

Next meeting

Christmas Celebration Dinner and Twilight Trivia Night

Wednesday, 7 December 2005

Location: **The English Speaking Union**

146 Toorak Road West (between Walsh and Marne Streets)
South Yarra (Melway 21 4E)

Time: **6.30 p.m.** for pre-dinner drinks

7 p.m.: Festive buffet, spit roast, potato au gratin, salads and
sweets, tea and coffee

\$20 members, \$25 non-members. Soft drinks, orange juice and
wine at bar prices.

Join us for a festive Christmas dinner followed by frivolous
but fun-filled trivia to celebrate the end of a great year! Get
your team together now—tables of 8, or just come along
on the night and join one!

Book sales: *At the Typeface* will be available for sale if
you haven't purchased your copy yet (\$30) and The Sun
Bookshop's Deborah Force will bring lots of books for
sale—just in time to buy a great Christmas gift with a 10%
discount on the night.

Your Choice Editing Awards 2005

If you're coming to enjoy the festive fun we want YOUR
nominations for these awards of the year. Email your
nomination to <lzsteele@melbpc.org.au> for any or all
of the following awards, with supporting evidence where
possible.

- The Big Booker Award—for the person making a
booking for the biggest group to the Christmas party.
- The Nightmare Award—tell us about your 'tear-your-
hair-out' experience this year.
- The Eye Teeth Award—the job you'd give your eye teeth
to work on (can be real or fictitious).
- The Em Dash Award—for the manuscript with the most
inappropriate use of punctuation marks. Nomination

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must be supported by at least a paragraph displaying
the offensive features.

- The Irrelevance Award—for the book title with least
possible relevance to the book content.
- The 17th Proof Award—most unusual title for an edited
report (research report, annual report, etc).

Prizes on the night! Check the Society's website <www.socedvic.org> and emails for more details.

Booking details

- Book with Katherine Ross—email preferred—at
<info@akra.com.au> or phone 03 9712 0704. If you
have organised a team for trivia please let Katherine
know.
- Book STRICTLY before **midday on Monday,
5 December**. Bookings received after this deadline will
not be accepted.
- State if you are a member, student, ASTC member,
AusSI member or non-member. Give an email address or
telephone number.
- If you need to cancel, please email Katherine as soon as
possible so we don't waste money 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.
- People who arrive on the night without a prior booking
will be unable to attend.



IPEd Notes

**by Ed Highley, Secretary, Institute of Professional Editors
[vice Janet Mackenzie, IPEd Liaison Officer]**

The national conference, 'Editing in context', held in Melbourne on 13–15 October was on all counts a great success and a credit—no, a high distinction—to the organising committee in the Society of Editors (Victoria). Full marks too to all the presenters in a program that was full of interest, never flagged and which often forced hard choices on participants when the parallel sessions came around. Selected papers will be put at www.socedvic.org/editingincontext/ on the conference website. All papers and associated material will be sent on a CD to registrants in due course.

The conference was held under the auspices of CASE (the Council of Australian Societies of Editors), which is now really, truly the Institute of Professional Editors. Support among the almost 300 conference participants for the Institute and its plans for accreditation and other national activities was palpable. When, at the end of her keynote address on national affairs, Janet Mackenzie asked the audience if they were happy with the new name and its diminutive—IPEd, the response was an ocean of raised hands, followed by spontaneous applause. The proposal that IPEd's vision be 'To advance the profession of editing in Australia' was also warmly received. Later in the day, the Institute was officially launched with much song (literally) and dance at the conference dinner.

Also in plenary session, IPEd's Accreditation Board (AB) brought participants up to date on progress towards implementation of the national accreditation system voted on and approved by the societies at the end of last year. Board chair Robin Bennett led the session with a talk that covered the questions most frequently asked about the system. This was followed by a series of hypotheticals prepared by board members and designed to show the sorts of evidence of editorial skills that assessors will be looking for in applications for accreditation. This practical session was well received by participants and generated useful and incisive questions from the audience and, one suspects, helped to overcome the anxieties that some editors might have felt about the business. Certainly, the impression gained by IPEd delegates and AB members was that, among those editors present at the conference, there was generally strong support for the expeditious implementation of the system.

Enthusiasm for national activities among participants was also evident in the numbers of editors who signed up to join one or other of IPEd's working groups. As a result, the National Organisation Working Group has been reconstituted, with the primary task of taking IPEd through to establishment as a registered, legal entity. Its membership has grown from three to nine. The Promotions Working Group has been reinvigorated and renamed as the Communications Working Group with, so far, seven members. Education and training, and related issues of professional development, and their linkages with accreditation, were hot topics during the conference, in and out of formal proceedings. In her keynote speech, Janet Mackenzie called for help for the national body from editors with expertise and experience in these areas. The response was almost immediate and a new Education and Training Working Group with an initial membership of eight was formed.

