

## Next meeting

### Workshop on IPEd Accreditation Sample Exam Facilitated by Renée Otmar

Wednesday, 19 September 2007, 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm

The English Speaking Union, 146 Toorak Road  
West (between Walsh and Marne Streets),  
South Yarra (Melway 21 4E)

The first Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd) Examination for Accreditation is scheduled for 2008. The Accreditation Board has recently developed a sample exam, available for download from the IPEd website <[www.iped-editors.org/node/85](http://www.iped-editors.org/node/85)>. At the September Society of Editors workshop, members will have the opportunity to discuss the exam over wine and pizza, and provide feedback to the Accreditation Board. This is a fantastic opportunity to get information about what the assessors will be looking for, and to let them know about your experience of completing the sample exam.

**Please download and complete the exam, and check your answers against the answer sheet prior to the workshop.** You might also want to bring along any reference materials you intend to take into the exam, especially the *Style Manual*, sixth edition (Wiley).

The workshop will be facilitated by our president, Renée Otmar, who represents the Assessors Forum on the Accreditation Board. Renée has coordinated the development of the sample exam. Also present will be several other Victorian assessors, who are all keen to answer your queries and take your feedback on the planned exam.

#### PLEASE NOTE BOOKING DETAILS (FOR CATERING PURPOSES ONLY)

The dinner meetings are organised by volunteer committee members – please assist them in this very time-consuming task by taking note of the following.

**Cost:** \$20 members, \$15 students, \$25 non-members

#### Bookings are essential:

- Book with Nonie Sadler – email preferred – at <[noniesa@bigpond.net.au](mailto:noniesa@bigpond.net.au)> or phone 0431 954 465.

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- Book STRICTLY before 5.00 pm on **Monday, 17 September**. Bookings received after this deadline will not be accepted.
- If you need to cancel, please email Nonie as soon as possible.
- If you cancel after 7.00 pm on the day before the meeting, the Treasurer will contact you shortly after and ask you to pay as if you had attended.

NB. People who arrive on the night without a prior booking will be unable to attend.

## IPEd Notes

### News from the Institute of Professional Editors

#### August 2007

The Interim Council is making progress with establishing IPEd as a legal entity. The proposal that the societies have accepted, which is on the website <[iped-editors.org](http://iped-editors.org)>, forms the basis of the constitution. The Interim Council has discussed the details of what needs to be included and identified where extra advice is needed. Following extensive consultation, we have signed an agreement with a solicitor specialising in business law who is

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preparing a draft constitution based on the documents we have supplied. Our thanks to Virginia Wilton of the Canberra society for handling these negotiations. The draft constitution will be circulated among the societies of editors for discussion, and then returned to the solicitor who will prepare a final document based on responses to the draft. The societies will then be asked to accept this constitution.

The Accreditation Board, led by Shelley Kenigsberg of the New South Wales society, has drawn up an issues paper that canvasses responses to the sample editing examination and the implications of sitting the exam on screen. Members are invited to comment on the issues paper, which is on the website under Accreditation. The complete sample editing examination and answers will be posted on the website so that members can trial it. Each society of editors will hold a workshop towards the end of the year to gather opinions and feedback on the trial; this consultation will enable the assessors to refine the actual examination paper to meet members' needs.

The Accreditation Board has collected information from members about their intentions to sit the exam, and found that many are keen to do so as soon as possible. We expect that the first editing examination will be held in March 2008; members will receive at least four months' notice of the date and venues.

The revision of the website has encountered some delays. The convener of the Website Working Group, Mike Purdy of the Canberra society, is training extra administrators to add and edit content. By spreading this expertise among several people, we ensure that the website will continue to operate despite the manifold demands on volunteers' time. The expectation is that the new website will go live before the end of August.

*Janet Mackenzie  
Liaison Officer*

## September 2007

The Interim Council is making steady progress with the constitution. Currently, it is revising a preliminary draft prepared by a Canberra law firm, Williams Love & Nicol. The task of reconciling our desired arrangements and our passion for plain English with the requirements of the Corporations Law is time consuming, but we are confident that we will soon have a workable document to put before the membership. The aim is to

post the constitution on the website <[www.iped-editors.org](http://www.iped-editors.org)> for comment by mid-October, a little later than was expected.

The revised schedule for the constitution will flow on to IPEd's activities. One result is that the first accreditation examination will probably not be held until mid-2008. Members are assured that they will receive at least four months' notice of the exam date.

