

# Blue Pencil

Newsletter of the Society of Editors (NSW)

ISSN 1030-2557

October 1990

Next meeting

## Christmas dinner – 27 November 1990

**D**on't miss out on this special event – for \$25 you can enjoy a Chinese banquet, catch up with editing friends, and be entertained by our speaker, Jim Bebbington. The dinner will be held at the Bowlers Club in the City. See the enclosed notice for further information.

October meeting

## Editing magazines and journals

**T**he three editors who spoke at our last meeting work on very different journals/magazines, but all had one thing in common – the one-person band syndrome.

### House journal

Margaret Foster is the editor of *The Tiger*, Esso Australia's fortnightly in-house newsletter. *The Tiger* was born in February 1989; previously there had been

### Future meetings

Meetings of the Society are held in the first week of the month.

**27 November:** Christmas dinner. See details in this issue.

**5 February 1991:** Jacqui Kent, President of the Society in the early 1980s, on the early years of the Society; AGM

### Inside

- 1 Editing magazines & journals
- 5 Graduate Diploma in Editing & Publishing
- 5 Book editing course
- 6 Australian Book-seller & Publisher
- 6 Committee wanted
- 6 Society of Editors (Victoria)
- 7 Society of Editors (South Australia)
- 7 Society of Business Communicators
- 7 Australian Society of Authors
- 8 NSW Society for Technical Communication
- 8 Galley Club

a one-page newsletter which, although timely, was a throwaway with no pictures. This was succeeded by a glossy, four-colour monthly in which news was often out of date. The current *Tiger* is a marriage of these two, offering both pictures and up-to-date news.

Although largely a good news magazine, *The Tiger* covers events such as dry holes, spills, strikes and other not-so-good happenings. The aim of the newsletter is to report news that affects, or is about, employees.

Margaret does just about everything except print the newsletter—she writes most articles, commissions others, edits, subedits, and then lays out the magazine using the Ventura desktop publishing program. Contents include

regular columns such as “People on the move”, classifieds (but no paid advertising), and a “Column 8”. At the planning stage, possible feature articles are often listed from sources as diverse as the public relations department, government affairs, and employee submissions, but as the deadline draws near some of these drop off, pictures or articles fail to arrive or articles are not approved. Margaret then dips into her bottom drawer to find a timeless piece that can fill the gap.

Much of the content comes via the electronic mail system and can be imported directly into the word processor. Margaret creates two DOS directories and reconciles them when the layout is complete to check that nothing has been left

## **Society of Editors (NSW), PO Box 254, Broadway 2007 Committee 1990**

Michael Wyatt (President). Ph 699 9491 (Keyword Editorial Services)

Kim Anderson (Library and Immediate Past President). Ph 888 4111 (Angus & Robertson)

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

Garry Cousins (Membership Secretary). Ph 955 1525

Lesley Dow (Minutes Secretary). Ph 906 7122 (Sydney University Press)

Valerie Marlborough (Publicity). Ph 417 4288 (McGraw Hill)

Kathy Metcalfe (Treasurer). Ph 888 4111 (Angus & Robertson)

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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out. Her computer occasionally goes into a catatonic state when Ventura is running, so everything has to be saved frequently. By Wednesday night copy has been subbed, headlines are in place, and picture sizes and croppings have been done. The copy, with coded spaces for pictures, is sent to the printer and Margaret takes a photocopy home to proofread. On Thursday morning corrections are collated, pictures are scanned, tiger symbols are dropped into white spaces and captions are checked so that the finished artwork can go off for printing. It is usually Thursday afternoon when Margaret is asked what is going into the next issue, something that she likens to a mother emerging from labour and being asked when she is going to have her next baby!

### **Glossy magazine**

Valerie Stead is the editor of a number of bridal magazines and books published by a small publishing company. The main magazine, *Bride to Be*, is a 220-page quarterly, half of it advertising. There are usually four feature articles per issue and the photographs for these come from advertisers (who get large photograph credits). Valerie then writes up to 1000 words per article on her PC and the disk goes to the in-house typesetter and then to the art director.

Travel usually occupies a big section and until last year one of the “perks” of Valerie’s job was travelling to the South Pacific with models and photographers. Then it dawned on Valerie that these trips were of benefit to the local tourist bureaus but absolute hell for her! Fashion is naturally another major input but the fashion “editor” is a stylist who works with photographers and models

rather than with words, so fashion articles need to be fixed up by Valerie.

Editorials are a bit of a nightmare and are in reality “advertorials”, though advertisers can only insert photographs, not text. The editorial can be on anything of interest to brides-to-be. The photographs used usually underlie a promotion, for example a quiz or competition being run by the advertiser.

Valerie is the only editor on staff and her job includes writing, researching, editing and proofreading. She does not run an empire, in fact she has no secretary and not even a visitor’s chair.

