

October meeting: Guided tour of a pre-press bureau

Places were quickly booked for the tour of the pre-press bureau, Photoset Computer Service (PCS). Divided into three groups, we were taken through the various departments to learn about the dazzling world of pre-press computers.

We were shown the Hell Digiset 380, a high-speed dedicated photo typesetter (which is the same model used by *The Sydney Morning Herald*) and a slower but more modern Linotropic 300 which takes PostScript files. Bromides can be produced from manuscript, disk or modem. Although most work is from IBM compatible PCs, bromides from Macintosh files can be produced if files are 'printed to disk' (that is, produced as a PostScript version).

PCS do the typesetting for *The Australian Women's Weekly*, *Australian Business*, *Wheels* and *The Bulletin*. *The Women's Weekly* is received on disk in 'Ventura', and illustrations are scanned in by a Chromograph Scanner 380. Text and pictures are combined, pages assembled and colour retouched on the ChromaCon 2000.

Four-colour separation scanning can combine mono and colour elements (such as text and pictures) in final page format. Colour correction was demonstrated to us on the ChromaCon 2000 by manipulating the dress colour and background of a scanned picture of a model. 'Touching up' was easily performed by carefully removing lines (already few in number) from under the model's eyes. PCS use Du Pont's chromalin and Fuji proofing systems and also produce final film.

When asked what the savings were in receiving copy on disk compared to the older method of 'keying in' and typesetting, we were answered around 60% in time *and* money.

PCS also offer computer software training courses based on MS-DOS system.

Altogether, the tour was fascinating and provided editors with a greater understanding of typesetting and computer page assembly.

Committee news

Recently, the Society was approached by Andrew Kelly, President of the Society of Editors (Vic), to conduct a national conference in conjunction with ABPA's Australian Book Fair in June and to establish a national federation of editors.

The Society has already undertaken to hold a training seminar jointly with the ABPA in late April. Committee members believed that editors and their employers in Sydney have the funds and time for only one seminar over that period and so declined the offer of the conference.

The Committee whole-heartedly supported the proposal to form a national federation of editors' societies. Some of its possible functions envisaged include: a national voice for editors; a united front in negotiations with bodies such as the ABPA; a national forum for the exchange of ideas and views; cooperative work on accreditation and training; the organisation of national conferences and nationwide training; and a heightened community profile.

Members are quite welcome to discuss their ideas on the proposed federation with committee members.

Welcome to new members

Joshua Dowse
Suzanne Eggins
Gary Hayes
George Rupesinghe
Jeremy Steele

Hope we see you at the Christmas dinner!

Editor-in-Residence 1992

The Australia Council has announced the first Editor-in-Residence, to be stationed in Western Australia during 1992.

The successful applicant is the Society of Editors (NSW)'s own Robin Appleton, who takes up the position next March for a period of six months. Her job will be to advise groups and individuals on projects for publication, and to raise the profile of editors generally.

Our congratulations and best wishes to Robin in her challenging role.

Special Interest group on technical editing

Are you involved in technical editing? Perhaps you should join the Technical Editing Special Interest Group.

Some issues that the group may be looking at include:

- Management
Defining the editor's role; delegating authority to go with the responsibility
- Style guides
- Editor-writer relationship
- Skills
Editing tables and figures; editing indexes; editing tables of contents.

This group is in the planning stage so, if there is something you would like to discuss, contact the group now.

Further information:

Susanne Wood

Ph: (02) 936 1159 (9 am-5 pm)

Jean Weber

Ph: (02) 809 4610 (8 am-9 pm), or write to Jean at 7 Nicoll Avenue, Ryde NSW 2112.

ABPA Society Sydney Christmas Dinner

Christmas will be celebrated by the ABPA Society on Wednesday 27 November at The Arizona Parkroyal, 150 Day Street, Sydney.

Tickets (\$40.00 for members and \$45.00 for non-members) include a 'Tex-Mex' meal and dancing.

Send cheques made payable to ABPA to Meredith Curnow, ABPA, Suite 59, 89 Jones Street, Ultimo NSW 2007 by 18 November.