The Accreditation Board is very active in its various areas of responsibility. One task is to draw up guidelines, procedures and cost estimates for smooth functioning of the accreditation scheme. There has been a good response to the issues paper that discussed the pros and cons of offering the accreditation examination online, and the Board is collating the feedback from members on this topic in order to decide how to proceed.

Meanwhile, the Assessors Forum has finalised the answer paper and marking guide for the sample exam that was presented at the national conference in May; thanks to Renée Otmar of Victoria and Paul Bennett of Queensland for their work on this. The sample exam has been posted on the website under Accreditation. Members can download it and have a trial run, and then compare their answers with the ones posted. Members are urged to attend their societies' workshops that will be held during September and October to discuss their impressions of the sample exam and provide feedback.

The website <[www.iped-editors.org](http://www.iped-editors.org)> has gone live in its new version, with improved design and extra features; more content will be added as it becomes available. The upgraded site is much easier both to use and to maintain – thanks and congratulations to Mike Purdy of Canberra who has put in countless hours on it, and to Rosemary Luke of South Australia and Rosemary Noble of Victoria. One feature of the site is an event calendar for listing societies' training courses and events of interest, such as public discussion of editing at writers festivals and on radio. (Recently members have made presentations at the Byron Bay and Melbourne writers' festivals and appeared on *The Book Show* on Radio National.) The calendar is compliant with the standard for calendar data exchange and you can subscribe to it as an RSS feed if you want to be notified of new postings. If you have any suggestions about the website, please contact your IPEd delegate.

*Janet Mackenzie  
Liaison Officer*

## Membership report

### September

The first meeting of the new committee welcomed a number of new members.

Our new full members are Janet Williamson, Stefan Carey, Simon Davey, Zoe Denner, Nicole Dodanwela, Hayley Hawkins, Kate James, Corin Kelly, Natalie Korszniak, Fran Madigan, Marina Mafani and Linda Worland. Gill Gartlan and Robin Taylor have also been accepted as full members (distant).

Our new associate members are Kristin Argall, Michelle Brown, Kimberley Gaal, Jane Ginberg, Karen Gough, Duncan Handley, Wendy Hsu, Denise O'Dea, Amanda Pinches, Timothy Roberts, Lyn Smith, Leslyn Thompson, Melanie Thomson, Maria Villella

and Nicole Webb. Beryl Alston, Gillian De Vries and Michael Rathbone are new associate members (distant).

Several associate members have now qualified for full membership. They are Vivienne Scott, Jaclyn Crupi, Jillian Pope and Loren Daniel; and Roderick Andrew and Kate Hawkins are now full members (distant).

### Membership payments – final reminder

**This is the LAST newsletter that members will receive if they have not renewed their subscription.** Membership renewals were due on 1 July, so they are now well and truly overdue. Non-financial members will also be deleted from the email list at the beginning of October.

*Ron Thiele  
Membership Secretary*

## Training course

# Advanced Microsoft Word for Editors

### Templates, Styles & Formatting, and Macros with Emma Koch

Much of an editor's job involves repetitive work, especially as the technological requirements of the role continue to become more complex. Understanding and utilising features available in Microsoft Word to automate tasks can assist you in improving efficiency and accuracy. This course focuses on the ways in which templates, styles and formatting, and macros can streamline your working practices. At the end of the course, you will be able to create your own templates, styles and customised macros.

Note: This is an advanced Word course and assumes a reasonable proficiency in MS Word. The course is aimed at editors who are looking to further develop their Word skills.

Topics covered in the course:

- **Templates**
  - What is a template?
  - Creating templates
  - Attaching existing templates
- **Styles & formatting**
  - What is the difference between styles and formatting?
  - Viewing styles
  - Creating styles
- **Macros**
  - What is a macro?
  - Creating and editing macros
  - Some useful macros

### About the presenter

Emma Koch developed an interest in technical support for editors through her various roles at Lonely Planet. She supported the languages unit, developing templates and macros to suit the requirements of working with scripts and special fonts. She has continued to use this knowledge in her various roles at the University of Melbourne and has a particular interest in improving efficiency through reducing the need for repetitive tasks when using Microsoft Word.

### When & where

9.00 am to 1.00 pm  
Saturday, 6 October 2007  
CAE, 253 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

### Cost

Members \$100, non-members \$130

Enquiries: <melanie.dankel@lonelyplanet.com.au>

Tea and coffee will be provided.

## Book review

# *Editors in Conversation*

Edited by Kerry Biram, Diane Brown and Jenny Craig

Published in 2007 by Australian Scholarly Publishing (RRP \$22.00)

Read this book. Read it for the pleasure of meeting wise, committed and generous members of the editing profession. Read it to find out just how much Australian publishing has changed over the last forty years. Read it if you are new to editing, and want to be inspired, or read it to reminisce with old friends and valued colleagues.