Valerie feels she is reasonably well paid and enjoys her job—despite the occasional irritation—enough to have stayed for eight years. The main job requirements are to be able to write, spell, use a computer, and have a few ideas. The most vital requirement, however, is to know the market.

### **Book review journal**

Gregory Harvey is publisher, editor, subscription manager and most other things of the new book review magazine *Editions*. Dissatisfied with what was currently available in book review journals in Australia, Gregory started *Editions* in August 1989. He feels that the literary scene in Australia is sufficiently well-developed that it is possible to review Australian books alongside overseas books and to treat them on the same level.

Modelled on *The Times Literary Supplement* and the *New York Review of Books*, *Editions* aims to be more accessible to the intelligent general reader than either of these overseas journals. The aim is to open up a forum where

writers can talk about their ideas and books to a wider audience without patronising them.

*Editions* concentrates on book reviews and interviews with authors although there are the occasional departures into articles of interest to readers, writers and the book industry. During its first year, *Editions* (that is, Gregory plus one full-time editor) concentrated on building up a network of academics who were commissioned to write reviews with meat on them – providing general readers with solid information on the books reviewed. Ideas for articles were discussed by Gregory and the editor, Jose Borghino, and a reviewer with specialised knowledge would be approached. *Editions* publishes five to six feature articles of up to 4000 words but the bulk of each issue comprises single or dual book reviews of 800–1500 words. There are the usual difficulties with length, and in these cases Jose and/or Gregory have the painful job of cutting excess words while not ruining the integrity of the review. Gregory has found that few academics can write to the correct length, nor can they write headlines or introductory paragraphs, so his job is to do this for them. There are no regular columns as yet in *Editions* but the aim is to work towards having a number of contributing editors.

Newspaper format was chosen largely because it is cheaper and because a magazine format would bring *Editions* into direct competition with glossy colour magazines displayed alongside it in newsagents. It is produced on an Apple Mac, using Express and Word-perfect for quality, flexibility and affor-

dability. The computer is also used for contract desktop publishing jobs – a sideline that helps to subsidise the production of *Editions*. A bureau provides bromides, the pictures are stripped in and the artwork goes off to the printer. By using Linotron, full tabloid pages are produced, saving the time and effort involved in laser printing A4 pages and then cutting and pasting. Gregory, who does all the production work, feels that pictures are important to break up solid text and to make the magazine more accessible on a visual and design level (it is here that *Editions* parts company with *The Times Literary Supplement*). It is unlikely, however, that *Editions* will move to scanning pictures, because this process takes up a great deal of memory and requires expensive equipment.

Production costs must be kept to a minimum so that as much money as possible can be devoted to the more difficult area of distribution. The aim is to distribute *Editions* to all major Australian cities. Currently, *Editions* is distributed through newsagents and selected bookshops in Sydney, but the key to its success lies in subscriptions. Aiming at an eventual circulation of eight to ten thousand, sales of four thousand are needed to break even. Undercapitalised and funded initially from beggings, borrowings and stealings, the magazine has just received a (too small) grant from the Australia Council. With limited advertising and limited counter sales, *Editions*, published six times a year and selling for \$3 an issue, is a financially “marginal” publication – staggering but surviving.

**Lesley Dow**

## Graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing

**M**acquarie University's School of English and Linguistics offers a full postgraduate program in editing and writing for editors and others engaged in the publishing industry or in publications work in government departments. The program runs part-time over two years, with classes conducted on two evenings a week.

The program is designed to "professionalise" the work of editors and publishing personnel—to develop their existing skills and set their present expertise in a full theoretical and practical context. It offers core courses in language, editing (including copyediting practices), writing, the design and production of books, and publishing management. Option courses allow students to explore specialised areas of editing, such as literary and scientific editing, and of book production (for

example, desktop publishing). A week-long practicum is arranged for each student at a publishing house other than the one they are currently employed at.

For further information, apply to the postgraduate studies office on 805 7344. The fee for the two-year program is \$4000; students are exempt from the Higher Education Tax.

Applications for 1991 close on 2 November 1990.

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### Book editing course

**T**he Journalists Agency is running a five-day course on book editing. The course is designed for new and trainee book editors, authors and hopeful authors, former book editors returning to the field, and secretarial staff who are involved in editorial work.

The course is being run from 7 to 11 January 1991 and costs \$295. A limited number of places are also being offered in either or both of two special sessions: Advanced Proofreading (10 January)

and a Practical Editing Workshop (11 January). The course will be run in Sydney and the hours will be 10 am to 4.30 pm. For further information contact Dixie Gibson on 550 9749.

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### Management development course

The ABPA ran a one-day workshop on "Management Development for the Book Publishing Industry; Planning & Problem Solving" on Saturday 13 Oc-

tober. Unfortunately notification was received too late for inclusion in *Blue Pencil*.

