

The SOCIETY of EDITORS (VICTORIA)

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 34 NUMBER 3

SEPTEMBER 2004

Next meeting

The Fate of Australian English

**Ian Britain (Editor of *Meanjin*)
and Nathan Hollier (Co-editor of
Overland)**

Café Mystique (upstairs – formerly Rhumaralla's)
342 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy

Wednesday, 6 October 2004

6.30 for 7 p.m.

A Greek Banquet

All things Greek: meat, fish and vegetarian platters. 3 course selections plus tea and coffee. \$30.00 members, \$35.00 non-members. Drinks at bar prices

Nathan Hollier is co-editor of *Overland* magazine and teaches literary studies and professional writing at Victoria University, where he is also a PhD candidate writing a cultural history of the Whitlam period. In 2004, he edited the essay collection *Ruling Australia: The Power, Politics and Privilege of the New Ruling Class* (Australian Scholarly Press). He has published on numerous aspects of Australian culture in a wide range of forums, including *Australian Literary Studies*, *Journal of Australian Studies*, *Australian Book Review*, *The Age* and *The Australian*.

Ian Britain was born in India in 1948, and migrated with his family to Australia in the 1950s. After an academic career as a historian, he was a founding editor of *Webbers* magazine in Melbourne in the early 1990s and a guest editor of *Island* (Hobart, 1994–95), before being appointed to the editorship of *Meanjin* in 2001. His books include *Fabianism and Culture: A Study in British Socialism and the Arts, 1884–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 1982) and *Once An Australian: Journeys with Barry Humphries, Clive James, Germaine Greer and Robert Hughes* (Oxford, 1997). He also co-edited

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(with Brenda Niall) *The Oxford Book of Australian Schooldays* (1997). He regularly writes book reviews for newspapers and for the *Australian Book Review*.

Bookings are essential:

- Book with Amanda Coverdale – email preferred – at <amanda@clari.net.au> or phone (03) 8802 4482.
- **Book strictly before 5 p.m. on Monday, 4 October.**
- State if you are a member, student, ASTC member, AusSI member or non-member.
- Give an email address or phone number.
- Please let us know immediately if you have any special dietary requirements so we can make arrangements with the chef.
- If you need to cancel, please email or phone Amanda 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.

Future events

November meeting (date TBA) – Kate Burridge is our guest speaker. She holds the chair of Linguistics at Monash University and her recently published book is *Weeds in the Garden of Words: Further Observations of the Tangled History of the English Language*.

December meeting (1 December) – Christmas celebration and the book launch of the new edition of *The Australian Editing Handbook* by Elizabeth Flann and Beryl Hill.



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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.

Letter to the editor

Ahoy there!

Dear Newsletter Editor

May we all be sailors, indeed! I am planning to enlist in the Navy forthwith. Ahoy there!

If anyone would care to sign up with me, they will discover that the procedure when launching a ship is to break a bottle of champagne over her bows, saying: 'I hereby declare the [name of ship] well and truly launched. May God bless her and all who sail in her.'

And this is the SOCIETY OF EDITORS Newsletter!?!

Come, come, my children. The transcript of a speech should always be edited before publication so that it reads coherently and grammatically. Good heavens, they even edit the Prime Minister!

Your attention is drawn to page 89 of *The Editor's Companion* under the heading 'The Spoken Word in Print'. Janet Mackenzie writes: 'The speakers have a right to their authentic voices, but the editor also has an obligation to the reader and the conventions of print ... a literal transcription is tedious to read.'

I couldn't have said it better myself.

Avast there, me hearties!

*Teresa Pitt
Honorary Life Member*

Editor's note: *In last month's newsletter we published the transcript of Teresa Pitt's speech at the launch of Janet Mackenzie's new book. Due to illness and other unforeseen circumstances, the transcript was not edited. The newsletter is prepared by volunteers on a monthly basis. We mostly get it right, but not always. I apologise to Teresa for any embarrassment.*

Using Word macros

By popular demand we have scheduled another session of 'Using Word macros for more efficient editing'.