Eight distinguished women editors, all Honorary Life Members of societies of editors around Australia, met during the National Editors Conference in Melbourne in 2005. In four paired conversations and a conference panel, Sheila Allison and Pamela Ball, Robyn Colman and Lee White, Beryl Hill and Wendy Sutherland, and Renée Otmar and Loma Snooks talked about their working lives. All eight have had distinguished careers in the publishing industry, corporations or government departments and agencies. They discuss the enormous changes in work practices and attitudes to editing, and how they see the profession of editing moving forward.

Training is one important aspect that the editors talk about. Beryl Hill's training under Barbara Ramsden at MUP was thorough and rigorous. We can laugh now about being 'taught to tie parcels securely with brown paper and string so that they wouldn't fall apart in the post', but I think we would all love to get more guidance with day-to-day issues such as file management, as well as with central aspects of editing such as seeing both the big picture and the fine detail, and the gentle art of communicating with authors.

Computerisation is one of the most profound changes the profession has seen. The editors reflect on how their work has changed, and question some current practices, including loading onto the editor such low-level tasks as entering author corrections. One of the central questions remains: are editors consistently and appropriately valued for their capacity to maximise an author's potential to communicate?

There is plenty to think about, and be challenged by, in this book. But perhaps its best feature is the easy to-and-fro between the serious issues and the delightful personal stories and anecdotes. My favourite is of Lee White describing how she became 'computer literate': she went to the library and read two books about computers. She did get the job where computer literacy was a pre-requisite, and then spent a few days coming to grips with her first computer, including working out how to turn it on!

Reading this book is like the best of a lunchroom that really works – with good company that shares lots of belly laughs, but also challenges you to think about and improve your professional life.

*Eve Recht*

## Training course

# Project Management for Editors

### Presented by Meredith Mail

Back by popular demand, Meredith Mail provides a thorough introduction to Project Management – the philosophy that underpins the discipline and the methodology that supports it. Learn how to deal with multiple projects, questions you need to ask your clients, basic tools to make your life easier, plus everyday tips and tricks with plenty of opportunity for practical exercises.

### When & where

9.30 am to 4.00 pm

Saturday, 3 November 2007

CAE, 253 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

### Cost

Members \$120, non-members \$160

Enquiries: <[melanie.dankel@lonelyplanet.com.au](mailto:melanie.dankel@lonelyplanet.com.au)>

**Limited places available. This course will book out.**

## Honorary Life Members

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

John Curtain (d. 1999)

Stephen Murray-Smith (d. 1988)

Beatrice Davis (d. 1992)

Anne Godden (d. 2004)

Frank Eyre (d. 1988)

## Membership

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](http://www.socedvic.org)>

### Subscriptions

Full membership \$75

Distant membership \$45

Associate membership \$75

## Dinner meeting report

# The Editor and the Indexer

### Presented by Max McMaster

Max McMaster is president of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers (ANZSI). He has more than 1,500 indexes to his name, and has been a freelance indexer for the past 15 years, working mostly on back-of-book indexing. In his detailed talk, Max focused on the relationship between the indexer and the editor, but began with a couple of Indexing 101 questions. What is the essential difference between a table of contents and an index? The former is sequential and the latter is alphabetical. What is the function of the index? 'To see if you've been mentioned' someone in the audience immediately replied; Max's answer was that an index is a pointer to further information on the topic, with the emphasis firmly on further.

So how does the indexer fit into the publishing process? A book's index is considered to be part of the author's intellectual property, and is the author's responsibility; either they prepare it themselves or pay for a professional indexing job. Either way, the editor looks after the incorporation of the index into the complete book.

What is involved in the editor-indexer negotiations when a professional indexer is involved in a project? The initial brief must include information on the subject of the book, the intended audience, and the size of the book. The indexer needs to know the timeframe for preparing the index, (ideally 2 to 3 weeks, in reality sometimes as little as 2 to 3 days), and how many pages have been allowed for the index.

How long should an index be (assuming 10 point Times Roman in a double column)? Ideally, for a general book, 3 per cent of the overall length of the book, for a 'serious book for the general reader' around 5 to 8 per cent, and for a specialised text book about 12 to 15 per cent. In reality, what the indexer actually gets is what's left. If this isn't enough, the indexer can negotiate – can the half title page be dropped? Can the number of columns be increased? When all else fails, Max pulls out his trump card: 'I can do a shorter index, but it will take more time, and therefore cost more'.

