

# The SOCIETY of EDITORS (VICTORIA)

## NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 33 NUMBER 3

SEPTEMBER 2003

### Next meeting

#### **Council of Australian Societies of Editors (CASE)**

#### **What we got up to at the Brisbane CASE conference in July**

with Kerry Biram, Donna Williams, Lan Wang

#### **What is CASE and what is it doing for us?** with Renée Otmar and Janet Mackenzie

##### **Rhumbaralla's Café (The Loft, upstairs)**

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

**Wednesday, 8 October 2003, 6.30 p.m. for 7 p.m.**

\$25 members and \$30 non-members for main course, dessert, tea and coffee. Drinks at bar prices

Here's your chance to hear firsthand from some of the folk who made it to the Brisbane CASE conference and back again. They'll give a personal perspective on the conference, describe some of the sessions and what they felt was valuable. The panel session about the conference will start at about 8 p.m., between main course and dessert.

Renée Otmar and Janet Mackenzie will fill you in on what CASE is all about – how it was set up, what it aims to achieve, how it operates and what it is doing for us as editors.

**Bookings are essential** (and see important notice from our Treasurer on page 2):

- Book with Kerry Biram – email at [kerry.biram@bigpond.com](mailto:kerry.biram@bigpond.com) or phone 9481 3993.
- Book strictly before **5 p.m. on Monday, 6 October**.
- Indicate if you're a member, student, ASTC member, or non-member.
- Choose from the vegetarian, vegan, white-meat or red-meat main course, and the cake or fresh-fruit salad for dessert.
- Give a contact phone number or email.

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- If you need to cancel, please email or phone Kerry as soon as possible so we don't waste money on catering for people who don't turn up.
- If you cancel after 7 p.m. on the day before the meeting, the Treasurer will contact you shortly after and ask you to pay as if you had attended.

**Coming up: Wednesday, 12 November (NOT the first Wednesday, which is the day after Cup Day): All I want for Christmas is...;** some leading Melbourne booksellers put us in the picture on how they cope in the hectic pre-Christmas season, and what are the hottest sellers of the season. *Venue:* Rhumbaralla's (The Loft) in Fitzroy. Please read the next newsletter and our website for more details.

### Can you help?

Meeting secretaries Kerry Biram and Jo-Anne Bianchi work extremely hard getting our dinner meetings organised each month. Some help with writing the dinner meeting report for the newsletter would be much appreciated. Are you able and interested? If so contact Jo-Anne at [write\\_edit@ihug.com.au](mailto:write_edit@ihug.com.au) or Kerry at [kerry.biram@bigpond.com](mailto:kerry.biram@bigpond.com).



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**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.

## CASE Representative needed

At the most recent meeting of the Council of Australian Societies of Editors (CASE), it was noted that a motion had been passed unanimously at the final plenary session of the Brisbane conference stating: 'That the conference recommends to CASE that efforts be made to establish a national body within two years (that is, by July 2005)'.

As a first step towards this, a working group was formed to gather information about possible models for a national organisation – how other bodies have handled the relationship between state and national organisations. The convenor of the working group is Karen Disney from South Australia.

We need one of our members to represent Victoria on this working group. The time involved would be around an hour a week. Communication between working group members is usually by email, with the occasional teleconference and/or face-to-face meeting if required. Members of other working groups (Standards and Accreditation) have reported participation in these groups as being most rewarding and inspiring on a personal level, and that's quite apart from the good work they did on behalf of the rest of us! If you are interested in representing your Society (and making history in the process), please contact Renée Otmar on email [office@otmarmiller.com.au](mailto:office@otmarmiller.com.au) or phone 0409 792 799.

*Renée Otmar*

## Monthly meeting costs

As many of you will know (well, at least those of you who read the annual balance sheet), our monthly meetings are subsidised by the Society; the charge you pay does not cover the full costs of the night.

As many of you will also know, our meeting secretaries have repeatedly emphasised the fact that when you book to attend but do not come, the Society loses money.

So far in this financial year, our monthly meetings have cost the Society \$252 (\$87 for the August meeting and \$165 for the September meeting). If we continue at this rate, the Society will spend over \$1000 on subsidising the monthly meetings – that's \$1000 that we won't have available to spend on other activities.

At this month's committee meeting, your committee decided that anyone who cancelled within 24 hours of the monthly meeting would be asked to pay for the cost of their booking. If you have booked but can't come, as long as you let Kerry Biram know the day before the meeting, that's fine. Ringing the restaurant an hour or two before the meeting is polite – but we will still be charged for your meal.