Trainer: Catherine Hunt

Saturday, 16 October, 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

This half-day course is for anyone working in Microsoft Word who hasn't used macros much before. By the end of the course you should be able to record simple macros and have a good understanding of the scope of tasks that can be accomplished by more complex macros.

Venue: Room 441, CAE, 253 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

Cost: \$95 members (Society of Editors, Indexers, ASTC); \$125 non-members

Bookings: Please book with Marta Veroni, <bohemia@melbpc.org.au> by **Friday, 8 October**

Time to renew your membership!

Winter and Spring are busy times for the Membership Secretary. As well as considering new member applications (of which we have some 40 or so in recent months), there's also the processing of the membership renewals. If all our members who have not yet forwarded their renewals have held back from concern about my workload, thanks! But your renewal is now overdue.

As we have now shifted to email receipts, we are no longer sending out laminated membership cards as a matter of course. A slip in lieu of a card is now attached to your email receipt. If, however, you would like a laminated card, simply contact me and I will forward one to you.

We are shortly to discontinue use of our vicnet bulk email service as a way of emailing members. The list has become out-of-date and we have decided to use your email address as recorded on our membership database for future emails. You'll receive emails about this in the near future.

*Ron Thiele
Membership and Correspondence Secretary*

Editing in Context

National Editors Conference 13–15 October 2005

Many of you will have seen our announcement two newsletters ago of the next Council of Australian Societies of Editors (CASE) conference which is to be hosted by the Society in Melbourne in October 2005.

The organising sub-committee has now secured a venue for the conference. It is to be held at the Eden on the Park hotel, on Queens Road near Albert Park. Not only does the hotel provide excellent conference facilities and accommodation, but it is also in a brilliant location close to transport to both the city and the bay.

As you know, the conference theme is Editing in Context and will focus on editing as a profession. There are also three sub-themes to be addressed:

- Transition (changing workplaces, conditions, technology, industry norms)
- Consolidation (training, business aspects, skills acquisitions, standards)
- Collaboration (partnerships, mentoring, networking).

Keep an eye on our website at <www.socedvic.org/editingincontext/> for up-to-date information, and if you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me at <lanwang@wovenwords.com.au> or tel: (03) 9410 9027.

*Lan Wang
Conference Convenor*

Fran Bryson, Literary Agent: Linking Authors and Publishers

September dinner meeting report by Tess Moloney

Members of the Society and some guests, courtesy of the Melbourne Writers' Festival, gathered at a new venue, the Prince Patrick Hotel in Victoria Parade, Collingwood, to hear literary agent Fran Bryson talk about being a literary agent and ask her lots of questions about her role.

The Prince Patrick (is this an Irish joke?) is a pleasant upmarket pub that turned out to be a little noisy for our purposes. The food was tasty, the company excellent, the speaker generous and informative, and the audience engaged.

Fran Bryson is the principal of the Bryson Agency Australia, a literary agency that had its genesis over 20 years ago under the aegis of John Timlin as The Almost Managing Company, a theatrical agency representing actors, playwrights and directors. Now specialising in the book market, Fran's recently published projects include Rodney Hall's *The Last Love Story* (Picador); Michael McGirr's *Bypass: The Story of a Road* (Picador); Christine Balint's *Ophelia's Fan* (Allen & Unwin and WW Norton); and Noel Tovey's *Little Black Bastard* (Hodder Headline).

Fran entered the publishing industry 12 years ago, initially planning to be an editor. She undertook RMIT's editing and publishing graduate diploma in 1983–84 which she upgraded to a Master of Arts (Communications) at RMIT University in the late 1990s.

Fran explained that her role depends entirely on the needs of each project, and each client/author. Many clients are referred or recommended to her by someone else. Her initial work involves evaluating an author's manuscript or proposal (a one page pitch). Her agency's books are currently closed to new clients.