We are seeking more members for the aforementioned working groups, and for the Standards Revision Working Group whose deliberations will parallel the refining of the accreditation system. We need all the help we can get and it would be a fine thing if all societies were represented on all working groups. If you feel you can make a contribution and can commit the time, please contact your IPEd Interim Council member (formerly the CASE delegate) in the first instance. You will be welcomed with open arms, and will enjoy the experience.

What spare time IPEd Interim Council and Accreditation Board members had during the conference was taken up by meetings to review progress and plot the future course. Conferences such as 'Editing in context' are rare opportunities for all delegates to get together face-to-face at minimal cost to their societies. The Accreditation Board met with a group of university educators, headed by Professor Pam Peters, interested in exploring how tertiary editing courses and accreditation might interact.

At the end of the conference, almost before the echoes of the final speakers had dissipated, the Tasmanians were on the podium promoting IPEd's next conference, to be held in Hobart on 9–11 May 2007, with the theme 'From inspiration to publication'. Not to be outdone, the South Australians then got up and sang about their conference in Adelaide in 2009. The national future seems assured.

Dinner meeting report

Henry Rosenbloom: Doing good and doing well

by Helene Bethune Moore

On the morning of 9 November, Scribe publisher Henry Rosenbloom had flown to Sydney to attend the launch of *The Great Crash*, Michael Sexton's account of the dismissal of the Whitlam government in 1975. Originally published in 1979 as *Illusions of Power*, Scribe's new edition of the book was launched by Paul Keating in the week of the 30th anniversary of the Whitlam government's sacking.

That evening, after first stopping at his office to check his email where he found himself embroiled in an auction for an book he'd expressed interest in at the recent Frankfurt Book Fair, he was facing 56 editors, all keen to know how he had got to where he is, and how he handles the dilemmas facing an independent publishing house in a small country. After first endearing himself to his audience by describing editors as precious creatures who should be nurtured, Henry went on to describe an atypical career path—although what is a typical career path in publishing?

Henry has never worked for any other publisher, nor been trained professionally to edit, typeset or publish books. However, he'd always been oriented to the culture of the written word. He was his high school's magazine editor, a writer for and then editor of The University of Melbourne's student newspaper, *Farrago*, a house-journal editor for Ford Australia, and he wrote as a freelancer for *Nation Review* in 1972. Then he worked in the Whitlam government for Moss Cass.

Founding Scribe in the mid-70s seemed a natural progression to him—a way to pursue his interests in the real world, and in serious non-fiction and quality fiction. Without realising it, he became a member of what was even then becoming an endangered species: an editor/publisher driven by content.

He attributed this to his background as the son of Holocaust survivors and a student of history and literature. He felt the world was a serious place, and he thought Australia was very bad at publishing the kind of non-fiction he was interested in. He became a trade publisher because he wanted to publish books that mattered.

In an interview earlier this year with the ABC, Henry summarised some of what was said at our meeting: 'I should acknowledge that there's something deeply irrational about being a serious trade publisher. It's highly competitive, and it's one of the few genuinely entrepreneurial activities left in the free market; but,

paradoxically, it usually rewards high risk with low financial returns and deep anxiety. It's just that it's something I feel compelled to do. I'm driven by a compulsion to provide a means for authors to tell the truth about what they see and what they know, and by the belief that we have to 'comfort the afflicted and afflict the comforted'. This is perhaps a bit prosecutorial for a publisher, but there you have it.'

For many years, Scribe produced small numbers of worthy books each year, unknown and invisible to the world at large. The modern era for Scribe didn't begin until 1997 and 1999 when Henry started acquiring rights from overseas publishers. The Australian publishing industry suddenly sat up and started to take notice. His first US acquisition, a sex therapy and guidance book, did well (10,000 units within six months, and its seventh reprint has just been delivered into the warehouse). Henry realised that he was onto something. He didn't have to deal with editors who drove him nuts, or meet or front-end costs. He just had to print and promote.

Following this promising start, Scribe regularly acquired rights from overseas publishers, and developed a much broader list. Henry started to attend international book fairs, and he became open to book publishing as a global activity. Scribe had a number of successes quickly, and gained in confidence.

The effect on the local market was that Scribe was immediately given a new credibility. Scribe had wanted good quality work from local authors, and now authors were scrambling to come to him.

Ironically, the extension of Scribe's list in this way has also meant that Henry has had to compromise on the books he publishes. Scribe has 36 books on its list this year, with maybe half of those overseas acquisitions. To be able to publish the books he loves—those with integrity—Henry has also to be a market realist, and take on books that the acquisitions team thinks will be a commercial success. *The Man Behind the da Vinci Code* is an example of such a book.