The indexer also needs to establish how many indexes are required: legal books often have a specific cases index, gardening books often include an index of botanical names, and psychology books have a cited author index, as well as a general index.

Max prefers to quote for a job on PDFs, and (as with quoting editing jobs) there is often negotiation around a fixed budget. He prefer to works with electronic second page proofs, with hardcopy PDFs as well. Again, as with editing, there are advantages to both hard copy and electronic versions. Max cited horror stories where page numbers changed after the index was prepared. Indexing software can automatically adjust a certain number of whole pages, but things get very messy when everything shifts a part of a page.

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Style sheets can be useful; and it is important to establish if the house style is for a run-on rather than set-out index.

Max then talked about different styles of indexes. While young children's non-fiction should only have main headings, secondary texts would have one, or possibly two levels of subheadings. Max's advice was not to use more than two levels of subheadings, even for specialised and academic titles. His preference for biographies is to use direct entries for different aspects of the subject's life (eg adolescence, politics, marriage) whereas many indexers still tend to include all these as subheadings under the subject's name.

Interestingly, in the US, some fiction is now being indexed. Max's professionalism was somewhat bothered by the notion that a crime fiction book would not include an entry for whodunit – readers could still enjoy the story, but the index would be incomplete.

What books need an index? An index is not necessary for books of less than 20 pages, is discretionary for books of 20 to 50 pages, but most books over 50 pages should have an index.

And can computer software replace the human indexer? Absolutely not. If a specific word is not in the text, the software won't find it. Humans can recognise relevant synonyms and implicit connections, as well as being much better at recognising quickly where discussion of a particular concept ends. And while the author is often too close to their work, a professional indexer is skilled at drawing out common threads and useful pointers.

How much of the completed index should the editor check? If it's from an author, check 50 per cent of entries for accuracy. If you are working with a new indexer, check 10 to 15 per cent. If you are familiar with this indexer's work, check 2 to 3 per cent. 'There is no index produced on the planet that is 100 per cent accurate,' says Max.

What can an editor do about a too-long index? Options include: increasing the number of columns, dropping the point size, reducing the number of subheadings, deleting some entries – with discretion – and changing a run-on style (which saves space, but is not as easy to read). Reducing the number of turn-over and roll-over lines and careful use of abbreviations can also help. If relatively minor changes do not solve the problem, it is probably better to go back to the professional indexer – time and cost permitting.

Finally, Max defined a beautiful index for us: 'One that is comprehensive, accurate, easy to read and makes logical sense'.

*Eve Recht*

## OSAE working group

### Seeking additional members

Do you enjoy interviewing? Are you interested in heritage and history? Do you have skills in recording and transcribing interviews, writing articles and project funding applications, or

skills in media relations and library information management or archiving? If so, read on.

Following the successful launch and subsequent sales of *Editors in Conversation* at the Hobart IPEd Conference, the Occasional Series on Australian Editors (OSAE) subcommittee of the Victorian Society is embarking on a new round of interviews with Victorian honorary life members. With interviews planned over the next few months we are looking for members who would be willing to help with preparing interview questions, briefing honorary life members, facilitating and recording interviews, editing transcripts and archiving. The aim of the OSAE subcommittee is to ensure that the biographies, working lives and perspectives of our honorary life members are recorded and preserved in a permanent form, and more widely accessible.

The OSAE working group meets every two months and we would welcome your ideas, inspiration and involvement.

For more information, phone 9718 1358 or email: <diane@netspace.net.au>.

Jenny Craig for the Occasional Series on Australian Editors working group: Diane Brown (convenor), Kerry Biram and Jenny Craig.

## Redact update Getting ready for Redact

Preparations are well underway for the second Redact residential weekend. The three very experienced presenters – **Sarah Brennan** (fiction), **Bryony Cosgrove** (biography) and **Paul Watt** (trade) – have developed detailed course outlines, which are now available on the Society's website: <www.socedvic.org>. Check them out.

We'll shortly be sending out the preliminary course material to participants, so they can be fully prepared to make the most of this exciting opportunity. Where else are you going to get a full weekend of in-depth discussion, hands-on editing and project management, led by presenters who really know their stuff and are willing to share what they've learned from many years in the industry?

If you haven't registered yet, don't wait too long and risk missing out on your preferred strand. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis, and enquiries are coming in from as far away as Queensland.

Full course and registration details are on the Society's website. And if you need more information, email <redact.residential@gmail.com>.

*Kath Harper and Penny Johnson*

**More details about Redact on page 6 of this issue**

# Useful Websites for Editors

The Internet is jam-packed with handy and instructive tidbits for editors, but sifting through all the cyber junk to find these can be a frustratingly difficult and time-consuming venture.