Once a client or a project is on board, she settles on strategies for marketing the first pitch to publishers, then determines strategies along the book publishing, distribution and selling continuum. Fran markets a manuscript to publishers in different ways: she might pitch a project to a specific publisher, or send multiple submissions. On occasions she has marketed a project to an overseas publisher in the first instance. Her least favourite way of selling an author's manuscript to a publisher is by holding an auction.



Once a publisher has shown interest in a manuscript, Fran's work commonly involves negotiating offers and deciding which rights to sell. She also markets rights that stay with the author by, say, sending promotional copies of books to audio-book producers.

Fran keeps an eye on promotion – especially of an author's name. She also fields enquiries and organises signings and festival appearances. Fran herself appears at writers' festivals as a speaker, judge and chair.

Fran works in the agency with only one colleague, her assistant Liz. She

doesn't employ or sub-contract any work. She and Liz read everything between them, and while Fran might recommend to a writer that a manuscript would benefit from editing she doesn't organise or pay for this directly – such work is undertaken at the writer's expense.

Fran welcomes clients who appreciate the value of good editing. She advises her authors about how the editing process works. Knowledge often makes this process smoother: it doesn't help if an author doesn't know what's going on.

Sometimes she talks to an editor before she sells a project, sometimes she suggests an editor to work on a project. Her recommendations may or may not be followed. She doesn't have lots of direct contact with freelance editors.

Authors and agents

Fran doesn't like to believe it's absolutely necessary for an author to have an agent. It's rather like having an accountant, she says, it's possible to promote yourself but generally worthwhile to employ a specialist. In Fran's view, writers tend not to have a business mind. Literary agents should have a sound knowledge of literary markets and editorial skills and Fran admits to spending a lot of time in bookshops seeing who's marketing what.

Publishing and remuneration

Literary agents work on commission. Like the people they represent, literary agents don't make much money or get paid

continued on page 4

Dinner meeting report

very often. Fran says she's not a babysitter, financier, or taxi service, but has been guilty of all three at times.

How writers become clients

Fran is commonly the recipient of the infamous unsolicited manuscript.

Recommendation is the most common way Fran takes on writers. Occasionally, she represents a manuscript submitted by a sub-agent. Fran links with 17 sub-agents around the world who sell to different territories. Sometimes editors refer clients, sometimes a publishing house, sometimes other agents cross-refer when it's not their area.

Fran is often contacted by writers asking: Are your books open? Are you representing work in my particular area? What are your submission guidelines? (She requires three chapters totalling 5,000–10,000 words together with synopsis, biography and a good covering letter.)

A selection of literary agents is listed on the Australian Society of Authors website.

The diversity of projects at the Bryson Agency

Diversity is a necessity. Fran values a mix of projects; ideas feed off each other and networks overlap. The agency has recently re-focused and tends to work in the genres of narrative non-fiction, autobiography, biography, memoir, literary fiction, fantasy, and plays. Fran tends not to be involved in educational publishing, children's publishing, or in film and TV.

What Fran loves about her job

The moment a new book hits her desk. Attending prize-giving ceremonies.

What Fran hates about her job

Saying no – although it's easier to say no permanently (especially now, as her books are full) because it's no reflection on the work. Giving 'tactful feedback' to authors. Negotiating film deals.

The standard of manuscripts

The standard of the manuscripts that Fran sees varies enormously. There's a common perception that the literate can write yet there's a big difference between what is literate and what is publishable. There's also a difference between what is publishable and what is marketable. Multinational publishers, in particular, are only interested in what is marketable.

The flavour of the month

Yes, there's an element of fashion in publishing. Twelve months ago if Fran had been told that Michael Moore would be as big as he is now she would have laughed. The market

for non-brand name fiction has been very flat, frighteningly flat, all over the world, ever since 9/11.

The merits and risks of working on a manuscript without a publisher's input

Fran recognises that it takes lots of crafting to get an author's voice to be coherent and compelling on the page. Sometimes Fran takes a manuscript through six drafts and she has worked with some manuscripts and authors for two years before submitting the manuscript to a publisher. Publishers expect a higher standard of polish. Fran has never had a situation where her work as an agent has been negated by a publisher.