Henry admitted that doing good—publishing 'worthy' books—and doing well don't equate. Good books don't make money. Literary non-fiction is not profitable in this country: to sell 3,000 copies is regarded as a success, but not a profitable one.

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Analysis of the third national survey of editors (October 2005)

by Pamela Hewitt

The third national survey of editors was conducted at the conference, 'Editing in Context', held in Melbourne in October 2005. There were 108 responses to the survey, a slight increase in the response to the second national survey of editors, carried out in July 2003 at the Brisbane national conference.

These surveys are the only comprehensive, national collection of information about editors. Although participation at national conferences is not necessarily representative of all editors as a whole, they are excellent opportunities to gather national data and views, and they provide a snapshot of the profession. To allow comparison over the three surveys, the same questions were asked, where possible. Much has been achieved on the national front in the past four years, so the survey has been refined to take into account changing national issues.

As the conference was held in Melbourne, there is a disproportionate representation of Victorian editors. Some 40% of respondents were from Victoria. Even so, there is an encouraging continuity of response, which suggests that we can have confidence in the findings. The most variable responses are found in the area of rates and charges, so I conducted a state-by-state analysis to allow comparison.

Who is an Australian editor?

- It comes as no surprise that women continue to outnumber men in the profession, with 87% female respondents and 13% male.
- Editors are getting (a little bit) younger! While 58% of respondents are over 45, this is down slightly from 63% in 2003, and 42% are under 45.
- We're a well educated bunch. 92% of editors hold at least a degree. Most (58%) hold more than one higher education qualification, and just over a quarter have a Masters or Doctoral degree.
- Editors are working harder to extend their skills, with 95% participating in professional development programs. This continues the increasing trend for professional skills upgrading noted in the previous survey.
- Almost 70% of respondents had more than 6 years' experience as an editor.
- Most editors bring to their work previous experience in relevant professional areas. The most commonly mentioned fields are teaching, administration, journalism, librarianship and writing. Many bring subject specialties to their editing work, such as science, law, linguistics and management. Experience in bookselling,

policy, archives, computing, communications, university lecturing and business are just some of the other areas of relevant work experience that editors listed.

- There was an increase in the proportion of full-time editors (60% compared with 51% two years ago), with 27% working part time and 13% working in the field in addition to other employment.
- Mapping the changing boundaries of the profession is vital to our continuing relevance to a changing workplace. The nomenclature editors use is an important indicator of shifts in the industry and of the ways we see ourselves. In previous surveys, I asked respondents if they described themselves primarily as copyeditors and/or proofreaders, substantive editors, project managers or whether they used some other title. Many indicated that these boundaries were impossible to delineate in their working lives, so this time I framed the question differently. The changing role of editors in the publishing industry is now more accurately reflected in the findings. In 2005, 19% of respondents described their role as copyediting or proofreading, 11% saw themselves primarily as substantive editors, 16% described themselves as project managers while 37% agreed that it was impossible to distinguish between combinations of these activities. Among the other 17% of responses, many used different job titles: communications manager, on-screen and website editor, editorial consultant, managing consultant, content developer, project editor as well as knowledge management professional and others.
- Compared with the 2003 survey, a higher proportion (46%) of respondents worked as employees, reflecting the greater levels of in-house employment among editors in Victoria. Just under half of respondents were freelance, with the other 5% describing their employment status as contract, volunteer or a combination of employee and freelance.

Rates

Now for the news we've all been waiting for. There has been a significant increase in the reported rates editors charge. The national average hourly rate is now \$61, a marked increase on the \$50 average reported in the previous two surveys.

Even better, this is not merely a result of the over-representation of Victorian editors. A breakdown by state and territory follows: average hourly rates for editing were

\$67 in Victoria, \$63 in the ACT, \$60 in NSW, \$55 in South Australia and \$49 in Queensland. Tasmania's average was the highest, at \$76, but this is based on too small a sample to generalise. There were no figures for WA or the Northern Territory. For the first time, we can report on rates in New Zealand, which average \$45, albeit against a small sample.

As we know, these averages mask huge variations. The highest reported hourly rate for editing was \$120 and the lowest was \$25. As in the past, many editors charge different rates for different services. Proofreading rates averaged \$38, indexing was \$45, thesis editors averaged \$39 and manuscript assessment rates were \$36 or \$325 per manuscript. Higher paid services were project management, which commands an average hourly rate of \$82, and document development, at an average hourly rate of \$56.