Calendar notes

This is the last *Blue Pencil* for this year; the next newsletter will be published in January 1992. The next meeting, which will be the Annual General Meeting, will be held on Tuesday, 4 February 1992.

The Australian Institute of Professional Communicators (AIPC)

The September newsletter of the AIPC has a crisp look about it reflecting The Society of Business Communicators' transformation to The Australian Institute of Professional Communicators.

The AIPC has a history of change and development going back to 1977, when the AIPC's predecessor, the Society of Industrial Editors (SIE), was founded by Stan Benson, Harold Hood and Peter Turnbull. The original SIE was founded, to some degree, on the ideas of the San Francisco-based International Society of Business Communicators and London's British Society of Industrial Editors. In 1982, the SIE's name was changed to the Society of Business Communicators to better reflect membership.

The AIPC regularly holds meetings and organises interesting, well-structured courses. Unfortunately, the majority of courses are certainly out of the price range of many freelance editors and appear to be aimed at corporate bodies fulfilling the Training Guarantee Act.

Non-discriminatory language

A book that could be useful to our readers is *Non-Discriminatory Language*.

The publishers comment that:

It discusses ways in which language can contribute to discrimination, and describes various linguistic mechanisms used to express discrimination.

It also provides extensive guidelines on how to avoid discriminatory language relating to sex, race, ethnicity and disability in the Australian context.

This book will prove particularly useful to all those who want to avoid linguistic discrimination, and to those who need to prepare guidelines on using non-discriminatory language in specific organisations.

Non-Discriminatory Language is written by Anne Pauwels and is an AGPS Press publication (\$16.95). ISBN 0-644 -2969-7. Cat. No. 90-1656-1.

Seminar 91

The third annual seminar of the Australian Society for Technical Communication (NSW) was held on 19th and 20th October at Kuring-gai College.

Associate Professor of Communication, Terry Mohan, gave the opening address on readability. Recent research suggests that structural devices (such as headings, topic sentences and repetition), anecdotes and analogies are more useful to non-specialist readers than to specialist readers. Professor Mohan also mentioned in his address plans at the University of Technology for a new postgraduate course in technical communication.

The guest speaker, John Mackin (Fujitsu), gave an entertaining and thought-provoking talk on creativity bringing order *to* chaos and the necessity of rules.

Dr Pam Peters of Macquarie University discussed style and style checkers ('Rightwriter' and 'Grammatik IV'). Other topics ranged from standard generalised mark-up language configuration control, computer aided acquisition and logistic support to ethics and employment options for technical editors.

David Sless, Director of the Communication Research Institute of Australia provided an introduction to 'FormsDesigner', a piece of software that simplifies the layout and production of forms.

'FormsDesigner' was actually quite impressive. It uses an intelligent rule-based system with built-in design features that 'works out' for you the best layout for your form. The 'rules' are based on the findings of research conducted by the Institute which has worked with many large organisations such as Telecom. However, most default settings can be changed by the user.

The program, available for Macintosh systems at this stage, is easy to learn and use, and is supplied with several templates (one of which looks *very* similar to the recent Telecom bill). There are tools for the creation of question and answer boxes, the placement of text and so on. When choosing colours, the program checks your choice for good contrast between boxes and background, and recommends various shading percentages. Other features, which can be altered

by the user, include automatic placing of column-width rules between sections, and answer boxes designed for typed or handwritten responses (even the age of respondents can be taken into account). One drawback of the program which requires some further work was the slow processing/screen refreshing time between major changes.

The Society for Technical Communication was established in 1987. It holds general meetings every second month, produces a newsletter and journal (with support from the University of Western Sydney) and has a consultants register. Membership is \$35 per year.

Further information:

Reg Hardman
Ph: (02) 818 5028 (a.h.)

NSW Society for Technical Communication
PO Box R812 Royal Exchange
Sydney 2000



Courses and conferences

Style Council 91

This year's Style Council will be held at the University of Melbourne from 22 to 24 November 1991.

Four previous Style Councils have brought together editors, publishers, journalists, educators, lexicographers and representatives of government and industry, to debate issues of style and usage, and have proved their value in promoting intelligent discussion about Australian English and in shaping linguistic standards and conventions.