As Treasurer, I would like to send a special thank you to the member who, unprompted as far as I am aware, did send in a cheque for \$25 to cover the cost of their booking for a meeting earlier this year which they were unable to attend.

*Susan Keogh*

## Your input please

Beryl Hill and Elizabeth Flann are currently researching a revised and updated edition of *The Australian Editing Handbook*. They would appreciate any input from members about what they would like to see in the updated version: what needs expanding; what could be cut or deleted; what is most/least important to them. They would be particularly interested to hear stories about members' experiences with the on-screen editing of manuscripts. Success stories and horror stories are equally welcome.

Email Beryl at [bjhill@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bjhill@bigpond.net.au) or Elizabeth at [flanne@deakin.edu.au](mailto:flanne@deakin.edu.au).

## On-screen editing books

The first of the on-screen editing books I am publishing in association with the Society will be available towards the end of this year. The book deals with use of Word styles in editing. There has been a delay in getting this first book finished, partly because I received feedback from editors that using style templates was an area they would like covered. Accordingly, the book has been expanded to about twice its original length and is now titled *Styles and Style Templates*. It covers several versions of Word. It also covers the PC and Mac platforms. I hope that editors and writers using styles will find it a useful text.

*Brett Lockwood*

# Accreditation Workshop – your chance to be part of our history

By Janet Mackenzie

The workshop on the Draft Report will be held on **Saturday, 25 October 2003, 2–5 p.m.**, at the Yarra Room at the Melbourne Town Hall.

Please book with Kerry Biram, preferably by email at [kerry.biram@bigpond.com](mailto:kerry.biram@bigpond.com) or phone on (03) 9481 3993, strictly **before 5 pm on Monday, 20 October**. Booking is required to establish our catering requirements.

Members will have a unique chance to shape the future of the editing profession at a workshop on Saturday, 25 October, which will discuss the Draft Report prepared by CASE's Accreditation Working Group. The Draft Report is up for comment by editors nationwide until 30 November. It is available in PDF format on the websites of all the Australian editors' societies.

## Two essential components

A profession has two essential components: a body of knowledge, and a method of screening out incompetent practitioners. Editors have defined the body of knowledge in *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*, and the next step is to identify competent editors. We have been talking about an accreditation scheme for decades, and at last we have a concrete proposal in front of us.

The Draft Report was well received at the national conference in Brisbane in July. To quote one of the conference participants, it has turned accreditation 'from an unwieldy mass of difficulties into a clear, achievable, worthwhile objective'.

## Competence vs excellence

The Draft Report follows the criteria of the Issues Paper that was put to members in June 2002, for a scheme that is fair, transparent, appropriate, inclusive, consistent, flexible, acceptable, sustainable, accountable, and takes account of existing education and training. The scheme tests competence rather than excellence. It seeks to accommodate all the sorts of people who might apply – young editors at the beginning of their careers, senior editors arriving from other countries, people outside the book industry whose work includes some editing, experienced professionals in other fields who find themselves drawn into editing. The scheme also attempts to ensure that compliance is not onerous and that applications are relatively easy to prepare.

The proposed scheme is devised by editors for editors. It will be set up and administered and controlled by editors. By adopting it, we will pre-empt any other body that might seek to regulate entry to the profession, such as the Australian National Training Authority, who would then tell us whether or not we met their requirements.

Members have asked whether CASE might incur legal problems in operating an accreditation scheme, either complaints from clients and employers about the work of

accredited editors, or objections from applicants who are refused accreditation. The Draft Report has been submitted to the Arts Law Centre in Sydney and incorporates their suggestions, so it should be legally sound.

## Legal issues

The Accreditation Working Group is seeking comment on the Draft Report in order to make sure that the proposed scheme meets members' needs. This is the last round of consultation before the scheme is finalised and put to members for acceptance or rejection. Please download the Draft Report, study it, and bring a copy to the workshop. If you can't be there on the day, email your thoughts to the Victorian accreditation delegate, Janet Mackenzie at [jmack@mansfield.net.au](mailto:jmack@mansfield.net.au).

## Book Indexing Workshops

### 23 and 24 September 2003

Are your indexing skills rusty or lacking? The Australian Society of Indexers (Vic. Branch) is conducting full-day introductory and intermediate level indexing workshops at Camberwell in Melbourne.