What Fran tell authors of editors and editing

Fran advises her clients that editing will save their lives and that the editing process is the most valuable process that they will ever go through in their writing lives. Ultimately, though, she points out that the buck stops with the author. She tries not to take on authors who won't listen: life is too short to have authors who won't be edited.

The global marketplace

The global market is always in her mind. Taking on books that will work globally is a strong focus (and supports her passion for travel). Fran would also weigh up other considerations: Is a manuscript suitable for film and audio? Is the author a good speaker?

Author endorsements on a book cover

It's hard to gauge whether these help. Yes, if it's the right author. Sometimes it makes no difference.

The protection of ideas

In reality, authors can have the same idea at different times because they are influenced by the same stimuli and fashion. She does know of stories of books with the same title, or same cover. It's difficult to assess whether being quiet about or broadcasting an idea is the better method of protection.

Bookshop discounts

Members receive 10% discount on book purchases over \$20 (specials excluded) at the following bookshops, on presentation of a current membership card or receipt:

- **Technical Book Shop**
295 Swanston Street, Melbourne
- **Brunswick Street Bookstore**
305 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy
- **Pages Bookshop**
167 High Street, Kew
- **Collins Booksellers**
56 Toorak Road, South Yarra (not other Collins Booksellers stores)
- **Spellbound Books**
460 Lygon Street, Brunswick East

Freelance Register 2005

Applications close Friday 29 October 2004

Applications are now open for the 2005 *Freelance Register*. You must be a financial full member of the Society for 2004–05 to be eligible for a listing.

Please note: Freelancers with an entry in the 2004 *Freelance Register* will **not** be automatically included in the 2005 *Register*. It is your responsibility to reapply each year.

Distribution

We will be printing 1000 copies of the *Register* for distribution to the book publishing industry, corporations, government departments, and community organisations. The *Register* is also published on the Society of Editors (VIC) website.

The online version of the *Register* will be updated once during the year if you require changes to your **contact details only**.

Fee

The fee for an entry in the *Register* will be \$100 (including GST). This fee covers production and printing costs. The Society meets the distribution costs.

Payment

Send a cheque for \$100, **payable to The Society of Editors (Vic.) Inc.**, to: L. Elaine Miller, Little Grey House, 24 Foam Street, Elwood VIC 3184. **Please write your name and address on the back of your cheque, so that the treasurer (who won't have your application form) can send you a receipt.**

Word limit

The word limit for all professional details (i.e. all text for your entry except your name, ABN and contact details) is 180.

This limit will be strictly enforced: if it's over the word limit, your entry will be sent back to you for editing.

Proofreading your copy

You will be e-mailed a PDF file of your page in the 2005 *Register* to proofread and return by e-mail. Keep a copy of your original entry so that you can proofread against it. Editorial changes to original text will not be accepted as proofreading, and you will not be sent further proofs of your entry.

Proofreading will take place between **1 and 14 December 2004**. If you are unavailable between these dates, note this when you send in your entry and do so **by 14 October**. You will then receive your copy to proofread in November 2004. Alternatively, arrange for someone to proofread your copy for you, and provide the e-mail address to which your PDF should be sent if you want it sent to someone other than you.

How to apply

(1) Updated entries

Please photocopy your entry in the 2004 *Register* and update your contact information and/or professional details by annotating your entry clearly in red pen. (It is useful to make an enlarged photocopy, so that the annotations are clear and easy to understand.) If there are no changes, simply send a photocopy marked 'no changes'. **If you mark your photocopy 'no changes', you will not be able to make substantive changes at proof stage.** Send your update, together with payment. If you're updating your entry but are making significant changes to it, e-mail the new text to Elaine Miller at <lemur44@optusnet.com.au>.

(2) New entries

Supply your contact information and professional details, following exactly the headings given here under 'Contact information' and 'Professional details'. Please use the Style Guide (see pages 8–9), which has been provided for consistency in capitalisation, punctuation and the order and format of information. You may also wish to look at a 2004 *Freelance Register* for guidance. Please note the word limit of 180 for professional details.

