of reproduction. Quality always commands a higher price.

Kathy advised the picture researchers among us to try to obtain several pictures of the same subject to give the designer a choice. Also, she advises that it is important to be sensitive to the manuscript and to avoid racist or other discriminatory pictures.

Transparencies are expensive and safe handling is imperative. Most photo agencies require returns within a specific time and late penalties can be incurred. Loss or damage fees are very high. Couriers or registered post are the best means of transport. It is important, too, to credit photographs correctly as errors or omissions often attract a 20% loading fee.

Picture research is a vital part of any publishing project. A team effort is necessary together with a thorough search of sources and frequent communication with authors and agencies. A good book will be proof of success.

**Christine Mackinnon**

## Membership fees to go up

In 1990 membership fees will rise from \$20 to \$25. This fee will, for the first time, include the cost of attendance at meetings. Guests will be charged \$5 per meeting. Our membership year runs from 1 February to 31 January, so you do not need to send your renewal fee now, though you are welcome to do so. New members who join now will be considered paid up for 1990.

## **The humorous publisher**

Maureen Colman sent in the following piece. It was published in the Bulletin, 16 October 1984. Greenies may need to drink some camomile tea or have a quick shot of environmentally sound, bogwater whisky, before reading it.

Publishers tend to take themselves seriously and never more than when discussing the format of their books. Houghton Mifflin of the US, however, has on the title page of its Science Made Stupid! which is published this month: "This book is set in 12-point Monotone Bimbo, with chapter headings in Basketball Overextended. Both faces were designed by the great Adolf Pffupff and are characterised by noble, full-bodied proportions with complex, slightly fruity serifs. It was printed by upset lithography on 70-lb Tropicana Ivory mislaid Cowabunga Slipshod Overcoat. The ink came out of a can. This paper is 100 percent unrecycled. Whole forests were levelled, thousands of small furry animals left homeless and vast virgin landscapes devastated to make this book."

## **University of Chicago publishing courses and seminars**

The University of Chicago Publishing Program offers a range of noncredit courses and seminars. The workshops include:

- Management development for publishing professionals (3-day seminar, 19-21 April 1990; \$325)
- Workshop for experienced manuscript editors (Saturday 28 April 1990; \$195)
- The author-editor relationship (Sunday 29 April 1990; \$195)
- Overview of acquisitions in book publishing (Friday 18 May 1990; \$195)
- Workshop for experienced acquisitions editors (Saturday 19 May 1990; \$195)
- Computerised manuscript processing: an introduction to the technology (Saturday 12 May 1990; \$195)
- Electronic manuscripts and the publishing firm (Sunday 13 May 1990; \$195)
- Paperback acquisitions: opportunities, pitfalls and payoffs in acquiring paperback reprints (Saturday 26 May 1990)

The cost of each workshop also covers lunches and course materials. For further information contact Jeane Balcombe on (02) 212 4600 or telephone the University of Chicago direct on (0011) 312 702 1722.