#### Introductory indexing course

Covers basic indexing principles and techniques. Held on **Tuesday, 23 September**. Cost: \$180 AusSI and Soc of Eds members; \$220 non-members.

#### Intermediate indexing course

Participants fully index a 60-page technical publication using dedicated indexing software. Held on **Wednesday, 24 September**. Cost: \$200 AusSI and Soc of Eds members; \$240 non-members.

Contact and further information: Flyers and application forms available from Max McMaster, tel: (03) 9500 8715; email: [mindexer@optusnet.com.au](mailto:mindexer@optusnet.com.au).

# Award rates for in-house staff

By Elaine Miller

The Journalists' (Book Industry) award covers editors and trainee editors in Victoria, NSW, the ACT and Queensland. Awards set out minimum standards for Australian workers who are paid under them, covering pay rates, job classifications, hours of work, sick and annual leave, superannuation, hours of work, parental leave, overtime, meal times and breaks, and redundancy. They would generally apply across an industry sector or occupation.

Since the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (Cth) was enacted, awards have a more limited role. They serve as a very basic 'safety net'. The current Federal Government has required awards to be simplified. This means some important employment matters such as vocational training, staffing levels, occupational health and safety, and restrictions on the type of employment (for example, limiting the use of casuals) cannot be included in the Award. The Act does allow these matters to be covered by other forms of employment, namely Enterprise Agreements or Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs).

In the publishing industry, some larger companies may have enterprise bargaining agreements. These are the result of negotiations between an employer and staff regarding improvements to the terms and conditions of employment. If enough staff are members of the relevant union, they can obtain union assistance in making the enterprise agreement. The union representing book editors, as well as journalists and those in the entertainment industry, is the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA).

An enterprise bargaining agreement will often provide greater benefits than an award. Enterprise agreements enable

employees to decide what is suitable for their workplace and allow members to bargain collectively rather than individually for better employment conditions.

Employers who prefer to use AWAs (or individual contracts) rather than awards or enterprise agreements would argue that they can be designed to suit individuals and that staff will not be disadvantaged, pointing out that while the contract might be deficient with respect to a few matters, this is balanced by other advantages. For example, there may be no restriction on the number of hours worked and no overtime penalties, balanced by over-award wage payments.

If you're not sure how you are employed, ask your employer, or ring Wage Line (1300 363 264 within Victoria; (03) 9954 2510 outside Victoria). The Wagenet website [www.wagenet.gov.au](http://www.wagenet.gov.au) contains further information about employment conditions. Upon being offered a job, you may wish to ask under what type of agreement you are to be employed.

The Journalists' (Book Industry) award applies to MEAA members employed as editors or trainee editors (excluding executive managers or publishers) by book publishers. The levels (1, 2 and 3) are loose categories – indicators rather than precise job descriptions. Persons employed at level 3 would usually have some responsibility for supervising others. If your employer is a party to the award, your boss or the human resources manager should be able to tell you what category covers you.

From 19 July 2002, the minimum award rates of pay before tax are as follows. The 2003 award variation should be going through shortly, increasing the rates.

	<b>Full-time (weekly)</b>	<b>Casual (per hour)</b>
<b>Level 1 (Trainee Book Editor)</b>		
Upon commencement	\$550.60	\$16.66
After 6 months	\$594.30	\$17.99
<b>Level 2 (Book Editor)</b>		
Grade 1	\$638.10	\$19.31
Grade 2	\$658.00	\$19.91
Grade 3	\$701.80	\$21.24
Grade 4	\$745.50	\$22.56
<b>Level 3 (Senior Editor)</b>		
Grade 1	\$789.40	\$23.89
Grade 2	\$831.10	\$25.15
Grade 3	\$940.60	\$28.47

**(With thanks to Kate Lappin, MEAA, for her assistance.)**

Visit the MEAA website at [www.alliance.org.au](http://www.alliance.org.au).

# Design in the 21st century

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## September dinner meeting report by Jo-Anne Bianchi

The Society of Editors September dinner meeting 'Designing in the 21st century: a forum about technological changes in design – brought together three women from different areas of publishing – Lauren Stratham, Jo Waite and Virginia Murdoch. Each with their own flair, speciality and individual slant on the design industry, they delightfully informed and entertained the 36 members and non members in attendance describing their own work environment, their history and the development in their own field of expertise.

### Lauren Stratham

Lauren Stratham has worked in the publishing industry and as a self-employed book designer for 28 years. In that time, she has seen a total change in designing technology and work practices.

