

The SOCIETY of EDITORS (VICTORIA)

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 32 NUMBER 11

MAY 2003

Next meeting

Sophie Cunningham

A failure of imagination

the 'fiction versus non-fiction' debate

Rhumbaralla's Café (The Loft, upstairs)

342 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy (**Not** 23 Bourke Street, city)

Wednesday, 4 June 2003, 6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m.

\$25 members and \$30 non-members for a set menu plus tea and coffee. Drinks at bar prices.

In an article entitled 'Why Fiction is on the Shelf', published in *The Age* ('The Culture') on 6 February, Mark Mordue puts forward the thesis that fiction is in trouble and that literary non-fiction is taking its place. Sophie Cunningham has edited both fiction and non-fiction, is Mark's publisher and is a fiction writer. She's also a lover of literary non-fiction, and concedes that sales for that genre are probably more consistent than they are for fiction. However, against Mark's view, she argues that this situation isn't the fault of novelists. In his article, Mark somewhat indelicately quotes her as saying 'It's bullshit to say one is more authentic than the other'.

Insofar as fiction sales are dropping, Sophie suggests that the decline is due to failure of the wider, cultural imagination; it isn't, as Mark and many other commentators argue, just a reflection of bad writers and poor publishing. During the 2000 Adelaide Writers' Festival, the American novelist Richard Ford spoke along these lines. He argued that the realm of the imagination eludes readers more and more – they are, in fact, irritated by it. They want facts, and when they do read fiction, they try to pin down the 'real' facts that underlie the novel. To do this is to totally miss the skill of (good) fiction writers, who have creative freedom to reach truths that non-fiction writers, constrained by facts, can't always find.

Sophie has worked in publishing for 15 years as a fiction and non-fiction editor and as a publisher. From 1992 to 1994 she was publisher at McPhee Gribble/Penguin, and from late 1994 to June this year she was trade publisher at Allen & Unwin. Since July 2002, she's been a television columnist for *The Age*. Her first novel, *Geography*, will be published by Text Publishing in April next year.

In this issue

From the president's bunker	2
National conference competition winner – Trischa Baker	3
Meeting report	4–5
About us – Emma Holder	6
Membership renewal form	9–10

Please book with Deb Doyle by either email at <deb@hotlinks.net.au> or phone on (03) 9388 1571, **strictly before 5 p.m. on Monday, 2 June**. The menu will comprise bread rolls for starters, main course, dessert, and tea and coffee (full strength and decaffeinated). Sophie will speak at about 8 p.m., between main course and dessert. When you book, please state whether you'd like the vegetarian, vegan, white-meat or red-meat main course and whether you'd like the cake or fresh-fruit salad for dessert. If you later find you have to cancel, please let Deb know as soon as possible so we don't waste money on the catering.

Coming up: Wednesday, 2 July: The Society's annual general meeting, at which, as per the Society's tradition, the food will be complimentary for members. Venue: Rhumbaralla's (The Loft) in Fitzroy. Please read the next newsletter and our website for more details.

Society thankyou

The Society would like to thank Anne Findlay for taking on the role of proofreader of the newsletter. Liz Steele and Lan Wang continue to do a sterling job as editor and DTO, respectively, for which we are eternally grateful. Like all other committee positions, newsletter staff positions are voluntary and involve weekend and after-hours work, so the commitment of the newsletter staff is greatly appreciated.

Renée Otmar, President



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News, comments, letters and other material for publication, review or mention in the newsletter should be addressed to the Newsletter Editor at the address on the left.

Disclaimer: The views expressed by individuals in this newsletter are their own and do not necessarily represent the views of the Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc.

From the President's bunker

In April I left the bunker for two days and two nights, to represent our Society at the International Conference on the Future of the Book, held in Cairns. The paper I presented introduced the Australian Standards for Editing Practice, and talked about why a nationally coordinated accreditation system is a necessary next step in the professionalisation of editors. Given that there were only about four editors at the conference (as far as I know), I feel that the interest and response to the paper indicates that others in the book industry do care about editing and editors, and that is immensely gratifying. See page 7 for the abstract; the full paper is now available on the Society's website.

Cairns was warm and pleasant, but the Melbourne I returned to was delightfully sunny and colourful. Now, as the days grow shorter and the nights longer it feels right to be stocking up on things that suggest warmth and comfort – like books and magazines. There's something so comforting about curling up in front of the heater with a good book on a Saturday afternoon (would that every day were a Saturday).