Style Council 91 Program

Friday 22 November

- Australian style and language behaviour
- Getting out of a style groove

Cocktail party launch for Macquarie Intermediate Dictionary and National School Dictionary Project.

Saturday 23 November

- Norms and standards in the context of instruction
- Changing aspects of Australian English

Conference Dinner (pre-dinner drinks, 3-course meal with beverages; cost: \$35) at Newman College. Guest speaker is Terry Lane.

Sunday 24 November

- Standardising language and/or language standards

Registration fee after 31 October is \$200. Accommodation (bed and breakfast) can be arranged at Newman College.

Further information:

Maureen Leslie
Ph: (02) 805 9800

Would any member(s) of the Society of Editors attending the meeting be prepared to write a short summary/comment for inclusion in *Blue Pencil*? We would really like to hear your views. Please contact a committee member if interested.

Postgraduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing

A two-year postgraduate course for people working in editing and/or publishing is offered at Macquarie University.

The course combines practical and theoretical aspects of editing, design and publishing and is supported by discussions on research findings. This is not surprising considering that the study of Australian English is a strong research area developed by linguists at Macquarie University.

Dr Pam Peters (Senior Lecturer in Linguistics) is the course convener and Margaret Olds (Editorial Director, Child & Associates) convenes the publishing and design courses. The course has many expert guest speakers such as Rod Mead (State Library), Richard Smart, Lindsay Somerville (ABC Enterprises), Harry Pears (Typeface Research) and Graham Grayston (AGPS).

Although this two-year course *next* commences in 1993, now is probably a good time to consider your plans for further study.

Course summary

Year 1

Language, editing and writing (full year)
Publishing and management
Design and production of books

Year 2

Language, editing and writing (full year)

Option 1: scientific writing and editing
legal writing and editing
literary writing and editing
public administrative editing

Option 2: indexing and abstracting
book design
marketing
desktop publishing

Year 1/2

Practicum: a placement at a publishing operation, to observe and participate in book production.

Tuition fees, which are tax deductible, were \$1600 for this year. Although this amount could be difficult for freelance editors to gather, it represents fairly good value-for-money when compared to other professional, shorter courses on offer. Furthermore, two scholarships were kindly presented by Butterworth and Reader's Digest during this year for those students without financial support from their employers and, it is rumoured, more will become available next year.

Further information:

Dr Pam Peters
(02) 805 8773
or leave a message on (02) 805 8740

Society of Editors (SA)

The Annual General Meeting of the Society of Editors (SA) was held on 22 August 1991. Jenny Walker, Karen Disney, Pamela Ball and Celia Jellett renominated for the committee. Jill Burton declined in favour of Geraldine Sladden, Jackie Burns and Julie Whitehead, who joined the committee for the first time.

Guest speaker at the AGM was Jane Arms whose talk was entitled 'How far can you go?'

The Society of Editors (Queensland)

Hugh Lunn, a well-known author and speaker, is the guest speaker at the The Society of Editors (Queensland)'s last general meeting for 1991.

A recent talk by Alan Ernst on electronic publishing was summarised in the society's newsletter *Offpress*. Alan is Managing Director of the Queensland Department of Primary Industries Publishing Unit.

Comments on compact disk interactive (CD-I) were particularly interesting:

Due in Australia in 1993, this new multimedia system with full user interactivity marries high quality pictures to text, graphic and sound.

Alan described the 'Cartoon Jukebox' CD-I which featured a series of nursery rhymes. Viewers can call up menus, e.g. to re-colour items in the screen picture with an electronic paintbrush program... The click of a button will change the language to one of eight alternatives...

The system is revolutionising information access, and publishers are already developing programs. *National Geographic* is publishing 'The encyclopedia of mammals' on CD-I; Renault has service manuals on CD-I; your Kodak prints of the future may be on CD-I.

And the article continued, describing the various uses of CD-I including dictionaries, electronic journals and newspapers. In Japan and USA, books are already on mini-compact disks.

Computer technology is certainly changing the means of publishing... How are *your* computer skills?

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