The initial positive changes for Lauren were not getting dirty and that her designs were straight! Lauren explained how these negative factors of old-fashioned designing affected editors. 'It used to drive editors crazy. They would constantly want us to straighten things up and get rid of the dirty marks.'

But the major change is in the cost of equipment. 'Once upon a time I had to have a drawing board, a waxer, a scalpel blade and some layout pads.' 'Now I have to have 10 to 12 thousand dollars every time I upgrade.' Unfortunately though, for Lauren, the amount she can charge for a job has not increased that much and she has less disposable income now than she did in the 70s.

### The fudgy area

When Lauren Stratham talks about fudge, you can be sure she is not dreaming of the sticky sweet. Lauren is talking about the fudgy areas in publishing that the availability of technology has created – where the roles of writer, editor and designer begin to blur.

'Editors work with Word, therefore their environment is the Word program. Designers work with the look and the layout, therefore their environment is the desktop programs and graphics programs.' Lauren believes that for editors and designers to have an efficient and effective, time-wise and cost-wise, work relationship, they have to learn more about each others roles and ensure that processes are established at the beginning of each job. 'We each should be proficient in our respective programs and technical environment, but I think we should be knowledgeable and informed about the others.' She believes that by understanding each other's skills we will communicate more effectively and be speaking the same language. 'Designers have to know what happens in Word and editors have to have some idea of what happens in design programs.'

### File presentation

Here are a few questions that Lauren asks editors in relation to Word file presentation before starting a job.

- Are you going to do an on-screen edit and supply me with clean edited files?
- If so, will you be applying style tags to the various textual elements?
- If you are, please supply a sample file with the style names applied so I can make my style sheet names compatible.
- Could you strip out all the authors' styles and formats and start from scratch please? This will reduce style corruption.
- Please don't use automatic list function. When imported into Quark all the bullets/numbers and tabs are lost. You will have to do them manually.
- For clarity and style distinction you will probably want to vary the formats in your styles but could you use very basic formats? This will significantly reduce style sheet corruption when the Word file is imported into Quark.
- Restrict font usage to a bare minimum e.g. Times and Arial.
- I prefer to receive just one file for the whole job. It is more efficient for extended style name application, find and change.
- Are you PC or Mac, what Word version do you use? I prefer Word files to be saved as Word 5, 6, or 8.
- Please make sure your 'fast-saved' option is turned off and the final file is a 'save as' file.

### Jo Waite

Jo Waite not only runs a private design practice, with an emphasis on books, but she is also a Lecturer in Design at RMIT and sees firsthand, how the changes in technology have affected designers.

She was surprised that when questioned about how technology was working for them as designers, many of her students felt that they were 'losing some of the craftsmanship' which they said seems to be sacrificed for the greater need of computer skills. Jo said her students felt they have a wider choice of how they could do things and their choice of fonts etc, but they are often 'bamboozled' by the technology.

Jo is also a firm believer that editors and designers have to learn to work together. To encourage an understanding and respect for each other's skills, she gives her students an 'Editing Game' in which they learn and practise editing marks. 'They need to know how to work with editors so we teach them how to use the copy marks.'

There are technological issues in the school and the industry especially over InDesign vs Quark, partly due to the costs. She is also astounded by the power of Microsoft Word 2000. She has only ever used it for copying text, but a recent training session has opened up her mind and she feels that students in the future should be more highly trained in the use of Word.

Personally Jo loves the technology, she loves Quark and Photoshop, but she also loves to scribble on paper, 'I still need to do some traditional handwork.' Jo always begins a project by doing thumbnail sketches then translates the design to the computer – sometimes going back to a little bit of both is good, she said. She encourages her students to do the same thing.

## Virginia Murdoch

Virginia Murdoch gave us a different slant on design and the way editors fit into the development of technology. She is principally a web designer, but her humorous talk focussed on more than just web issues.

She talked about the technologies that influence the way we present writing and the relationship that has had with the work of editors over thousands of years. She commented how difficult it would have been to edit something that had been carved into stone!

Virginia has been schooled in the new areas of design and editing and confessed to not knowing what Lauren and Jo were talking about when they mentioned pasteboards and wax. She spoke about how the rules of language initially changed for the use of language on the Web, but she feels the use of language on the Web must change to allow for creative individual expression as well as the transfer of information.