So I have begun stacking up on the bedside table some delectable titles to tide me over the coming winter – which would be excitement in itself even if I didn't receive an unexpected contribution to my stack as a belated birthday present. A friend 'passing by' a certain old bookshop decided that one little discard had my name on it. I am so delighted now to be the owner of my very own *Chaucer: The prologue & three tales* (G.H. Cowling ed., the 22nd impression (1968) by Ginn and Company Ltd, London, first published in 1934) that I wonder if I will ever actually settle down to read it! It's a joy just to fondle the cover, caress the pages or examine the binding – could I stand the pleasure of consuming the contents? Do you ever feel this way about a book

you have purchased or been presented as a gift? As Winnie the Pooh would say, 'I wonder what exciting book you are reading this autumn'. Pray tell.

At tonight's committee meeting I was intrigued to hear one committee member say that she enjoyed attending these meetings. Partly, she said, because they gave her an excuse to get out of the house, and partly because 'what could be better than sitting around a table for a couple hours while talking to nine of your closest friends?' Of course, she was exaggerating (surely we can't all be her best friends), but that statement highlights an interesting aspect of being on the committee. If you have been toying with the idea of volunteering some of your time to the Society, I hope you'll seriously consider nominating for next year's committee. If you are new to the Society, what better way to make the acquaintance of like-minded people than to join the committee and thereby also make a contribution to your profession? Nominations are now open for full and financial members who wish to join next year's committee. The election will be held at the annual general meeting on 2 July (see page 11 for details).

One former committee member who has gone on to bigger and better things (but still keeps the Society close to her bosom) is the winner of our conference competition, Trischa Baker – see page 3 for her abstract and other details. Congratulations to Trischa! I hope lots of our members get to Brisbane to experience her presentation.

On that victorious note, I wish you all a happy end of financial year!

Renée Otmar

Freelance Affairs report

A big thank you to a great team: Cathy Edmonds, John Bangsund and Kath Harper, whose superlative time management and other skills enabled the *Freelance Register* to hit the streets in February this year.

We printed a total of 1000 registers, 500 more than last year, because its public is growing. All Society of Editors' members now receive a copy of the *Register*, not just freelancers, and this has boosted the numbers on the database. However, I've also snaffled the Municipal Association of Victoria's council list and targeted the many different departments and associations within universities and colleges.

In continuing to build the database, I'm trying to match potential recipients of the *Register* with freelancers' areas of

expertise and interest. If you have any suggestions for future growth that you feel you can share, please email them to me at <thegirls@labyrinth.net.au>.

Kirsten Slifirski

Membership report

This month the Society is very pleased to welcome four new associate members. They are: Philip Bentley, Margit Gailis, Andrew Gaylard and Erin Kiyonaga.

As we approach the end of the financial year, it's time to think about membership renewal, which falls due for **all** Society members on 30 June. You will find a renewal form on pages 9–10, or you can download one from the Society's website.

Helen Bethune-Moore

Competition winner heading for Brisbane



We are pleased to announce Trischa Baker as the winner of the Society's biggest-ever competition. Trischa has won a trip to Brisbane in July and the opportunity to present a paper on editing corporate publications to the CASE national conference for editors, *From Gutenberg*

to *Gates: gazing into the e-future*. Her winning entry 'Word surgery: delivering the kindest cut to corporate publications' impressed both the committee and the conference organisers, and she is scheduled to present her paper on Saturday 18 July.

Trischa has been an editor since 1990. She specialises in business, law and medicine. A lawyer and former Managing Editor at Pearson Professional, Trischa is currently Publishing Consultant, Legal Professional Development, at Leo Cussen Institute. An abstract of her paper follows.

Word surgery: delivering the kindest cut to corporate publications

There is a way to turn corporate gobbledegook into clear prose. It's called 'word surgery'. Business people like concrete analogies. They also share with editors the tendency to pick up good ideas wherever they find them. Fossicking around in the worlds of medicine and corporate editing has disclosed a useful surgical metaphor to explain the approach taken by the most skilled practitioners when treating their patients (the body or the book). This session shares serious insights into the world of corporate editing, drawing rather irreverently on the medical model.

- A personal journey in corporate editing: the barber-surgeon phase of editing practice.
- 'Above all do no harm': how the Hippocratic Oath applies to editors.
- Tackling the task: are you a GP, a psychiatrist, a surgeon or a pathologist?
- 'A fine hand with a scalpel': the implements of corporate word surgery: (machete vs scalpel – chisel and cranial saw – oxygen – anaesthesia – scissors – catgut – monitoring the pulse rate – electroshock).
- 'I'm afraid what we have here is a cadaver': How to tell the family the patient cannot be revived (organ donation and the value-adding consolation of reusing the good bits elsewhere).