There was a great deal of discussion about rates in the space provided for comments. It comes as no surprise that the most common remark was 'these rates are too low' (10 respondents said this, some using terms such as 'slave labour', 'ridiculous undercharging' and one commenting 'I can't believe people are working for \$35 an hour'). A repeated suggestion was for societies to provide guidelines on rates, hold seminars on the topic and work to improve the way clients value our work.

Another familiar response was that some editors charge different rates according to what they believe the client will pay, or can afford. Several people also raised the problems of undercutting by colleagues and lack of information about what to charge. Here is a typical response: 'I would like some more guidance about professional rates because I don't know the range in which it is reasonable to negotiate; at the moment I'm at the mercy of what the publishers suggest as an hourly rate.'

In contrast to the practice of charging differential rates, others commented that their time is just as valuable to them and the client, regardless of the service performed, and so they did not vary their charges. Others said that they resisted quoting an hourly rate in favour of quoting on the job.

To summarise, there has been progress on this front but it is clear that many editors would like to increase their charges and that they look to societies and the profession nationally to help them achieve this.

Challenges

Extending skills was the challenge most frequently cited as the most important and it was the most commonly listed item overall, followed by **keeping abreast of technology** and **increasing income**. This response is much the same as those of previous surveys. Several individuals

said that they saw improving the way editors are valued as important. Other priorities were becoming more time efficient, keeping up with administration and balancing lean periods with times of oversupply of work. One editor listed 'refusing tempting jobs' as a challenge, while another remarked that these things are not 'challenges' but 'all in a day's work'.

Priorities

The groundswell of support for the establishment of the **national organisation** (the Institute of Professional Editors, or IPed) was clear, with the highest number of people listing this as their number one priority, followed closely by the need for the provision of more **professional development for editors** and a desire for a **greater advocacy and promotions** role on the part of societies. There is growing support for societies to take on an **employment brokerage** role, the next most popular choice of priority.

Individuals also stressed the need for a mentoring scheme for newcomers to the field. This was spontaneously raised by several respondents in the last survey and I will include it as a separate item in Hobart in 2007. Some other suggestions were an online e-list, stronger partnerships with writers, publishers and other industry organisations, and accreditation of courses.

Subject areas

Rather than listing subject areas, this year's survey merely asked respondents to nominate their own fields. The results were remarkably compatible. Once again, most editors either described themselves as 'generalists' or listed a range of subject areas. **Education** was by far the most common subject area (42 responses). When you add higher education (11), vocational education (4), curriculum and assessment (1 each), this confirms the broad field of education as the largest single subject area for editors. **Science** accounted for 20 responses, with a further 6 specialist scientific areas mentioned. The **humanities**, broadly defined to include social sciences, history, ancient history, anthropology, politics, philosophy, critical theory and archaeology was the next on the list, with 25 responses. Twenty respondents listed **trade fiction and non-fiction**, including children's books, biography and poetry. **Business, finance, marketing, human resources** and **accounting**, when grouped together, amounted to 18 of the listed subject areas, while 15 respondents listed government and corporate editing among their subject areas.

Small numbers of respondents listed many additional subject specialities. These included language and

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Editors on the move

by Pamela Hewitt

Editors are getting younger and richer.

Well, only a little bit younger and only a tiny bit richer, but progress is progress. The third national survey of editors found that hard work and organisation are showing results.

I've been conducting these surveys for four years. In 2001, I was writing a paper for 'Partnerships in Knowledge', a national conference of editors and indexers held in Canberra, and I was dismayed to discover that there was little useful quantitative or qualitative information about Australian editors. It seemed that the only way I could get reliable information on what editors did, thought and charged was to ask them myself.

The result was a survey that asked editors for standard statistical information on age, sex and residence. It went on to find out about their educational background and employment experience. The survey contained questions about the challenges editors face and their professional priorities. It also provided, for the first time, reliable data on the rates Australian editors charge.

It came as no surprise to me to find that the profession is both experienced and well qualified. As I said at the time, editors are:

- highly skilled, combining generalist and specialist knowledge
- highly qualified, usually with a first degree, often with one or more postgraduate qualifications
- highly experienced, often with a track record of ten or twenty years in the industry
- working in industries at the forefront of technological change, at the very heart of the information revolution.

This is looking promising. Surely here we have the cream of the knowledge society, highly prized specialists for the industries of the future. It should go without saying that, as employees, we should command high salaries, a company car and generous executive packages. As freelancers, the sky should be the limit. What wouldn't a corporate client pay for the services of such people?¹

Anyone in the trade will be rolling their eyes by this point. It's well known in the industry that editors are not at the top of the publishing tree in this country.