Virginia quoted Jacob Neilson, a Web useability guru, on the best way to write for the Web:

- use highlighted keywords
- meaningful subheadings
- bulleted lists
- each paragraph should contain one idea
- write in the journalistic inverted pyramid style
- items should be half the word count of print documents.

Virginia said these ideas for developing website content are great in the majority of sites. This style of writing works well for people coming to the Web to find information. But the web is somewhere where anyone can publish anything in any form – often badly written. Virginia is concerned that these hard and fast rules will inhibit the creativity of writers. 'I think that all these rules about how to express things endanger the great place that the web is for just doing stuff.'

Editors have always had to adapt to the technology where the writing meets the publishing. More and more editing jobs now require the editor to be 'web savvy' and have some experience in using Hypertext Markup Language (html) so it is vital that editors at least become acquainted with html.

It was obvious from the lively discussion that all designers and editors have developed their own methods of dealing with the technological advances. Some of us relish the challenge

of mastering new software; others stick to our old ways. But the overall impression I gained from the evening is that it is vital for designers and editors to learn to work together and improve the process of publishing – and maybe give each other a few less headaches.

## Society's Award conferred

Macmillan editor, Helena Newton, has been awarded The 2002 Society of Editors (VIC) Award, presented annually to the highest achieving student in the editorial components of the graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing at RMIT University.

The Award, which consists of a citation and a \$500 cheque courtesy of the Society, was presented at RMIT's Storey Hall on Monday 25 August as part of the School of Applied Communication's prize-giving ceremony.

The Society of Editors (VIC) was instrumental in establishing the RMIT postgraduate program in 1988. As part of its commitment to the program, it has presented this award each year since then.

Michael Webster, who runs the program, said the university values its association with the Society of Editors as it helps ensure the program stays grounded in the industry. The students also value the Society's sponsorship, especially the cash component, he said.

Other awards presented in the program at the ceremony were the Australian Book Publishers Association Prize and the Gecko Team Award for excellence in the Publishing Management component of the program. Members interested in knowing more about RMIT's Graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing can access the 'Information for Prospective Students 2004' page at [www.rmit.edu.au/adc/editingandpublishing](http://www.rmit.edu.au/adc/editingandpublishing).



*Award winner Helena Newton with course coordinator Michael Webster*

## Book review: *The On-screen Editing Handbook*

By Sally Woollett

*M. Sabto, Tertiary Press 2003, 89 pp., limp bound, ISBN 0 86458 310 9, RRP \$22.50*

*The On-screen Editing Handbook* is a compact, friendly introduction to some of the features of Word useful to editors. According to the introduction, the handbook is 'aimed primarily at writers and editors'. Virtually all examples are based on editorial practice, which is good for editors, but less relevant for authors.

Beginners would get the most benefit out of this book by reading it from cover to cover, then using it as a reference. The handbook is applicable to Word 6/95 and onwards (PC and Mac, although menu options may be slightly different for Macs). The limp binding is a handy format for use 'behind the wheel'; however, the small format (176 by 242 mm) has compromised the book's design.

Good design is particularly important for instructional texts – the reader relies more on visual cues for efficient learning and revision. In parts of the handbook, the flow of body text is disrupted by complementary information such as tips and notes, which in a larger format book could have been placed in the margin. In other places, text central to a chapter theme is lost in the general narrative and is thus difficult to refer back to. The one-colour screen dumps are on the small side (at least for these tired editorial eyes!). These issues present an extra challenge to readers who are very new to the content. However, such limitations could only be overcome at a price significantly higher than \$22.50.

More than one-third of this book is devoted to Word styles, a feature now commonly used in on-screen editing. The nuts and bolts of styling are there, but they are not all in the same place. (Style templates are discussed in a different chapter.) Also, macros, removing redundant spacing and file management were all in separate chapters, two of which are very small. Perhaps they could have been grouped in a 'housekeeping' chapter. Nevertheless, these items are well cross-referenced.

An interesting and valuable component of the handbook is an explanation of the editor's on-screen work in the context of the production process. The book cleverly incorporates these explanations at relevant points, encouraging editors to consider the wider implications of their work. Working with authors is also discussed, although the 'Author makes changes on screen' procedure should be undertaken with extreme caution!

There are two appendices in the handbook: a sample design brief and a list of steps in the pre-production process. A FAQ or troubleshooting appendix would also have been useful.

Editors experienced in the use of Word styles and Track Changes who are looking for troubleshooting tips and advanced Word functions will probably learn little from this book. Editors relatively new to on-screen editing will find *The On-screen Editing Handbook* to be a reasonably priced and useful guide.