Book Conference 2003: The Future of the Book

from Robin Freeman

One hundred and ninety-two delegates: editors, publishers, librarians, academics, printers, representatives of industry peak bodies, booksellers, educators and writers from Australia, Canada, Ghana, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States of America gathered in Cairns from 22–24 April to explore, celebrate and foretell the future of the book.

Those of us looking forward to book-ending Book Conference 2003 with a sunny, tropical holiday – snorkelling the Great Barrier Reef in crystal waters with unlimited visibility, trekking the Daintree Rainforest, hiring a 'Moke' and exploring the hinterland towns of Mareeba and Atherton, or simply lazing by the pool at our hotel – were to be disappointed. The weather was overcast or wet. While locals revelled at the start of the wet season (at a time when it should have been finishing) we felt churlish to complain. There was, however, plenty to experience at Book Conference 2003.

Critically important issues relating to the future of the book were aired during the eight plenary and 60 parallel sessions. As well, delegates found time for spirited debate over lunches and coffee breaks and during the Conference Dinner held at the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Centre.

Jason Epstein, former editorial director of **Random House (US)**, spoke enthusiastically about the future of print on demand and an 'APM for books that will print single copies of library-quality paperbacks on demand at point of sale wherever Internet connections exist'. Writer, **John Man**, convinced us that the book has a future in its present form; it is unique and can never be replaced by technological devices.

Of particular relevance to editors, were presentations by Helena Bond, Renée Otmar, Jenny Lee and Robin Freeman.

Helena Bond, Society of Editors (Queensland) Inc., spoke of bringing new skills as a life coach to her freelance editorial business. In an increasingly competitive market, Helena suggests that editors can play a role in coaching writers towards a better understanding of their clients and intended markets, thus empowering clients to more ably cater for increasingly diverse reader expectations.

Renée Otmar, Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc., began with a brief review of today's typical editor, 'a forty-ish, highly qualified, highly experienced woman with her own business'. She looked briefly at the enormous variation in rewards for this businesswoman, at changes to the industry that have taken editors out-of-house and thus made them responsible for increasing overhead costs. Renée then provided a comprehensive overview of issues surrounding the publication of the Australian Standards for Editing Practice and the role of the standards in guiding the industry towards more appropriate training, professional development and remuneration packages for editors.

Jenny Lee, English Department, University of Melbourne, looked at the ways in which new technologies are breaking down the 'gate keeping' role of traditional book publishers (introducing the DIY factor) and speculated about

continued on page 5

Discovering whether the Left has taken a Right-hand turn

Report on our May dinner meeting

by guest writer Dennis Murphy

In the beginning was the Word. Immediately after came the Editor. For who else knows better the power of the pen? This power was on display at Rhumbarella's Café during our May dinner meeting for discussion on the topic 'What's left of the Left'?

The panelists were **Kenneth Davidson** from *Dissent* magazine and *The Age*; **Guy Rundle** from *Arena Publications*; **Ben Butler** from *The Big Issue*; and **Jill Sparrow**, co-author of *Radical Melbourne*. The discussion was moderated by **Joel Becker** of the Victorian Writers' Centre.

In a political sense, the terms Left and Right have their origins in the French revolutionary parliament: 'radical' representatives sat on the left of the presiding officer, while 'conservatives' sat on his right. Ever since, the Left has been concerned with expanding the scope of democratic control in the political, social and economic spheres. However, the term 'Left' has been evacuated of meaningful content for some time now, due primarily to its appropriation by the USSR. The Stalinist distortion of the socialist project meant that a bureaucratic caste ruled an authoritarian state, all the while claiming to be 'left-wing'. Clearly, genuine supporters of Left politics did not mourn the demise of the USSR, even while acknowledging that the task they faced would be qualitatively different in the era of a triumphalist, unilateral USA.

Grassroots renewal

In the absence of the USSR, which hung for decades around their collective necks like the proverbial albatross, the Left has been renewing itself internationally during the last 10 years. There has been much fruitful activity at the grassroots level, and the beginning of a renaissance of progressive media. The Internet has been used to spectacular effect, culminating recently in a massive series of well-organised, internationally coordinated anti-war rallies, without an identifiable leader or bureaucratic caste. These events have major implications for Left politics in the years ahead.