There have been enormous changes in the publishing industry worldwide, and editors work in a globalised economy, along with everyone else. Desktop publishing, email and the Internet have transformed the way we

work. Editors haven't been slow to see the possibilities technological change offers for freelancing. Many set up small businesses, typically one-woman shows, and publishers were also quick to take advantage of the cost benefits of outsourcing a large slice of the editorial role.

There has been sometimes heated discussion about declining editorial standards in Australian book publishing, with Frank Moorhouse, Hilary McPhee, Nikki Christer and others weighing in from different perspectives.² I won't revisit that debate here, except to consider the role of freelance editors, and to suggest some possibilities for cooperation.

For editors, the results of changes to the editorial function in publishing houses have been mixed. What they gained on the swings of autonomy, they often lost on the roundabout of running a micro-business, hunting for work, juggling deadlines and the flood and famine of publishing projects. All the same, there is a cadre of freelancers with experience of in-house production processes who make a mostly modest living by offering their skills on the market.

Education and training

Some of the gaps left by the reduction in in-house training have been taken up by the higher education and TAFE sectors. Most universities and many vocational colleges now run courses that include editing and publishing, sometimes as specialist qualifications and sometimes as components in communications, journalism and creative writing courses. The industry has stepped up its training, with the APA running courses and now offering accreditation to external providers. Societies of editors, writers' centres and private providers also offer a range of short courses.

My surveys show a continuing and growing interest in education and training. The greatest demand is for professional development programs. In 2001, 30% of respondents wanted to see more professional development programs as a matter of priority and this jumped to 79% in 2003. In the latest survey, 68% of editors rated the need for professional development highly, second only to the need to establish a national organisation for editors.³

² Frank Moorhouse, *Australian Author*, Hilary McPhee, interview with Ramona Koval, *Books and Writing*, broadcast 12 May 1999. For Nikki Christer's comments, see Jane Sullivan, 'Publish and be damned', *Age*, 14 December 2002.

³ The new Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd) was announced, to fanfare and song, at the Melbourne conference. See Jane Sullivan, 'Letters to the editors at the typeface', *Age*, 16 October 2005 and www.case-editors.org.

¹ 'Valuing our services, valuing ourselves' paper presented at 'Partnerships in Knowledge' conference, Canberra, April 2001.

An ageing profession?

Despite the fact that many people still come to editing after a career in areas such as teaching, librarianship and academia, there are now younger entrants with newly minted publishing and editing degrees and the intention of making a living as editors, not merely subsidising the production process. When I conducted the first survey, some people expressed concern at the ageing of the profession. In 2003, 63% were over 45 and this is now a slightly lower 58%.

As one survey respondent commented, 'We are not dowdy housewives filling in time while hubby's at work, but strong, committed, dynamic professionals with a specific view of publishing...not an 'add on' but a specialised, powerful group with 'insider knowledge'.'

As editors with in-house experience leave the industry and younger people with professional qualifications take their places, the cottage industry model of freelance editing will be increasingly unsustainable. Lots of experienced book editors have moved into more viable areas—government and corporate work, website and electronic editing (fields where you make a lot more with the same essential skills by calling yourself a communications consultant, knowledge content provider or information architect).

Rates

The significant increase in reported average hourly rates in this year's survey is a pleasing development. The national average of \$61 an hour is a step up from the \$50 mark that the first two surveys reported. Even so, it masks huge variations. The lowest rate was a paltry \$25 an hour. Survey respondents made wry comments, including the words 'slave labour' and 'ridiculous undercharging' about the amounts that their work commanded. The highest reported rate in this survey was \$120 an hour, a rare outlier in the data but not too different from the recommended MEAA freelance rate for book editors.⁴

To run a small business, as freelancers do, this hourly rate needs to be raided for equipment and home office costs, including Internet and phone charges, software, holiday and sick leave, education and training, IT maintenance, supplies, the daily administrivia of emails, phone calls, banking, postage and advertising. And this is without even thinking about superannuation or insurance. After all, most freelancers don't.

Too many freelancers don't charge enough to do much more than pay for their overheads. There are exceptions to this sad rule, but most of these people don't work as book editors but with more lucrative government and corporate clients.

⁴ The current hourly freelance rate for book editors and proofreaders is \$189, and the daily rate is \$756.

Working together

I will provide summaries of the survey findings to IPEd and editors' societies. I'll also be making my findings available to the ASA and the MEAA. There are signs of a renewed phase of cooperation between editors and their union. Many former union members have drifted away from an organisation that they felt didn't understand or represent them, but there seems to be a new willingness on both sides to work together. As we move into a grimmer industrial relations era, everyone in publishing has much to gain from joining forces and finding common ground.

I'm aware that many professional writers would be glad to earn anything like \$60 an hour for their work. Before you frame retorts about relative value and wage justice for authors, let me say that I'd love to see writers properly paid for their work. I'd add that many writers engage in editing as their day job and, indeed, many editors are also published writers. We have a lot in common.