## Handy hints for the editorial computer

### A few more keyboard shortcuts

Two keyboard shortcuts that I use all the time are:

#### Changing case Shift + F3

This cycles through a series of upper and lowercase combinations, depending on the state of the word when you start.

Thus, if you place your cursor within an all lowercase word, each time you press Shift + F3 you will first convert the first letter of the word to uppercase, then change all letters

to uppercase and finally convert all the letters back to lowercase.

#### Applying Heading 1, 2 or 3 style Alt + Ctrl + [1, 2 or 3]/Cmd + Opt + [1, 2 or 3]

If you wish to apply Word's in-built headings, you can use this handy shortcut.

For example, if you want to apply Heading 1 style, simply place the cursor somewhere within the relevant heading and press Alt + Ctrl + 1 (PC) or Cmd + Opt + 1 (Mac).

*If you have any tips of your own that you would like to pass on, please email [lanwang@wovenwords.com.au](mailto:lanwang@wovenwords.com.au)*

## ABOUT US

### Kerry Biram

Freelance editor and indexer



*Editors can make their start in publishing in some odd ways, but Kerry started in the 1970s when she had the good fortune to be appointed to an editorial position at the ABC, on secondment from the Education Department. She moved on to the Education*

*Department's Publications Branch, then spent some time in the Victorian Teachers' Union. After a year travelling overseas she returned to part-time freelancing, quiet domesticity and parenthood. She freelanced for Melbourne educational and trade publishers, and became a Registered Indexer with the Australian Society of Indexers in 1984. In 1995 she joined the small and busy Penguin editorial team producing Fish Australia, then took up a position as Senior Editor (Non-fiction) at Penguin. A further period of freelancing followed, followed by work in her family's company, but the call of publishing proved too strong to resist, so she's back doing what she loves best – freelancing.*

#### **What's the best thing about your job?**

The flexibility to work my own hours – late at night and at weekends, sometimes, but to be able to have time during the day to do other things when I need to. It's important to be able to accept the work I like, and work I feel capable of doing justice to.

#### **What's the worst thing about your job?**

The fact that at any stage the work can suddenly dry up, and leave me with no income for who-knows-how-long. But that just means I have to become more resourceful than usual and start doing some applied marketing.

#### **What's the best thing about being an editor?**

Coming into contact with a huge range of books that I wouldn't necessarily read otherwise. It's a wonderful way to gradually develop a broad general knowledge, even if the knowledge doesn't go very deeply.

#### **How did you become an editor?**

After a short and unhappy period as a primary teacher, I was lucky enough to land feet first into the Education Section of the ABC where I was taught the basic skills of editing and proofreading by another ex-teacher editor. I'm not sure I really learnt all that much about editing in that six months, but a couple of years later when I moved to the Publications Branch of the Education Department, I came in contact with some real experts. It was there, under the guidance of Eddie Gunn, Jim Hamilton, Gwenda Smyth and Ngaire Ravenswood and others, that I really learnt much of what good editing is all about, in an environment where everything was proofread simultaneously by three people, and then cross-checked.

#### **What was your first freelance job?**

I still laugh about it (and I still have the book, too)! I was doing my very first bit of networking after leaving the Victorian Teachers' Union and was put onto Neil Conning (Hi, Neil!), who provided me with my very first freelance proofreading job – *Wining and Dining in Bed*. Working on an illustrated book of recipes suitable for two people in bed was good enough, but when I was invited to the book launch, I fronted up to a suite at a hotel in North Melbourne, to discover that a Lady of the Night had been employed to demonstrate the main theme of the book in totally practical terms. Publishing had a lot to live up to after that.

#### **What are the essential qualities of being a good editor?**

Everyone says it, but it's true: an eye for detail. You also need to be adaptable and alert to odd things going wrong – with deadlines, with different versions of manuscripts, with authors who don't know what 'deadline' means. These days, most editors also need to be highly competent with computer skills – not just at the more advanced kinds of on-screen editing, but keeping your computer alive despite onslaughts from generations of computer viruses, worms, Trojan horses ... (I speak from bitter experience).