The aim of this new monthly *Newsletter* column is to provide a forum for Victorian editors to reveal their online gems: reliable sites that may be useful for editors in their day-to-day work, as well as sites that offer editors the opportunity to keep in touch with the growing online community of publishing professionals.

As a start to this new column, here are a few of my online favourites ...

## Answering the when and what of time and date ...

<[www.timeanddate.com](http://www.timeanddate.com)>

If you ever need to know the date of an overseas public holiday, or if you need to call an author overseas and are not sure of the time difference, or perhaps you just want to know what day your birthday will fall on next year, visit this website and discover everything you need to know about world times and dates.

## When your dictionary is missing in action ... <[www.google.com.au](http://www.google.com.au)>

If you need a definition in a hurry but don't happen to have your 2.5 kg dictionary on you, why not try Google? Just type into the

Google search box 'define:' followed by the word. In seconds you'll pull up a list of definitions from all over the Internet. This Google function is particularly handy for technical terms or foreign words.

## Just for a laugh ... <[www.mcsweeneys.net/2006/7/11/moe.html](http://www.mcsweeneys.net/2006/7/11/moe.html)>

Discover the hilarious editorial assessment of the lyrics of the Guns N' Roses' classic 'Sweet child of mine' on the Internet spin-off of author Dave Eggers' quarterly journal, *McSweeney's*.

## Submissions welcome

This column invites those intrepid Internet explorers among the Society's membership to share their online discoveries.

Do you know of a useful technical information website? Do you have a favourite editing blog you would like to share? Do you want to alert your fellow editors to an interesting journal article or a humorous editing website? If so, please email the website address details along with a short explanation of why you like the site to the Newsletter editor: <[niki.soe@fivemile.com.au](mailto:niki.soe@fivemile.com.au)>.

Niki Horin

Newsletter Editor



**redact, v.** To put (matter) into proper literary form; to work up, arrange, or edit. 1851. – SOED.

The Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc. is pleased to announce the second course in its new program in editorial training. **Redact** is a residential weekend course that offers intensive study of processes and principles in a collegial setting.

The program has broad appeal, designed to benefit both experienced and beginning editors, freelance and in-house. Participants will work in teams on a publishing project, taking it from raw MS through to polished end-product. The focus will be on collaborative learning, and we expect that the participants will develop lasting friendships and networks.

**Redact** will take place from early afternoon **Friday 12 October 2007** to lunchtime on the Sunday. Participants will choose from three specialties: fiction, biography or trade books.

The presenters are senior Victorian editors well known in the profession: **Sarah Brenan** (fiction), **Bryony Cosgrove** (biography) and **Paul Watt** (trade).

- **Fiction** — What makes a memorable novel opening; assessing the underlying structures of fiction; the elusive concept of style; essential components of a strong author–editor relationship: these and other topics will be workshopped, in the context of a draft novel MS (supplied to participants well before the course begins). Expect ardent discussion and a lot of fun.
- **Biography** — Writing biography has been described as 'walking on ashes', so is editing biography walking on eggshells? Life writing is very personal, dealing as it does with someone's memories, pain and happiness, ambitions and desires. We will discuss the importance of the author–editor relationship, and the issues involved in editing this genre, using an autobiographical MS and aspects from a range of other manuscripts.
- **Trade** — With the plethora of recipes and cookbooks available, is it still possible to make a cookbook stand out from the crowd without a huge budget and a celebrity author? Our task is to confound the cynics and come up with two ideas for innovative cookbooks. Before the course, participants will do a little bookshop research and list their favourite foods and cookbooks.

The venue is the Alzburg Inn Resort in Mansfield, gateway to the Victorian high country, just over 200 km from Melbourne.

The cost for the course (including lunch and refreshments on each day) is expected to be about \$460 for members of the Society, \$510 for non-members. Various levels of accommodation are available at the resort at prices (for both nights, including breakfast) ranging from about \$150 p.p. twin share to \$270 p.p. for a deluxe single room.

For more information about presenters, registration and other details, please see the Society's website at <[www.socedvic.org](http://www.socedvic.org)>.

## Word thieves

As soon as somebody mentions that an Australian text will be edited, writers rise up and say two things: 'the readers will understand what I have written' and 'language is constantly evolving – you have no right to stand in its way'. Both these statements are wrong. *Honest* writers would rise up and say: 'I am not interested in the readers not understanding, because I am writing this to impress my peers' and 'language is always evolving and you should be blessed for keeping the changes under control'.

