

Blue Pencil

Newsletter of the Society of Editors (NSW)
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September 1989

Next meeting 4 October 1989

The speaker at the next Society of Editors meeting is picture researcher Kathy Gerrard. Kathy spends most of her time liaising with picture libraries and photographic departments of museums and libraries throughout the world. She specialises in international illustrated non-fiction titles. Much of her work involves gathering authoritative references from which illustrators can draw accurate illustrations, charts and diagrams.

Kathy will talk about the ways in which picture researchers, book editors and designers work together to achieve an overall pictorial feel to a book. Together

they make decisions about what to illustrate and the number and style of illustrations and photographs.

We look forward to hearing Kathy speak and hope you can join us at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, 16 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli on Wednesday 4 October 1989 at 7.30 pm. Wine, soft drinks and eats will be served at a cost of \$3 if you telephone and book by Tuesday 3 October and \$5 if you come along without booking.

RSVP by telephoning Shirley Jones on (02) 86 3927. Please leave a message with her answering service if she is not in.

Last meeting – Susan Kinealy

Susan Kinealy was guest speaker at our September meeting. Susan, one of Sydney's most respected and experienced book designers, emphasised the importance and need for designers and editors to work together closely, especially when decisions have to be made. Susan chose the topics below for special consideration.

Size/format

Square or landscape formats do not please booksellers. They tend to get lost on bookshelves or stick out, and are easily battered. Very long thin books with limp covers also tend to be a problem.

It is important to develop new shapes for

books, experimenting first with "dummy" books to ensure economical papercuts and full use of the page area. A good example of developing a new trim size is *the Book of Garnishes* (11 x 5 1/2 inches). Susan battled with the publisher to be able to use this size, and her persistence paid off. Not only was the book very successful, but the format has been adopted by publishers throughout the world. *The Book of Garnishes*, by the way, has now been published in the United Kingdom, the United States and in several other languages.

The use of typefaces

In all cases type should be easy to read.

There should be space around the type as well as some leading. The weight and width of the type are also important. Text should be set to a maximum of 28-30 ems if it is to remain easy to read.

Slipcases

Slipcases need to be made properly, with a thumb pull. The image on the slipcase should appear on both the left and the right hand sides for the benefit of those who are left handed. This also avoids the dilemma of deciding on which side the image should be displayed!

What makes a good cover?

Almost all covers of book jackets have the title at the top third of the page for display purposes. The title should be in a typesize that can be read from a distance of 2 metres and in a typeface that captures the spirit of the book; for example, a craft book would have a more elegant typeface than a book on sport.

The sub-title and author's name are not as important as the title of the book. Finally, listen to what the sales and marketing people have to say, but don't get cold feet if they don't like your design!

How soon should a designer become involved in the production of a book?

It is important and beneficial to involve the designer from the very beginning of a project, according to Susan. Many publishers are hesitant to involve designers at an early stage because the book may be one or two years in the making. But Susan stresses it is better to be upfront about this than to bring the designer in at the last minute. It takes a great deal of time and research to choose a typeface, display face, and the style for maps and illustrations. Often, when a book is running late to the printers, it is the designer's time that gets squeezed – the printers time

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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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being absolutely immovable.

An ideal schedule for designers!

Susan stressed that wherever possible, the designer should be given sufficient time to come up with a suitable book design. Ideally, on a medium-sized book the designer requires two to three weeks to design a layout, one week to mark up the manuscript, four to six weeks to complete a paste-up and four weeks to prepare finished artwork. Preparing dummies usually takes two to three weeks.

One of the more challenging and rewarding aspects of book design is when the designer is asked to develop a concept. A good example of this is a book entitled *The Gentle Arts* by Jennifer Isaacs. Susan was very involved in developing the concept – a trip to the Royal Easter show gave her plenty of food for thought and a few photographs taken of the displays were enough to cement her ideas in rough layouts. The final book almost mirrors her original spreads. She was then able to produce a spin-off from the book in the form of a *Gentle Arts Diary*.