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

In 1984, I was invited to index a collection of the letters of Percy Grainger – *The Farthest North of Humanness*, edited by Kay Dreyfus. At that stage, I was still indexing on cards, but had decided to buy my first computer. Over the several months of compiling that index, I started to learn how to use the computer, bought Index4, an early indexing program, and learnt how to use that, then transferred all the index I'd put on cards into the computer program, and continued to learn (and make many mistakes) until I finished the work, which resulted in a 13-page 3-column index. I have to say it was also a time of some of the hardest work I've ever done, and many heartbreaks as I learnt through my errors.

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

Editing a local history of a Western district town, written and self-published by a member of one of the 'old families'. He knew everything there was to know about the people, places and events of the district, but had absolutely no idea of how to put it together coherently. As a manuscript it was lengthy, but in appalling shape, and the author was not prepared to allow me the time to devote the attention to it that would have turned it into a decent book. Even doing a very basic edit was painful and time consuming, and I was relieved to be finished and be able to hand it on. I now understand why several other editors I know say they won't touch self-published books.

#### **Which mistake will you never make again?**

Failing to back up my work frequently and to update and use my virus-scanner very regularly. I've learnt the hard way.

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

On screen, though I still have the editor's habit when someone says, 'Please have a look at this document, and see what you think', of first of all picking up a pen. However, health problems from constant computer work have meant that I have taught myself to be ambidextrous in my use of a mouse, so regular computer work can come at a price.

*continued on page 9*



## Elaine Miller

Freelance editor

*Elaine Miller has been a freelance editor of academic and trade books for five years. In the past she has worked as a journalist, a philosophy tutor, a delivery person, and a waitress in the greasiest of greasy spoons. She hopes to practise in industrial or environmental law after qualification as a lawyer next year.*

### **What's the best thing about your job?**

Being able to govern my own time and space, and to work in the subject areas that interest me most: in short, autonomy.

### **What's the worst thing about your job?**

Even experienced editors seldom get the pay they deserve.

### **What's the best thing about being an editor?**

Expanding the breadth and depth of one's knowledge; the reciprocal teaching and learning inherent in a good author-editor relationship.

### **What was your first editing job?**

There weren't a lot of opportunities in Columbus, Ohio in 1990. I sent a cruelly marked-up copy of a little arts magazine back to those responsible with a letter: 'Clearly, you don't have an editor, and you need one'. I meant a copy-editor, but was promptly hired as 'editor-in-chief'. The magazine was a new venture. Distribution consisted of leaving a stack of copies in public places, and the publication was funded primarily by the principals' secondary investment in gay telephone sex lines. It lasted less than a year and I never saw a pay cheque, but I did get to hear a few bands for free.

### **How did you become an editor?**

I left a promising career as a part-time arts reporter for a weekly newspaper in Columbus (that one was distributed free too, but it was owned by the company that published the daily broadsheet, so it could actually pay its staff). My husband had a job offer in London, and I thought that seemed like a good place to get into book publishing. I was hired as an editorial assistant at Cassell, working for three (and later five!) commissioning editors in the areas of film, art, crafts and cookery, military history, soft furnishings, travel, and reference books (my favourite). All of my bosses were fantastic, and that job provided a broad-based grounding in most aspects of publishing. And I got to write blurbs.

### **What are the essential qualities of being a good editor?**

I think being a pedantic rule-follower with an exhaustive knowledge of the language is very useful, but 'people skills' are essential. If you can't convince the author that his or her book will be better for your expert wordsmithery, everyone will be unhappy.

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

There have been lots, with different kinds of rewards! An economics text that was otherwise less than scintillating

required me to learn how to create and apply styles, a vital skill that I had managed to avoid until then. Two other projects come to mind, each of which involved genuinely collaborative teamwork with the author. One of these was my first law book; the other is on the business of writing and the author is a true professional in the best sense of the word.

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

Proofreading a telephone directory. I worked for about a year as a proofreader for a printing company. Fortunately the phone book was only for one small suburb.

### **Which word will you never spell incorrectly again?**

In a spelling bee in the third grade, I spelt 'Arctic' incorrectly. In Ohio it's pronounced 'ar-tic'.

### **Which mistake will you never make again?**

Always put everything in writing. Oral (or partly oral) briefs are like oral contracts: they can be valid, but hard to enforce.

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

On screen, with the hard copy handy. I find it easier to get a sense of the whole book in hard copy form, but moving text around and changing your mind is much easier with a computer.

### **What advice would you give to editing students?**

Editing is a profession, but it's also a trade. The relatively good working conditions that we enjoy in Australia should never be taken for granted, and retaining those rights requires vigilance and solidarity.