Being a coherent alternative

Jill Sparrow derives her optimism from these developments. She pointed out that the peace



Ben Butler



Guy Rundle



Jill Sparrow



Joel Becker



Kenneth Davidson

rallies that terminated the US attack on South Vietnam came at the *end* of the conflict; today's peace rallies were under way even before the invasion of Iraq began. She cited other significant indicators, such as best-selling books by Michael Moore and Noam Chomsky, and the international nature of the movements demanding social justice. Sparrow put her finger on a central issue facing the Left today: the need to articulate a coherent alternative. It was no longer enough, she argued, to explain to people that the system was flawed; they knew that already. It was now necessary to explain what could be done in order to make a difference. In addition, people will struggle if they feel they have a reasonable chance of success. It was therefore important to publicise victories and inspire people.

Pursuit of equality

Kenneth Davidson began by saying that for him, the pursuit of equality was a core value of the Left – perhaps *the* core value. He drew on his background in economics to explain that equality and freedom are not mutually exclusive at all; indeed, the existence of the former is a precondition for the genuine achievement of the latter. Davidson, a veteran of the progressive scene, said he derived his optimism from the fact that in the long sweep of history, the Left always wins; gradually and tentatively, but it wins. He cautioned that the Australian Labor Party today is a false friend of the Left; its rank and file members are genuinely devoted to the Left, but its leadership exerts a conservative stranglehold on policy. He highlighted the distinctive low-tax nature of Anglo-Saxon economies as compared with the Scandinavian model. He argued that the middle classes in the Anglo-Saxon countries resented paying for a welfare system that they were unable to access. Right-wing parties could tap into this resentment quite easily, and could dangle the bait of tax cuts, leading to even further cut-backs to welfare. (As this article was being written, the Treasurer, Peter Costello, brought down his latest budget. His selling point? Tax cuts!) The Scandinavian system, on the other hand, promoted social solidarity by ensuring that the middle classes could draw on welfare. They would therefore have a stake in the system's success.



Querying the Left's existence

Guy Rundle and Ben Butler, on the other hand, were not quite so optimistic. Rundle began by saying that 'the problem for the Left is that it doesn't exist anymore'. It was lost, he said, in the cul-de-sac of 'utopianism, pure oppositionality, and the Third Way'. A plausible Left alternative might arise in 20 or 30 years, but for now, Rundle said, 'I have no idea what is happening to the Left'. Butler noted that the Right today was better resourced, with media proprietors well and truly part of the ruling class. Right-wing propagandists appeal to a working class constituency by focusing on scapegoats, sounding reasonable, and adopting the language of the 'ordinary guy'. Butler argued that the Left needed to adopt modern propaganda techniques, and to learn from its losses.

Has the country shifted to the Right?

Rundle and Butler's pessimism despite the worldwide renewal of the Left is understandable: as committed activists, they have been involved in the thick of the fight. Some battle fatigue is normal. But there is another, more subtle explanation, and one that applies to many activists today – as their vision of the good society improves, their political perspectives have shifted to the Left; naturally, but mistakenly, they assume the country has shifted to the Right. As victories are won, expectations increase; and as expectations increase, some despair is normal. A case in point is today's political struggle to endorse the Kyoto Agreement. Although the US's refusal to endorse it is regrettable, the fact is that there is a Kyoto Agreement in the first place – created as a result of activist victories of the past. We can bemoan the limited successes of the Green movement, but the fact is that we have a credible Green movement – because of the activist victories of the past. The same is true of battles in which today's activists are engaged.

The forum organised by the Society of Editors (Victoria) is a valuable example of meaningful political activity. It was organised well, and the diversity in the audience was encouraging. It is from such meetings that great political movements develop.

Due to the large volume of material received to be published in this newsletter and our limited space, some items have been held over until the next issue. Our apologies, but keep the stories, letters and ideas coming!

Liz Steele

CASE Report

The Council of Australian Societies of Editors (CASE) Accreditation Working Group met in Melbourne on the weekend of 12–13 April. For the first time we saw the faces of the colleagues we had been collaborating with for more than a year.

The weekend was extremely productive. We now have a complete draft of a proposal for accreditation options which will soon be ready for another round of consultation with members. The timetable from now on looks like this:

- April – mid-July: The Working Group tests and fine-tunes the draft proposal.
- mid-July – October: The draft proposal is presented at the Brisbane conference and circulated among edsocs, employer groups and educators for comment.
- November – January 2004: The Working Group refines the draft proposal in accordance with the feedback.
- February: The Working Group presents the final proposal to CASE, who arrange a vote of the members.

If all goes well, our accreditation system could begin operation during the second half of 2004.

Janet Mackenzie

continued from page 3

Book Conference 2003

what this might mean to the editor of the future. The editorial role, she claims, is an essential part of any publishing practice, whether traditional or enhanced by electronic media.