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## Special offer

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# Australian Bookseller and Publisher

**T**he publishers of *Australian Bookseller and Publisher* are offering a special reduced subscription rate for one year only to new members of the Society of Editors (NSW).

Existing members who are non-subscribers can receive a year's subscription for \$5 if they send a cheque to Gary Cousins, 2/2 Whatmore Street, Waver-

ton 2060, by 14 November 1990. Please make your cheque payable to the Society of Editors (NSW).

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## Your opportunity

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# Aspiring committee members please step forward

**A**pril may be the cruellest month but February is the time when the Society elects its committee for the following twelve months, and this coming February, none of the existing committee members is standing for re-election.

It's not that we don't enjoy our committee work—we're just "burnt out", as they say in trendier industries. We feel the Society needs new people with fresh ideas and unsapped energy (yes, we'll stoop to flattery).

So if you think you or someone you know would make a great committee member, please let one of the present committee know, or come along to the AGM in February.

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## Editors' Societies around Australia

# Victoria

**A**t the September meeting of the Victorian Society of Editors the speaker was Bruce Pascoe, author, publisher and book and magazine distributor. In October the Society celebrates its twentieth anniversary and its guest speaker will be John Curtain.

In the September issue of the Society's newsletter, John Bangsund has written an interesting piece on the use of parenthesis within parenthesis. John holds the view that you can use parentheses within parentheses, and that you should not use square brackets within paren-

theses because the reader might think the square brackets contained an editorial comment. (I'm sorry if this reads like a tongue twister, but there's no other way of saying it clearly.) [What do other members think? Ed.]

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## South Australia

**T**he speaker at the October meeting of this society will be Brian Matthews, writer, scholar and senior lecturer in English and Australian literature at Flinders University. His topic will be working with editors.

The Society's newsletter, . . . *the word*, news about the Society's freelance contains an article on the restructuring register. of the AJA Book Editors Award, and

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### Other groups

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## Society of Business Communicators

**T**he Society's September newsletter carried an article by Mike Minchan on getting your message to millions and a report on the August luncheon, at which Hugh Mackay spoke on why people do not listen. At the October luncheon, Louisa Wright will speak about her experiences as an ABC radio correspondent in the Middle East.

The advertised speaker for the November 27 luncheon is Gareth Powell.

The Society's Christmas luncheon will be at Taronga Park Zoo on Monday 10 December.

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## The Australian Society of Authors

**T**he October newsletter from this Society carried news of winners of the Banjo Awards, the Qantas New Writers Award, the NSW State Literary Awards, the 1990 Warana Awards, the 1990 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards, and the 1990 Australian/Vogel \$10 000 Literary Award. Other news included the information that books being shipped from the United States to Iraq have been exempted from the US government's trade embargo. It seems that the troubles came just when US shipments of reading material to Iraq had quadrupled.

The Society of Authors keeps a register of members prepared to accept ghost-writing projects on commission. If you are interested in this sort of work, you can have your name included in the register if you first become a full mem-

ber of the Society. The ASA also has a "silver list" of shops and services that offer ASA members a discount. The list apparently includes bookshops, accommodation, office equipment, travel and superannuation.

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# NSW Society for Technical Communication

**T**he October newsletter carries two major articles, one on Electronic Publishing Systems, comparing the features of EPS and desktop publishing systems, and the other on screen design for online text.

The third issue of the Society's journal, *keyword*, carries articles on whether technical communicators need a code of ethics, using an employment agency (of particular relevance to freelance editors), computer-mediated instruction, and reviews of books on technical writing and editing.

Over the weekend of 20–21 October the Society held its Technical Communication Seminar, entitled "Bringing Tech-

nology Closer". It was attended by a number of our own members, two of whom presented papers: Michael Wyatt on "Indexing Technical Documentation" and Jean Weber on "The Role of the Editor in a Technical Writing Team".

The proceedings of the 1989 Seminar have been published, and are available for \$18 from the Society at PO Box R812, Royal Exchange, Sydney 2000.

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## Galley Club of Sydney

**T**he September newsletter carries a report of a talk given by Sally Milner of Sally Milner Publishing (and Vice-President of the ABPA) on the trials and rewards of independent publishing.

A new regular column on "Production Traps" tells how to calculate a proposed book's spine width and weight.

The October issue contains a report of a visit to the typesetting firm Excel Im-

aging, and advertises a tour of the APPM paper mill at Shoalhaven to be held on Saturday 27 October. "Production Traps" explains how your printer treats photos.

### "Editions"

If you are interested in subscribing to *Editions*, described on pages 3 and 4, at \$16 for six issues, write to Gregory Harvey, PO Box 1558, Potts Point, NSW 2011, or phone him on 357 2055.