Both groups want the publication they're working on to be as good as possible. We also want publications to sell, giving us common cause with publishers. We all want to be part of an Australian publishing industry where good writing and good editing are valued and nurtured.

If my bookshop spending is anything to go on, paying editors properly might be the start of an editor-led recovery in the Australian publishing industry.

Visit Pam Hewitt's website <www.emendediting.com>

Membership report

*by Ron Thiele
Membership and Correspondence Secretary*

Unfortunately, members who have not yet paid their 2005-06 fees are no longer financial, and are not receiving this newsletter or e-mail bulletins. If you know a member who is not financial, perhaps you could remind them that it is now past time that they paid their membership dues.

At its last meeting, the committee was pleased to accept to membership of the society Mary-Anne Ghaffurian, Tracey Millen, Michelle Manly, Scott Rosie, Cecelia Rogers, John Peter and Jackie Yowell as full members; and Natasha Harris, Cassandra O'Brien, Josephene Duffy, Barbara Pertz and Andrea Dobbins as associate members.

Style Council Conference

Eden on the Park, Melbourne, 15–16 October 2005
Theme: Style in Context, Australian and international

by Rosemary Noble

Following the highly successful editors' conference, Style Council 2005 once again lived up to its promise with a selection of inspiring and thought-provoking presentations delving into the intricacies of English language in its many and varied forms.

The conference kicked off to a lively start with a cocktail party to launch the 4th edition of the *Macquarie Dictionary*. Thomas Keneally did the honours and gleefully told us about such new entries as *archaeon*, a microscopic organism that can survive without sunlight and at boiling temperatures around thermal vents at the bottom of the sea; and a host of other first-time entries such as *apoptosis*, *geocaching* and *zorb*, and sadly, such twenty-first century realities as *stun grenade*, *carpet bombing* and *smart gun*.

In her keynote address, Kate Burridge added some words of her own when she talked about *orthophemisms* (an expression in the middle of a scale that has euphemisms at one end and dysphemisms at the other—an example of all three would be *pass away*, *die* and *snuff it* respectively). We learned that there are 1200 words for female body parts and 1000 for male. Kate talked about 'inappropriate anatomical significance' and a kind of default evaluation she calls 'middle class politeness criterion'. She concluded with a summary of some fascinating studies about human reactions to different types of taboo language.

Tony Wheeler, after a brief history of the amazing publishing success that is Lonely Planet, discussed the pitfalls of translating guidebooks. The title of his presentation, *Gricers, twitchers and 'doing doughnuts'*, refers to the sections on birdwatchers (twitchers) that must be in some guidebooks but not others, the British obsession with gricing (trainspotting) and the perils of translating into French such Aussie male behaviour as 'doing doughnuts'. The audience was treated to some highly entertaining stories about the travelling habits of various nationalities and I'm sure all of us were left longing to become Lonely Planet writers or editors.

There followed a series of interesting papers on the joys and perils of publishing in English in other parts of the world: Sue Butler, the publisher of the *Macquarie Dictionary*, not content to rest on her laurels after the mammoth effort to launch the fourth edition, is working on a dictionary of Indian English. She discussed the inclusion of words from Hindi and Urdu in common usage, as well as the editorial

decisions concerning spelling, meaning, pronunciation and usage that vary from Australian English. Watch out also for the *Macquarie Dictionary of Fijian English* in 2006.

With over 130 mastheads in a variety of cultures, News Limited, under the guidance of Kim Lockwood, set out to regionalise its online training courses for sub-editors and journalists in Fiji, where local English has a much more convoluted provenance than our own Australian English. Borrowing from dozens of local dialects as well as Hindi, the first or second language of the large Indian population, Fijian English also presents interesting dilemmas for the style guide of the *Fiji Times*.

As Edward Arnold's editor in Nigeria during the 1970s, Nick Walker oversaw the publication of the African Reader's Library, a large number of children's titles written in standard British English, for the local Nigerian population and using local folklore. Publishing in such markets posed different problems and technical, cultural and political factors varied enormously. A comparison between those times, when the publisher decided not to localise the language and the current climate promoted a lively discussion.

Eleanor Curtain Publishing has a large number of colourful beginning readers in the overseas markets of the US, UK, New Zealand, Canada, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Apart from the obvious adaptations of spelling in words such as organize/organise, and color/colour, US partners have very rigorous adaptation guidelines that must be adhered to. Strict balances of gender, ethnic and racial types, physical disability and use of animals, in the text and illustrations, amongst other things, are all prescribed.