Robin Freeman, Publisher, Common Ground Publishing, echoed Jenny Lee's views, endorsing several practical responses that editors can take in order to cement their role in the new publishing enabled by digitisation and Internet technologies. Proficiency with on-screen editing, an understanding of digital rights and online content management systems and new and appropriate printing formats are important, as is keeping up with international standards in relation to program languages and metadata that allows discoverability and an ability to attach context to content. Robin also sees new opportunities for editors that can be embraced by keeping up with some basic essentials.

Plans for Book Conference 2004, to be held as a follow-on event to the Beijing International Book Fair, in partnership with RMIT University and the China Book Business Report are well under way. Please contact Selena Papps on email <selena.papps@commongroundconferences.com> for further information or to be included on the Book Conference newsletter mailing list.

A Conference Booklet including information on all BC 2003 conference sessions and participants is available for free download from <http://book-conference.com/Program/> and you can view a photo gallery at <http://book-conference.com/BC-2003/img/>.

Emma Holder

Managing Editor of the secondary division at Macmillan Education Australia



When Emma left school she didn't know whether to pursue science or English as she loved them both. While studying for a Bachelor of Science she decided it would be great to combine the two and try to get a career in science publishing. Emma started editing science

educational resources at a small publishing company, and eventually moved to OUP where she was a senior editor working on dictionaries and science books. She moved to Macmillan in 2002 where she now oversees the editorial department in the secondary division, which involves working on a publishing list covering all the different subjects.

What's the best thing about your job?

The variety. I'm involved in a great number of different projects and have a say in design, cover, photos and illustrations as well as the structure and text in particular books. Also, I work with a lot of different people all the time – publishers, in-house editors, production staff, freelance editors, proofreaders and illustrators etc. – and most of them are a delight to work with. So it's not specifically science anymore, but I really enjoy education editing in general as it's complex, challenging and rewarding.

What's the worst thing about your job?

I haven't actually copy-edited or even been the project manager for a book since I've been Managing Editor and I do miss it. Plenty of time for that in the future though, when I go freelance one day ...

What's the best thing about being an editor?

It is very satisfying seeing a book take shape from being a rough, plain-looking Word document to a full-colour, highly illustrated book that communicates its subject clearly. I just love working with words and ideas and books.

What was your first editing job?

Styling, proofreading, collating corrections and taking them in on screen, creating graphs etc. for an academic book on business strategy ... I guess that's everything but actually editing though. My first real copy-editing jobs were teacher resources for VCE and HSC science subjects.

How did you become an editor?

After finishing my degree I headed off overseas travelling and working for three years. I was lucky enough to land a temp job in London that led to a permanent position as an editorial assistant working on academic texts and journals. When I returned from overseas I got a job at NEAP (a small educational publisher), who was looking for science graduates who had some publishing experience. I received on-the-job training there, mainly editing science and maths texts; and I also got to illustrate, typeset and commission a variety of publications, which was a wonderful learning experience.

What are the essential qualities of being a good editor?

Having a good eye for detail and excellent command of the English language and being well organised is obviously important, but also having good people skills, and having the ability to compromise and let go when you need to (which can be really hard, but if a school textbook doesn't make it out on time it can be doomed).

What's the most rewarding job you've ever done?

My current job is just wonderful – I work with really good people. And the most rewarding editing project would be a science textbook I edited once, as I found it incredibly interesting and had great discussions with the author about the text.

What's the most tedious job you've ever done?

Some of the dictionaries I worked on became incredibly tedious. I enjoyed them at first, as I loved learning new words (I became very good at crosswords during this time), but after having to hunt through 1300 pages of tiny dictionary text looking for word breaks in the middle of lines after the text had re-run I was fed up with it (and had eyestrain and a huge headache).

Which word will you never spell incorrectly again?

Invertebrates (invertebartes) – argh! It was a one-word chapter heading in about 40 point font too, and I didn't realise the mistake until blues stage.

Which mistake will you never make again?

Not saving and backing up frequently when working on a temperamental computer.

Do you prefer to edit on hard copy or on screen?

On screen – it's what I'm most used to, but some things are far better edited on hard copy.

What advice would you give to editing students?

I've sifted through many hundreds of applications for editorial positions, so I know how highly sought-after in-house editing jobs are, and how tough they are to get. Some advice for getting a job in-house would be to get whatever publishing work experience you can, whether it's volunteer work for a charitable organisation editing their newsletter, working in a small publishing company no-one's heard of gaining valuable experience, or doing publishing-related tasks in a non-publishing company. It's worth having in-house experience even if you plan to work as a freelancer as it is highly regarded when publishing houses appoint freelancers to work on projects: we assume you'll have a better understanding of our systems and requirements and the broader publishing issues.

What book would you most like to have edited?