We can do nothing to rein-in the hubris of writers, especially if they are academic – all we can do is to make a comment, wait to be ignored, and take the money. But we *can* do something about the warning that we shouldn't stand in the way of the evolution of language – we should ignore it, and take big steps to keep the evolution under control.

Copyediting is a bit like herding cattle. Cattle have to go from here to there, and you wouldn't want to change the general direction of travel, but you do have to bring back the ones that bolt, and keep an eye on those in danger of being rustled. Just as people steal cattle from herds, people steal words from English, and if I am told that I have no right to stand in the way of a changing language, I reply that you have no right to steal words of which I am a part-owner.

The problem is that people can't stop themselves from spurting out new words, or replacing time-honoured, accurate words by others that are not quite right. There are three groups of 'new' words, and while this article admires the first group, it criticises people who use the second and third groups.

Group 1: *New* new words. We must welcome these when they supply a need. Let's look at one new word from each decade of the twentieth century: *hangover*, *autism*, *penicillin*, *supermarket*, *bikini*, *modem*, *velcro*, *spin* (slant), *himbo*, and *spam*. (Words taken from John Ayto's *Twentieth Century Words*, OUP 1999.) These words define something we did not have, or could not express well before.

Group 2: Show-off new words or terms. These show off the user's new-found perspicacity, or demonstrate cool familiarity with a celebrity or current event. They include *buy-in*, *going forward*, *transitioning*, *governance*, *yadda-yadda*, and *cost-driver*.

Group 3: Stolen words. These are existing words that have been damagingly twisted to mean something different from what they meant yesterday. They include *altercation*, *protocol*, *issue*, *disinterested*, *crescendo*, *reticent*, *cohort* and *edgy*.

Some of the not-new-but-replacing-old words slide in under your guard, and all of a sudden they are entrenched and you'd be wasting your time trying to put things back the way they were. Do you remember how, in the late 1980s, we used to stamp and shout when people started *addressing issues* instead of dealing with problems? These days, even eminent editors address issues. The other day, a senior editor told me she wasn't ready for a relationship, and I had to tell her she was having them all over the place in full view of everyone. The best-educated reporters on Radio National often report on a crisis coming to a crescendo, and shady politicians sometimes blame their shady cohorts when things go wrong.

I can help you keep the language under control by providing a list of words that point to danger. When you are editing and you find these words, be bold and strike out dodgy uses! Stand up for your rights, protect your property, and upset a writer at the same time. The list is made up of just a few words either in flux or already completely fluxed, with the old use first and the new use second:

*anticipate* = be ready for something. *anticipate* = expect

*articulate* = (phonetics) move the speech organs. *articulate* = say

*allude* = casual or sly reference. *allude* = reference

*altercation* = verbal stoush. *altercation* = fight

*begging the question* = the fallacy of founding a conclusion on a basis that as much needs to be proved as the conclusion itself.

*begging the question* = to give rise to the need for a question

*corporate* = connected with corporations, like the local council.  
*corporate* = business

*criteria* = more than one criterion. *criteria* = one criterion

*crescendo* = build-up to a climax. *crescendo* = climax

*cohort* = large group of people. *cohort* = crony

*crisis* = the point when an illness or event will go one way or the other. *crisis* = a serious event

*culminate* = to reach the highest point. *culminate* = to end

*de facto* = (adj) in fact, though not in law. *de facto* = (noun) someone you live with as a spouse

*directly* = very soon. *directly* = direct, with no intermediary

*disinterested* = having no vested interest. *disinterested* = uninterested

*edgy* = nervous. *edgy* = on the cutting edge

*enormity* = grossness, badness or wickedness. *enormity* = large size

*fortuitous* = accidental, without planning. *fortuitous* = probably unplanned but fortunate at the same time. (Leave this one alone! This is a fortuitous change of meaning. The new meaning is more descriptive and more useful than the old one.)

*fulsome* = overdone in a sickly way. *fulsome* = thorough

*issue* = something of interest to people. *issue* = problem

*momentarily* = in a flash of time. *momentarily* = soon

*offshore* = just off the shore, like a drilling rig or an island.  
*offshore* = overseas

*oversight* = a mistake resulting from poor supervision. *oversight* = good supervision

*presently* = soon. *presently* = right now

*protocol* = diplomatic procedure. *protocol* = any procedure.