Very specific language and style decisions for other situations were discussed by other presenters. Stefanie Pearce, as Communications Manager for the Australian Synchrotron Project, a major new science facility in Melbourne, described the challenges involved in explaining this complex and unfamiliar concept to multiple local and national audiences and how particular words were deliberately chosen for media releases and publicity documents to further the political and strategic aims of the project.

Nick Renton, author of numerous well-loved books on word usage, sent us on a nostalgic trip through some old but

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About us



Roz Edmond

**BA Dip Soc Studs, Dip Int Des, Cert Coast Nav
Freelance editor**

Roz Edmond has been a freelance editor since 1980. She studied Swedish language and literature at Melbourne University with a side serve of Pitjantjatjara and Swahili and completed a BA Dip Soc Studs before working as a social worker with 'uncontrollable' juveniles.

Exhausted, she trained in furniture design, construction and interior design at RMIT, with hands-on experience in plumbing, welding, ceramics and film-making.

After a stint as professorial research assistant in the School of Architecture at Melbourne University she established an interior design and graphics partnership, creating buildings and books. The books have taken over.

The 1986 Society of Editors' Christmas committee meeting was held aboard the International 8-metre racing sloop Frances at the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria in Williamstown. Roz is still racing with the Classics.

What's the best thing about your job?

Humouring recalcitrant authors. Never knowing what bizarre manuscript is around the corner, waiting for your attention. Finding new examples of nominative determinism.

What's the worst thing about your job?

Timelines that shift like the Port Phillip weather.

What's the best thing about being an editor?

The constant challenge to cut and polish words and all their dancing partners before they storm into print. The crack and whiff as you open the pages.

What was your first editing job?

Brick, the school rag, at age 12.

How did you become an editor?

Matching excellent images with excellent copy. Making silent films and setting them to a score. Refusing to let ghastly copy out alone to the typesetter.

What is the most rewarding job you have ever done?

Being headhunted to the editorial 'gang of four' for the *Royal Commission into the Building and Construction Industry* was a great challenge, working with Commissioner Terry Cole and Senior Counsel Assisting. Valina Rainer led the team, with Kath Harper, Tony Rainer and me. The work was at a cracking pace and the jokes flew like double bungers. The copy was astonishing and the legal arguments read like detective sagas.

Describe some of the training you have had to become an editor.

Fireside spelling bees with my grandmother. Impromptu word plays on long summer evenings in the bush, and around the dinner table. Reading Puckoon aloud. Organising and participating in Society of Editors training workshops by the dozen.

What are the essential qualities of being a good editor?

Recognising the power of the invisible splice. Same as making up rigging for a racing sloop.

What are your favourite reference sources?

The *Shorter Oxford* and W W Napier's *Annals of the World*.

What advice would you give to editing students?

Write films, music, draw cartoons and craft long, thoughtful emails to friends and colleagues. Listen to the words.

What book would you most like to have edited?

W W Napier's *Annals of the World*.

Successful freelancing

Training workshop

presented by Renée Otmar and Sally Woollett

This two-day workshop program, previously advertised for November, has been postponed. It will now be held on 11 and 12 February 2006 from 9.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please see the Society's website for bookings and for further details: <www.socedvic.org>

Third national survey of editors

linguistics (7), law (4), information technology (3) and indigenous affairs (3). The many single-item responses were too numerous to list in a summary but I am happy to provide them on request.

Many people added some final thoughts at the end of the survey. A couple suggested that the accreditation system be altered: 'I believe editors with tertiary qualifications in the field should be accredited via a different pathway than those with experience only' and 'while I support accreditation, I think there should still be room for recognising in-house qualifications'. Here are some more parting comments:

- specialist knowledge can be an advantage when looking for a niche in publishing.
- I would be interested to see 'tests on editing' on the websites.
- an important part of my contribution is in developing processes and briefs, in addition to editorial activities—this is an area often referred to in a general way...but very necessary for smooth production process.
- Editors are too passive. We need to be entrepreneurs—in-house or independent. Editors must be able to describe what they do, how they will work with the client and demonstrate VALUE, VALUE, VALUE (not just pedantic correction—although that is critical).
- An overarching challenge...is to continue to define for ourselves and others how we add value to published texts.
- It would be great to see the development of a national professional association run by paid office-bearers. The voluntary work by current CASE reps is fantastic but vulnerable as it rests on those who are passionate enough to devote their spare, unpaid time to it.
- Would be helpful to have more professional development or mentoring systems to 'open up' specialist/niche areas.
- Editors need an image makeover. We are not dowdy housewives filling in time while hubby's at work, but strong, committed, dynamic professionals with a specific view of publishing...not an 'add on' but a specialised, powerful group with 'insider knowledge'.
- Would be good to make your findings available to the MEAA so they can be more effective on behalf of editors.