Send your entry as a Word document. If you use a different application, save the file as text-only. E-mail your entry to Elaine Miller at <lemur44@optusnet.com.au>. Send a hard copy, together with payment, to Elaine at the address listed above.

Contact information

Name (**Note:** Please specify any special instructions for purposes of alphabetical order, for example if your name is Chris Johnson Smith and you want your entry under J for Johnson, not S.)

Address	ABN (required)
Telephone	Professional details
Fax	Summary of services provided
Mobile	In-house experience
E-mail	Freelance experience
www home page	

Examples of projects you have worked on and your role in them: you may wish to subdivide this section into areas such as project management, editing, writing, etc., and to specify the subject areas or types of books. Many publishers find this breakdown useful when choosing a freelance editor for a particular project. See the Style Guide for examples.

Qualifications, formal and other; relevant awards
Areas of expertise
Areas of interest (optional)
Relevant memberships
Computer platform(s) used
Main software used (note versions)

Good and bad new words – what’s the difference?

by Robert Doolan

All my life I have suffered from earworms. Earworms are those catchy tunes you hear that burrow into your brain and play in your head for the rest of the day. Abba songs and TV jingles are particularly dogged earworms.

I didn’t know they were called earworms until I found out someone had recently invented the word.

I will always suffer from earworms, but knowing their identity now makes me more relaxed about all that musical activity in my head.

Earworm is a wonderful word, because it gives a name to a problem that used to take many words to explain (assuming you wanted to explain it).

Uptalk is also a great new word. Young people had been uptalking for several years before I found out it had a name. They make a statement and finish the last word with an upward inflection as though it’s a question: ‘I’ve bought a new mobile phone?’ ‘It takes photos?’ ‘Have a nice day?’ ‘I’m here to read your meter?’ ‘This is an emergency?’

I was happy when I found the name for this phenomenon. It is now in some online dictionaries. Unfortunately, uptalkers rarely know they are guilty of it, let alone what it is called.

In my opinion, these useful new words should be in every editor’s vocabulary.

And what about *wrap rage*? Isn’t that marvellous? It’s what I feel every time I try to open a new blank CD or audiocassette. Those things are packaged so tight that they defy opening unless you have extremely agile teeth or scissors in your pocket. I never seem to have either when I need them.

Wrap rage is a wonderful new expression. *Angry*, *exasperated*, and *annoyed* just don’t capture the specific emotion that *wrap rage* does.

In contrast, there are new words that management types are using that are, well, loser words. The management types all want to say *synergies* and *balanced scorecard* and *governance* and *asynchronous* and *implementation architecture* because all their management-type friends are saying these words. They *facilitate*, *engage with*, *value-add*, *enhance* and look for *key deliverables* in everything.

It’s not that these words are offensive. Some of them have been in every dictionary since Samuel Johnson’s. It’s just that the new hybrid meanings of many of them lack imagination and clarity. When I come across such words while editing, I’m sometimes not sure what the writer means.

A friend found this sentence in a draft report his supervisor asked him to read: ‘The policy will inform the text as it addresses the writing.’ He asked what I thought it meant. I didn’t know. Vague words expose vague thinking, so I suggested he delete it.

You can usually tell whether a new word or phrase is good or bad. If it’s clever and meets a need, or it encapsulates a long explanation in a few syllables, then it’s probably good and worth using. If it’s vague, or seems to muddy the meaning of an existing word, it’s bad. It’s also bad if it’s a little-used word that people have resurrected to show off their knowledge.

Childhood obesity often makes news these days. An American journalist noticed that most of these obese children were the offspring of Generation X (people born between the mid-60s and mid-70s), and labelled the overweight kids as Generation XL. That’s clever.