*relationship* = how you relate to someone. *relationship* = how you sexually relate to someone

*continued on page 8*

*refute* = deny, with proof. *refute* = deny

*reticent* = reluctant to discuss something. *reticent* = reluctant

The reason for standing up to word thieves is to preserve precision. A well-read person should not be reluctant to differentiate between 'having a vested interest' in something and simply 'wanting to know something' about something. I want to talk about my relationship with my daughter without half the population raising their eyebrows. When I play my cello, I obey musical markings that ask me to gradually increase my volume until I reach the climax; I don't suddenly *fff* at the first sight of a hairpin. When my 92-year-old mother tells me she's feeling edgy, I should immediately get her a scotch and keep her calm, not be prepared to see her appear in skin-tight hip-huggers.

If we are not 'allowed' to stand in the way of the evolution of our language, why should word manglers be 'allowed' to rob our language of its one good feature? Why should *they* go unchallenged when their grossness plonks itself down in the way of precise, poetic phrasing? How do we explain our acquiescence when they drive their dirty-great word Hummers through our narrow and precise sentences, knocking our meanings for six, and scaring the homophones?

I'll not be reticent to beg this question: Please, writer or editor – whether you are uninterested or involved, at home or offshore, edgy or old-fashioned – will you, in your work, promise to fulsomely utilise the *one* important criteria of overlooking a culmination of this crisis so that it will not reach a crescendo?

Paul Bennett

(Paul is a member of the Queensland Society of Editors)

## Book review

# Subtleties of Scientific Style

By Matthew Stevens

Published in 2007 by ScienceScape Editing, Thornleigh, NSW

See <[www.sciencescape.com.au](http://www.sciencescape.com.au)> for more information and to order a copy

Matthew is a scientific editor with more than 20 years experience. He is the first scientific editor outside North America to be awarded the ELS(D), the highest accreditation offered by the US-based Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (<[www.bels.org](http://www.bels.org)>).

Editing has many functions common to every genre. Matthew's opening quote could well apply to editing of any topic – 'Break

any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous' (George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language*, 1946).

There are some fields that have their own peculiarities, vocabulary and jargon. Science is such a one.

At the recent Fifth World Conference of Science Journalists there was discussion about the need for a science style guide unique to Australia. Matthew's book is a start, but it is not long (103 pages) and does not claim to be a definitive guide. As its title suggests, it draws attention to many of the unique subtleties of science editing. It has a select bibliography, but this includes books from UK and USA as well as Australia. He also opens the door to Internet resources. The book includes five appendices covering many useful hints, and both Apple Mac and Microsoft Windows shortcuts for many scientific symbols; this is very handy information.

The book is written with humour, which adds to its readability. I've met Matthew twice and can see his quirky personality in his writing, but also see his passionate eye for detail and his understanding of the need for precision in editing of scientific writing. He injects much common sense into editing within this complex field. He briefly covers the requirement of the editor to be mindful of satisfying the audience (publisher, author, and especially the reader); this is common to all well-written material.

Matthew's method of substantive editing might seem tedious, but it is thorough. He describes common errors that are traps for writers, and which editors need to recognise and correct. His examples of errors are, of course, mainly selected from scientific writing. His analysis of these is sometimes complicated, but it is logical. He discusses writing in the third person, which seems to be preferred in some scientific writing, and points out that this can result in 'sloppy scholarship'. He makes a plea for correct use of commas, for consistency in graphics presentation, and for care with tricky or misused terms.

Figures, tables and references are important features of scientific writing and, although the author is responsible for their accuracy, it is the job of the editor to ensure that reference annotation, table and figure content, and numbers agree with the text. Matthew enumerates some computer functions that make this easier to check, particularly with regard to references.

Matthew points out that science writing might have its own character, but the need for accurate and concise expression in plain English applies to all technical writing. It is not necessary to use a complicated writing style, even when using the jargon of the genre that is designed to communicate to a defined audience: 'Obfuscation is the enemy'.

As editors, Matthew points out, we aim to make every piece of writing we edit '... impossible to misunderstand'.

This book joins the array of useful references on my desk.

Estelle Longfield

## Freelance lunch

Tuesday, 2 October 2007

From 12.30 pm

Veggie Bar, 380 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy

We have booked a space at the Veggie Bar and hope to see you there. More than 30 new and experienced editors have attended each of the previous two lunches and really enjoyed the events.

If you work in-house you are not excluded – so come along and be part of this editorial gathering.

Your booking is required so we can sort out numbers and organise our tables.

### Bookings are essential:

- Please book with Liz Steele STRICTLY before 3.00 pm on **Friday, 28 September** – preferably by email – at <lzsteele@melbpc.org.au> or phone 0407 387 941.
- The minimum lunch cost to each diner will be \$14.
- **We will be required to pay for you if you book and don't turn up so remember to let us know if you change your plans.**

NB. We will be seated in the licensed area upstairs and the Veggie Bar will bill each table rather than us paying separately.