I've taken up this final suggestion and will be making the survey findings available to the MEAA as well as IPEd,

individual societies and other players in the industry. I hope that many of the other suggestions that emerged will also come to fruition between now and the next survey in 2007. The stand-out issues from this survey are the collective wish to:

- establish a strong national organisation
- move on increasing rates
- develop an effective mentoring scheme
- expand the opportunities for professional development
- improve the status of editing within the industry.

A number of people thanked me for conducting the survey and thanked the people who have taken a leading role in national developments through IPEd's working groups. I'd like to thank respondents for taking the time to complete the survey and to express my pleasure at seeing editing develop as a profession that has a greater sense of where it is going and how we intend to get there.

Visit Pam Hewitt's website on editing and editors: Emend Editing <www.emendediting.com>

Volunteer Web Manager

Are you interested in sharing your talent for online communications? The Society needs an enthusiastic volunteer to take over the website management role. Our new website is very easy to maintain (no software programs to learn!), and has exciting growth potential.

Key responsibilities for the Web Manager are:

- Uploading and editing content for the website (text & photos)
- Establishing member access accounts
- Contributing to the online discussion forum

Some knowledge of HTML would be useful, but not essential.

If you would like further information about the role, please contact the current Web Manager, Fleur Goding <fleurg@purrcommunications.com>.

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Dinner meeting report

From being in a position to publish books that Henry saw as having intrinsic merit, with commercial appeal a bonus, Scribe has had to compromise its list—a compromise Henry described as being Scribe Lite & Breezy—to ensure that commercial realities can be accommodated.

This too has its benefits. Scribe is bringing more good quality authors into the country. Henry finds that international connections give him access to a larger range of well-written and well-edited books. Overseas publishing houses are now picking up the Scribe imprint, so that the export side of the business is being expanded.

Despite Henry's reservations, it would seem that Henry Rosenbloom and Scribe are doing good and doing well.

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Style Council Conference

familiar titles and posed the question of whether we are often slaves to our style guides. Few businesses outside publishing houses even have rudimentary house style guides; instead, either relying on the government *Style Manual* or ignoring the whole question of style consistency.

Jennifer Blunden introduced the audience to the world of museum exhibitions, where she decides on the style of text used to guide viewers of museum exhibitions. She makes such decisions by examining the relationships between the language, content and the physical space, as well as the other layers of information provided via guided tours, print catalogues and interactive components.

In a study of 36 dictionaries for children, Valerie Yule looked at the style of the pronunciation guides that they contained (if any) and found that many were unhelpful, particularly to very young children and those for whom English is a second language. An update of this study revealed that half had no guide at all. The slack has been taken up to some extent by voice technologies in online dictionaries, but there is still a strong case for a dictionary as a printed book in this juvenile market.

Overall, Style Council 2005 was a delightful change of pace from the editors' conference and for a Word Nerd like me, well worth the extra time and effort to get myself to the venue for the fourth day in a row.

Desktop publisher wanted

Looking for the opportunity to network?

Contribute to the *Newsletter*, and you will.

The Society is looking for a volunteer desktop publisher to layout the pages of its *Newsletter*. Those interested must have desktop publishing skills and some experience. The occasional ability to work a few hours on weekends is required, but rescheduling to avoid that possibility is imminent. The *Newsletter* is published once a month, except December and January.

Please email Haya Hussein at <hayahu@bigpond.com> for further information or to register your interest.

The John Curtain Editorial Fellowship award

Valued at over \$16,000, the John Curtain Educational Editorial Fellowship consists of full fellowship for RMIT University's two-year, APA-accredited Graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing, as well \$6000 from the Australian Publishers Association.

Eleanor Curtain presented the 2006 Fellowship to Amanda Mrozik at the second national editors' conference, 'Editing in Context', held in Melbourne in October. Ms Mrozik currently works at Swinburne University in Melbourne assisting ESL students enrolled in higher degrees develop their proofreading and editing skills. She will take up the Fellowship in February 2006.

Applications for the biennial John Curtain Educational Editorial Fellowship—named after the late Professor John Curtain, publisher and teacher—are assessed according to their value in terms of individual professional development and the general advancement of Australian educational publishing, particularly editorial.

Dates for your diary

Next meeting

Christmas Celebration Dinner and Twilight Trivia Night

Wednesday, 7 December 2005



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Beatrice Davis (d. 1992)

Anne Godden (d. 2004)

Frank Eyre (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.

Application/renewal forms are available from the Membership Secretary or the Society's website: <www.socedvic.org>

Subscriptions

Full membership \$75

Distant membership \$45

Associate membership \$75

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