Other new expressions I like are:

- *awkword* (Paul McFedries’ description of a word that is difficult to pronounce)
- *cremains* (the remains of someone who has been cremated)
- *male answer syndrome* (the compulsion by many people (mostly men) to answer any question, regardless of knowledge)
- *job spill* (work that spills into your own time)
- *unibrow* (hair between eyebrows that makes the two brows appear to be joined)
- *prooflisten* (check a recording for errors — as opposed to proofread)
- *keyboard plaque* (the dirt or grime that accumulates on your computer keyboard)
- *ego wall* (a wall on which to hang your degrees, awards, and photos in which you appear with famous people)
- *grammer slack* (the tolerance shown by most internet users for small spelling and grammatical errors).

All the *good* new words mentioned here are descriptive, clever, concise, and meet a need.

The *bad* new words don’t contribute much to clarity, cleverness, or filling a need. In fact, there should be a word for these bad new words that merely eat away at people’s brains. Maybe *mind-maggots*.

Reprinted courtesy of the author and Offpress, newsletter of the Society of Editors (Queensland) Inc.

The Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc. presents
The big picture – structural editing

Trainers: Pamela Hewitt and Shelley Kenigsberg
Saturday, 13 November 2004, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Structural editing in fiction and creative non-fiction involves developing the logic and flow of a piece of writing, shaping and presenting the text in harmony with its internal progression. Editors almost always do this to some degree, but the process is often intuitive.

Beginnings and endings are crucial, at the level of the full text, section, chapter, paragraph and even the sentence. You need confidence in your judgement – some would call it gall – to overcome the fear of making bold changes, and it's important to develop the art of creative communication with authors.

The structural editor develops a feel for the problem areas in a text. How does it stand up to an analysis of flow and variation? Is it the right shape? Structural editing gives editors the analysis tool to highlight imbalances in coverage of topics, and overlaps and omissions. From this analysis comes the vital skill of devising suggestions for overcoming the problems.

These range from moderate to radical. Change a descriptive passage to dialogue? Blend two minor characters? Delete the opening dream sequence? Work on the transition between chapter five and chapter six? Introduce sections and blend chapters entirely? Make the penultimate chapter the first? The workshop presents practical suggestions for structural editing, including cut-up techniques, text charts, highlighting, summary statements and textual and 'anatomical' analysis.

- **Pamela Hewitt** is a freelance editor, writer and trainer, and proprietor of Emend Editing and Writing Services, which she established in 1996. She has developed and

presented editing courses and workshops for tertiary institutions, writers' centres, literary festivals, editors' societies and government agencies. Pamela is active in the editing profession. She is a member of the national accreditation working group, has written widely on editing topics and presented papers at editing and language conferences. Her current obsession is a training website for editors and writers, which goes live later this year.

- **Shelley Kenigsberg** is a freelance editor and trainer. She has worked in large and small corporate publishing houses as editor, commissioning editor and publisher, and began S K Publishing (freelance services) in 1998. Shelley has developed the Book Editing and Publishing Diploma course at Macleay College, Sydney, where she is now coordinator and lecturer. She has presented papers at several conferences. Shelley is Vice-president of the NSW Society of Editors (President 2000–2003) and is active on the Council of Australian Societies of Editors.

Note: This is a repeat of the course presented in July. Bookings will not be accepted without payment.

Cost: \$135 members (Soc. of Eds, Indexers, ASTC),
\$175 non-members
Bookings: Please book with Marta Veroni,
<bohemian@melbpc.org.au> by **Friday**
5 November.



The big picture – structural editing workshop
Saturday 13 November 2004

Payment is by cheque or money order, payable to 'Society of Editors (Vic.)',
and mailed to Marta Veroni, PO Box 182, Moreland VIC 3058. Direct payment available by arrangement.

Name: _____

Postal address: _____

Postcode: _____

Phone: BH _____ AH _____

Email address (if available): _____

Member of: Society of Editors ASTC Society of Indexers

Cheque/money order enclosed for \$ _____

Dates for your diary

Next meeting

Wednesday, 6 October 2004

Have you renewed your membership?

Last renewals must be received by 1 October. See our website for details.

Freelance Register applications

Close on Friday 29 October 2004



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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