### **What book would you most like to have edited?**

Any part of the 10-volume *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2001), or *Black's Law Dictionary* (West Group, 1999), the definitive US reference, in its 7th edition and going strong.

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*continued from page 8*

## About us – Kerry Biram

### **What advice would you give to editing students?**

Use your networking skills to get any kind of editing work you can at first. Then try to move around to different types of publishing positions getting varied editorial experience for a few years. You'll learn new skills in every position you take. Don't try to freelance until you're quite confident of your skills, as it's hard to ask for advice, and it takes much longer to learn new skills, when you're working on your own. Join the Society of Editors and come to as many meetings and training courses as you can; editing training needs to be a continuous process throughout your professional life if you expect to be able to keep up with changing demands of the industry.

### **What book would you most like to have edited?**

In the current *Readings Books & Music Monthly*, I notice David Crystal's *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* has gone into a second edition. I'm fascinated with learning about the English language, and had visions some years ago of doing studies in linguistics, so to have the chance to edit a book such as this would be a delight for me.

The Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc. presents

## Quotations and Negotiations

### The Freelance Workshop

Sally Woollett and Renée Otmar

Saturday 29 November, 10.00 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Does the idea of submitting a quote make you shudder? Have you ever worked for half of your normal rate because you couldn't tell the publisher that their manuscript needed more than just a 'light edit'? Have you ever had to negotiate payment for work of a type you hadn't encountered before? If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, then this course is for you. Renée Otmar and Sally Woollett share their freelance experiences in difficult situations such as these. They explore how a proactive approach, good communication skills and a good dose of assertiveness can avert many of these problems.

#### What we cover

- the importance of good communication
- 'teasing' out the real brief before you quote
- editorial reviews
- differences between quotes, estimates and set fees
- preparing quotes and estimates
- negotiating payment
- time management and scheduling
- anticipating problems and changes to the brief
- payment terms.

#### Who should attend

Freelance:

- old
- new
- thinking about it

In-house:

- coordinating/managing editors
- production coordinators

Anyone who negotiates payment for editorial projects

This popular workshop is a regular feature on the Society of Editors professional development calendar.

**The Freelance Workshop** is a joint initiative of Renée Otmar and Sally Woollett. Sally runs a successful freelance editing business and is a past Freelance Affairs representative of the Society. Renée is Immediate Past President and an Honorary Life Member of the Society, and the CASE delegate for Victoria. Both have extensive experience as in-house and freelance editors. Between them they have worked on around 300 freelance projects.

Price and venue to be advised. See next month's newsletter for details.

## On the Web

### Swot's Corner

<http://www.yaelf.com/swot.shtml>

Good for anyone wanting to know what the word is to describe someone with no sense of smell, or the term that refers to words like 'I scream' and 'ice cream', 'some others' and 'some mothers' or 'Toyota' and 'toy Yoda'.

### Words, Woe & Wonder

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/indepth/words/>

Handy for drawing a line between freedom fighters and terrorists and clarifying which jets, specifically, may be referred to as 'jumbo'.

### Word Spy

<http://www.wordspy.com/>

For new words and phrases see Word Spy. While the current examples aren't that inspiring, there have been some good ones in the past, such as:

<http://www.wordspy.com/words/jumptheshark.asp>  
<http://www.wordspy.com/words/Kodakcourage.asp>  
<http://www.wordspy.com/words/resetgeneration.asp>

Usually a week after a new post, there's an A3 article about the phrase in *The Age*. Bless them.

Thanks to Susan Keogh for these websites.

*Contributions are welcome – email Lan Wang at  
<[lanwang@wovenwords.com.au](mailto:lanwang@wovenwords.com.au)>*

Have you renewed your membership? If not, this is the last newsletter you will receive. Renew now!

## The Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc.

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

ABN 92 015 006 730

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

### Membership 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.

To renew your membership for 2003–2004, fill in Part A of this form and also Part B if your details have changed.

#### 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

##### Current employment

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 \_\_\_\_\_

For a new member application form, go to the Society's website <http://www.socedvic.org/>

## **Dates for your diary**

### **October meeting**

Wednesday, 8 October 2003

### **Accreditation workshop**

Saturday, 25 October 2003, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., Melbourne Town Hall

### **Have you renewed your membership?**

This will be your last newsletter if you haven't paid your membership fees.



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## **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](http://www.socedvic.org)

### **Subscriptions**

Full membership \$66  
Associate membership \$66  
Distant membership \$38.50