I absolutely love gorgeous cookbooks, so perhaps something like *Arabesque* or the *Ezard* cookbook. Otherwise, a book relating to a subject I'm interested in, such as *No Logo* or *A Brief History of Time*.

National Conference update

from Robin Bennett

Our program for July's CASE conference is close to being finalised: speakers confirmed to date include Loma Snooks, Pam Peters, Vern Field and Rosemary Noble from Deakin University, Barbara Kerr Wilson, Sue Pechey, Nick Hudson, Trischa Baker, Cathy Gray, David Whitbread, Robert Nichols, Ffion Murphy, Pat Torres, Margaret McDonnell, Max McMaster and Victoria Richardson.

Conference program

The conference will feature plenary sessions on accreditation and marketing the profession, both of which are major CASE issues of great importance to editors. Participants will be invited to contribute their ideas and suggestions on the latter topic.

We are also planning a forum on 'What makes the ideal editing course?' and a lively hypothetical on the long-term future of the book. Loma Snooks' session on the change to the communication model of writing for the *Style Manual* should provide an interesting perspective on the focus of future writing and editing.

The program will include sessions on:

- editing fiction
- reversioning or repurposing?
- copyright – the bits that count
- a future for design
- editing magazines and journals, including e-zines
- editing Indigenous writing
- corporate publishing
- teaching editors online
- working with self-publishers
- how to assess an index
- I spy – editing autobiographies
- on-screen editing – new tricks for old hands
- dealing with changes in English usage.

Participants are invited to bring their pet hates and concerns to Brisbane and share them with others during soapbox sessions at morning and afternoon teas. We'll provide the soapbox, you provide the bees in your bonnet! If you would like to exercise your bees, please contact Robin Bennett on <beyondgutenberg@hotmail.com> or June Kant on <ihpa@mailbox.uq.edu.au> by 24 June, so we can book your timeslot.

Workshops

Workshops will be offered on Sunday, 20 July. They will be:

- editing illustrated children's books (non-computer applications)
- developments in design
- on-screen editing – practical techniques for editors
- marketing your business (freelance editors)
- editing multimedia materials
- there's a person running this business (freelance editors).

We anticipate that all these workshops will be half-day sessions. Charges will range from \$125 upwards (to be confirmed soon).

Website

You will find details of conference sessions and workshops on our website. Summaries of content, biographical details of presenters and photos of presenters (where possible) are

being added to the conference pages as we receive them. The web pages will also include information on the program, the venue, cost updates, accommodation and other aspects of interest.

You can download the conference brochure from the website. Conference papers will also be placed on the website as soon as possible after the conference.

Trade fair

We are preparing a trade fair that will include local booksellers and suppliers of electronic products of interest to editors and other participants.

Billeting

Billets will be available for people who prefer this form of accommodation, at a cost of \$30 per stay. Contact Hilary McLaren at <mclaren@hotmail.net.au> if you have any queries about billeting – there are a number of questions that need to be answered to help organise your stay.

Special needs

If you plan to attend the conference and you have special needs, please let us know when you register.

All dressed up ...

Editors stake out their future in the knowledge economy

Abstract of Renée Otmar's paper presented at the April Future of the Book Conference in Cairns. The full paper is now available on the Society's website.

Along the brand-new speedway that is the knowledge economy, editors stand at the intersection between the commercial and the cultural imperatives of this unique industry. With every new project editors become mediators in a debate that hasn't even been had – at least not with their participation.

Digitisation has revolutionised every aspect of publishing. Along with that revolution has come a push by publishers for editors to move away from the traditional, linear production process (author–publisher–editor–designer–typesetter ... bookseller) to one that is a series of collaborations with these and other professionals. This, in turn, has forced editors to cross boundaries and take on roles as diverse as design, typesetting/ layout, pre-press, production management, copy writing, publicity and marketing, to name a few. And they continue to be under pressure to develop additional skills and expertise in order to re-shape the publishing process. Meanwhile, publishers have rubbed their hands together at the enormous potential for cost savings, and have blamed these increasing pressures on editors on technological change.

But rather than continue to be styled as passive lineworkers swept along in the maelstrom, editors have been making moves to protect their traditional skills. In publishing their Standards for Editing Practice, Australian editors have drawn a line in the sand. The challenge is for publishers, and other sectors of the industry, to understand, acknowledge and support these benchmarks through training, professional development and remuneration.