Susan finds developing concepts from just a title to finished book more exciting and enjoyable than always trying to interpret what the publisher and author have in their minds eye. The rewards have led her into packaging her own books – *Tropical Visions* and *Aboriginality* (both published by UQP) were two such ideas. Both reflect her flair for design and sympathy with the subject, in these cases artists living in the tropics and Aboriginal art. Both books reflect Susan's philosophy that books should be "reader friendly".

Kim Anderson

More on "an"

Further to Maureen Colman's comments on the use of "an" (*Blue Pencil*, August

1989), the Concise Oxford Dictionary cites "an historical novel, an hypothesis" as examples of the use of "an" before an aspirated h with an unstressed first syllable. I have worked for several publishers who have preferred "an historic(al)" in their publications because of possible confusion with "ahistoric(al)". I am neutral on the issue.

Robin Appleton

Note. Through a lack of cross referencing with *Blue Pencil*, May 1989 in which I had a signed report, Robin Appleton became in last month's issue, Robyn Appleton. Please return my Old French "i" to me. Thank you.
Sorry Robin. Editor.

Making better editors

The summary of Robin Appleton's talk at the August meeting made interesting reading. Unfortunately, many who would have liked to hear it first-hand were attending a class at Macquarie University that evening. The notes contain no reference to the Graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing, which seems strange when the topic is "Academic qualifications do not an editor make". Unlike the course with which Robin is familiar, the Macquarie course requires a substantial period of study and only accepts applicants who have gained some degree of editorial experience. Worth a mention, one might think.

Robin claimed that an editor can enhance the marketability of a publication, and yet the portrait she offers indicates a fairly narrow view of the editor's role. As there is no discussion of developmental editing, perhaps Robin's focus is the freelance copy editor. If this is the case, how can the publisher be held responsible for an individual's training? Editorial training

must begin in the publishing house, and there the editor is never an independent entity. As an adjunct to on-the-job training, employers and editors can now consider the option of formal "academic" training. The Macquarie course is not without first-year flaws, but it makes a serious attempt to place the editorial function in its larger perspective, as a shaping force and full participant in the publishing process.

Gillian Souter

New Freelance Register

The 1989/90 edition of the Register of Freelance Publishing Services is now available. If you require copies of the Register please contact Kenneth McGuire on (02) 44 6192 or (02) 449 4255.

Typography and design workshop

The Australian Book Publishers Association is holding one-day workshops in Sydney and Melbourne on this topic.

The Sydney workshop will be on 26 October 1989 at Sydney University. The cost is \$170 for ABPA members and \$220 for non-members. Special prices apply for bookings paid for before 2 October.

For further information telephone (02) 29 5422.

New journal for technical communicators

Keyword is a new journal from the NSW Society for Technical Communication. It will be published two or three times a year and is available free to members of the NSW STC and for \$5 per issue by subscription for non-members. The NSW STC had planned to send free introductory copies of the journal to Society of Editors NSW members, but this has proved

impractical. If you would like a free copy of the first issue please send a self-addressed, A4-sized envelope to:

Keyword Editorial Committee
NSW Society of
Technical Communication
P O Box R812
Royal Exchange
Sydney NSW 2000

Servants of the book

This is a one-day seminar to be presented by the Australian Society of Authors. Topics include:

- The minders – authors and agents
- Guardians of style and imagemakers – editors and designers
- Books as saleable products

Date: Saturday 21 October 1989

Cost: Members: \$40. Non-members: \$80 (which includes membership of the ASA until the end of 1989)

For further information write to:

The Australian Society of Authors
PO Box 450
Milsons Point NSW 2061

Christmas party coming up

Plans for the Society's Christmas get-together have not yet been finalised. See the next issue of *Blue Pencil* for details of what's happening.

Future meetings

The next meeting on 4 October will be the last monthly meeting for 1989. Monthly meetings will resume in March 1990.

Copy deadline

The copy deadline for the October issue of *Blue Pencil* is Friday 13 October.