We look forward to seeing you there!

## Society of Editors (Vic.) Award

The committee is pleased to announce that the 2007 winner of the \$500 Society of Editors (Vic.) Award is Sasha Baskett from Lonely Planet. This award is offered to the RMIT Graduate Diploma in Editing and Publishing program each year, and is presented to the student who excels in the editorial component of the two-year program. Congratulations, Sasha!

## Submissions invited

Book reviews, articles and other submissions to the Society of Editors (Vic.) *Newsletter* are welcome. Please send feedback, suggestions or submissions to <niki.soe@fivemile.com.au>.

*Niki Horin*

*Newsletter Editor*

## Meet your 2007–2008 committee ...



From left: Philip Bryan, Charles Houen, Katya Johanson, Melanie Dankel, Eve Recht, Niki Horin, Peter Riches, Rosemary Noble, Renée Otmar, Ron Thiele, Ian Willson (outgoing Treasurer). Absent: L. Elaine Miller, Vivienne Scott, Janet Mackenzie. Thanks to Lan Wang for this photo.



ABN: 92 015 006 730

P.O. Box 176, Carlton South, Victoria 3053 Australia

www.socedvic.org

# Membership application and renewal 2007-08

## MY DETAILS PLEASE PRINT ALL DETAILS CLEARLY

Given name ..... Family name .....

Address ..... Suburb .....

State ..... Postcode ..... E-mail .....

Tel: (BH) ..... (AH) ..... (Mobile) .....

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF APPLYING FOR MEMBERSHIP

I want to apply for **FULL MEMBERSHIP** of the society.

*Applicants **must** tick one or other of the following two boxes, but may tick both boxes.*

I have two years' full-time (or the equivalent in part-time) editing experience in paid employment **OR**

I have a post-secondary qualification in editing and publishing and one year's full-time (or the equivalent in part-time) editing experience in paid employment.

I have attached a short statement that substantiates the option I have ticked above. It includes a summary of the type and duration of my editing experience and details any relevant qualifications I have. **Note: Applicants for full membership must provide this information.**

I have attached statements from two people in editing-related employment which state that I have the necessary qualifications and experience required for full membership. (These references state each person's current occupation, employer and position.) **Note: Applicants for full membership must provide this information.**

I want to apply for **ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP** of the society. I have an interest in editing and associated disciplines and in the society's aims generally.

I want my associate or full membership to be **DISTANT MEMBERSHIP** because I live over 50 km from the Melbourne GPO.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL COMPLETE THIS SECTION IF RENEWING YOUR EXISTING MEMBERSHIP

I wish to **RENEW MY MEMBERSHIP** of the society for 2007-08.

## MY PAYMENT NOTE: WE DO NOT PROCESS APPLICATIONS WITHOUT PAYMENT, OR EVIDENCE OF PAYMENT, ATTACHED TO THIS FORM.

I **ENCLOSE** a  **CHEQUE**  **MONEY ORDER** for \$ ..... *Note: All memberships are due and payable on 1 July each year. New members after 1 January 2007 only pay half the membership fee for the 2007-08 year ... see table at right.*

Category	Payment required	Applicants 1/1/08-30/06/08
Full	\$75	\$37.50
Full (distant)	\$45	\$22.50
Associate	\$75	\$37.50
Associate (distant)	\$45	\$22.50

I have **TRANSFERRED PAYMENT** online to the society's bank account The Society of Editors (Vic) Inc / Commonwealth Bank / BSB 063-114 Account number 0090 1695. *Note: In the DESCRIPTION line, please type 'MEM' followed by your surname (or as many characters that will fit).* **I enclose a printout of my online receipt as proof of transaction.**

I would be interested in talking to a committee member about joining the committee at some stage in the future.

Date ..... / ..... / ..... Signature .....

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND POST IT TO SOCIETY OF EDITORS (VIC), P.O. BOX 176, CARLTON SOUTH, VICTORIA 3053 AUSTRALIA.**

## Dates for your diary

### Next meeting:

## Workshop on IPEd Accreditation Sample Exam

Wednesday, 19 September 2007

### Freelance lunch

Tuesday, 2 October 2007

### Training course: Advanced Microsoft Word for Editors

Saturday, 6 October 2007

### Training course: Project Management for Editors

Saturday, 3 November 2007

### Training course: Redact

12–14 October 2007



If undeliverable,  
please return to  
PO Box 176  
Carlton South VIC 3053

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