Letters to the editor

Trends in job ads

Dear editor,

I wonder how many members saw the latest *WBN* job survey in the March issue of the *AB&P* (2003: 10–11)? For those who didn't, I've summarised the data that is of interest and relevance to editors. First, the number of advertised book trade jobs increased in 2002 (a 7.5% increase). More jobs were advertised in Victoria (just over 50%). The number of trade publishing job ads increased by 31% from 2001. Educational publishing ads also increased by 15%. The number of editorial positions advertised (120) fell slightly by 4% while the number of sales and marketing positions advertised increased by 17% (to 185). Significantly, the most dramatic rise was in the number of design/production positions advertised – a 60% increase. In 2002 trade publishers placed 38% and educational publishers placed 34% of all positions advertised. The number of jobs advertised in the *WBN* by non-book employers such as government agencies, magazines, libraries etc, fell by more than half. Finally, 84% of the jobs advertised in 2002 were full-time. Of the remainder, 7% were part-time, 3% casual, 4% fixed-term contracts and only 2% freelance! The explanation offered by the *AB&P* is that it's more likely that freelance and contract positions aren't advertised in the *WBN*. This is because most publishers keep a roster of freelancers, many of whom are former in-house employees. This doesn't augur well for freelance editors who are starting up their businesses and trying to win some of the jobs. The market demand for design/production positions will continue to increase. This

trend indicates that full-time freelancers who are serious about continuing to earn a living and expand their client base, will probably also have to expand their repertoire of design and production skills in the short term, if they haven't already done so. Accordingly they will also have to acquire the software design packages now in demand, learn how to use them and keep replacing them as new and better packages become available. If we get behind Jason Epstein's prototype of an Automatic Publishing Machine (APM) 'that receives digital files and translates them into 150-page books that would be indistinguishable from any library book' why would the industry need innovative book designers anyway? What do other members think?

Diane Brown <diane@netspace.net.au>

More punishment ideas for non-attendees

Dear editor,

I think this is supposed to go to Renée, but I can't find any email address on the newsletter for her, so I decided you'd be the obvious choice. She was after suggestions to avoid the problem of people booking to attend meetings and then not turning up or letting anyone know. Personally I think those particular people should be made to pay up front when they make their booking, but if that seems a bit punitive, why not make that a requirement for everyone? As long as you can come up with some payment method a little less primitive than money orders, BPay or credit cards perhaps, it wouldn't be too difficult for anyone. If they don't turn up then, it won't matter. No refunds after a week before the meeting.

Chris Gardner

Another chance to fine tune your skills

ASTC (Vic) presents

Grammar, Punctuation & Editing

Presenter: Deb Doyle

Date: Saturday 14 June 2003

Time: 9.30 a.m.–4.30 p.m.

Location: CAE Business Centre, Room 417, Level 4, 235 Flinders Lane, Melbourne (btwn Swanston & Elizabeth Sts)

Parking: Kings Parking opposite Federation Square in Flinders St. Presentation of ticket at CAE reception for validation entitles you to a cheaper day rate when paying (approx. \$4.50 for the day)

Cost: ASTCV, ASTCNSW, SOCEDs members \$220, non-members \$300, student and concession \$150 (proof required)

Morning and afternoon tea supplied. Attendees should bring lunch money to go to a local café.

If anyone is interested in attending or receiving a registration form please contact ASTC Administrator – Fiona Gologranc on <admin@astcvic.org.au> or Mobile: 0412 500 519.

Survey of Australian Technical Communicators 2003

Sponsored by the Society for Technical Communication (Australia Chapter).

This survey is intended to provide information to Australian technical communicators about current salaries (or hourly rates) in relation to experience, qualifications and other factors. It is open to technical communicators living in Australia (employed or not).

The survey form does not produce any identifying information so you are completely anonymous. No questions are mandatory. Results will be available on the STC Australia Chapter's website, <http://www.stc-aus.org.au/>, probably in mid-August 2003.

To participate in the survey go to:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/take-survey.cfm?surveykey=2344002888>

The STC would especially like to hear from people who don't work in software documentation (as well as those who do), to get a wider cross-section of the techwriting community.

The Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc.

PO Box 176, Carlton South, Victoria, 3053, Australia

ABN 92 015 006 730

<http://www.socedvic.org/>

Membership application/renewal 2003–2004

Membership of the Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc. is open to anyone interested in the Society's aims.

Full membership is open to anyone with qualifications in editing and publishing recognised by the Society and one year's full-time experience in industry, or two years' full-time experience in industry if you do not have a relevant editing and publishing qualification. Those applying for full membership need to provide details of two referees. (Full members are able to vote at the Annual General Meeting, hold office on the committee and have an entry in the *Freelance Register*.)

Associate membership is open to anyone with an interest in the publishing and associated industries and the Society's aims generally.

Distant membership is available in either of the above categories if you live more than 50 kilometres from the Melbourne GPO.

Membership fees are due and payable on 1 July each year. Existing members who have not renewed their subscriptions by 1 October are deemed to have resigned. New membership fees after 1 January are half the annual fee.

ALL RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE FORM MUST BE COMPLETED

I wish to:

- renew my membership** for 2003–2004 – fill in part A of this form (also B if details altered)
- apply for **associate membership** – fill in parts A and B of this form
- apply for **full membership** – fill in parts A, B and C of this form

For **lapsed members** only:

If you are currently unfinancial, when were you last financial? _____

Part A

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____ (business) _____ (after hours)

Email _____

Category of membership (see above) **(All fees include GST)**

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full | \$66 | <input type="checkbox"/> Full (distant) | \$38.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Associate | \$66 | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate (distant) | \$38.50 |

I enclose a cheque for \$ _____ Name on cheque _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Part B

Editing training and experience

1. Are you currently working as an editor? Yes No

2. If yes, state whether this work is:

Freelance Type of work _____

In-house Employer _____

3. How long have you worked at this position? _____

4. Provide a brief dot-point description of the type and duration of your previous editing experience.

5. Detail any relevant qualifications and training you have.

Part C

Referees (two people who are full members of the Society or otherwise acceptable to the committee)

Name _____ Name _____

Position _____ Position _____

Phone/email _____ Phone/email _____

If accepted, would you consider serving on the Society of Editors Committee at some time in the future?

Yes No Undecided

Official stuff

Chq/cash/m-o					Amount rec.	Date	By
FM	AM	FMD	AMD	HLM	DB	Card	Date

Do you want to get more involved?

Toss away the gardening gloves, put down that paint brush, turn off the telly and do something really exciting with your life. Nominate to be part of the 2003–2004 committee of the Society, and take on one of the many exciting roles on offer. Join us for lively debate and decision making accompanied by a different culinary delight and a glass of wine each month. Learn more about your profession while helping the Society maintain its active and important role.

Nominations are now open for the position of president and other committee positions. Specific roles/portfolios are discussed and decided upon at our handover meeting in July, following the election of the new committee at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 2 July. Nominations will be published in the June newsletter. You must be a full and financial member of the Society to nominate for the committee.

Nominations for the position of president must be sent in writing (using the form below) to the The Returning Officer at the Society's postal address, PO Box 176 Carlton South VIC 3053 or via email to <office@otmarmiller.com.au> by **12 June 2003**. Nominations for committee positions can be sent to these addresses by the same date, or they can be put to the election officer at the AGM.

Please consider becoming part of the decision-making body of your Society – a rewarding and exhilarating experience!

If you'd like more information, contact Renée at the above email address.

The nomination form is also available on our website.



Nomination form

I, _____ wish to nominate _____
to fill the position of _____ (President, Committee Member)
of the Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc.

Nominee: _____

Signature: _____

Proposer: _____ Second: _____

Signature: _____ Signature: _____

Proxy voting form

I, _____ of _____
(Name) (Address)

being a current financial and full member of The Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc. hereby appoint

_____ of _____
(Name) (Address)

being a full member of the Society, as my proxy to vote for me on my behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc, to be held on Wednesday, 2 July 2003 and at any adjournment thereof.

Signed this _____ day of _____

Member's signature: _____

Dates for your diary

June meeting

Wednesday, 4 June 2003

Membership renewal

Must be received by 1 July 2003



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AUSTRALIA

If undeliverable,
please return to
PO Box 176
Carlton South VIC 3053
Print Post Approved
PP 349050/00019
ISSN 0311 0907

Committee 2002–2003

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Immediate Past President

Pia Herbert (Freelance) 9380 2223

Honorary Life Members

John Bangsund, Ruth Dixon, Anne Godden, Beryl Hill, Nick Hudson,
Colin Jevons, Susan Keogh, Vane Lindesay, Janet Mackenzie, Sally Milner,
Renée Otmar, Teresa Pitt, Yvonne Rousseau, Wendy Sutherland, Basil Walby,
Lee White

John Curtain (d. 1999)

Beatrice Davis (d. 1992)

Frank Eyre (d. 1988)

Stephen Murray-Smith (d. 1988)

Membership of the Society is open to anyone engaged professionally in any aspect of editing for publication, or who has had such experience in the past. Associate membership is open to anyone interested in the Society's activities. Associate members may not vote or hold office in the Society.

Membership application/renewal forms are available from the Secretary, the Membership Secretary or the Society's website: www.socedvic.org

Subscriptions

Full membership \$66

Associate membership \$66

Distant membership \$38.50