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Next dinner meeting

August dinner meeting Accreditation exam preparation workshop

Wednesday, 12 August, 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm
Lanai Bar – Duke of Edinburgh Room
113 Queen St (cnr Little Collins St) City (car parking on site, kerbside, or near Queen Victoria Market)

Are you registered for the accreditation exam in September, or thinking about it? Join us for dinner and a discussion about the exam. With some preparation, you can pass the exam and be part of the second group of accredited editors in Australia!

The meeting will include a comprehensive overview of the sample exam (see the [IPEd website](#)). Experienced senior editors will discuss the exam's format, the questions and the types of answers required. An outline of preparation techniques and the exam format will be on the menu. If you are still thinking about whether to sit the exam, come along and find out more – you may be surprised at how ready you are to take up the challenge. We'll mix the serious business of the exam with great food, lots of fun activities and spot prizes.

If you can, come to this meeting prepared by bringing your worked copy of the sample exam (together with suggested answers). We will also have copies of the sample exam available.

Don't miss this opportunity to test your skills in a fun, friendly and supportive atmosphere. Encourage your peers to take up the challenge and be part of the national push to improve our professional status and remuneration.

PLEASE NOTE BOOKING DETAILS FOR DINNER MEETING

- Book with Lu Sexton at bookings@socedvic.org.
- Please book as early as you can, but definitely before 5.00 pm on Monday, 10 August.
- State if you are a Soc Eds member, or a member of VWC, ASTC, ANZSI, APA, or a student.
- Cost: \$25 members, \$20 students, \$30 nonmembers. (Pay cash or cheque on the night; no credit card facilities available.)
- Please state if you are a vegetarian.
- If you need to cancel, please contact Lu 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.
- People who arrive on the night without a booking will be unable to attend.

John Bangsund's Threepenny Planet

Bing Crosby was once seated on a plane when a man walking down the aisle stopped and said to him in some excitement, 'Hey! Aren't you Bim Croslin, the singer? Gee, my wife is a huge fan of yours, Mr Croslin; could I have your autograph for her?' 'Certainly,' said Crosby, and signed the proffered notebook 'Bim Croslin'.

Someone once described Frank Sinatra as the kind of singer that comes along only once in a lifetime. Hearing this, Bing Crosby said, 'But why did it have to be my lifetime?'

'Motet' is a little word that means 'little word'. How little 'little' is in the ear of the beholder: Thomas Tallis's motet Spam In Alium ('Nothing but junk mail'), for example, has 40 moving parts and runs nearly 12 minutes. That's little, I suppose, compared with, say, Nicholas Ludford's Missa Benedicta et Venerabilis, which has fewer parts but runs nearly 80 minutes. A 'missa' is of course a mass, which means a considerable quantity, so it doesn't qualify as little -- but it could be on the same program as a motet, so be careful which church you go

CONTACT DETAILS

PO Box 176
Carlton South VIC 3053

Email: newsletter@socedvic.org
Web: www.socedvic.org

Dates for your diary

**August dinner meeting
Accreditation exam preparation
workshop
Wednesday, 12 August**

**2009 accreditation exam
Saturday, 12 September**

**4th National Editors Conference
8–10 October**

Upcoming training

**Build your own website *FULLY
BOOKED*
Saturday, 22 August**

**Introduction to InDesign (Mac)
SOME PLACES STILL AVAILABLE
Saturday, 26 September**

**Introduction to InDesign (PC)
Saturday, 21 November**

**Proofreading Refresher *REPEAT
SESSION*
Saturday, 21 November**

**Advanced Word *SOME PLACES
STILL AVAILABLE*
Saturday, 21 November**

**Avoid disappointment, book
ahead at www.socedvic.org**

The centre of everywhere

SocEds' Tony Berry and Jackey Coyle-Taylor met Michael Williams in July to discuss SocEds' involvement in Melbourne's new Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas.

Williams, head of programming at the centre, is an editor himself with a CV that takes in several years at Text Publishing, six months in New York at the office of literary scout Maria Campbell and freelancing for various publishing houses including Random House, Scribe Publications and Affirm Press.

Part of Williams' current role at the Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas involves establishing the venue as a hub for Victoria's literary and publishing community centred at the State Library of Victoria.

Naturally Melbourne's editors – as an integral part of our distinctive and thriving independent publishing scene – should be represented there and Michael is aware of keeping our key role uppermost in the public mind during the current immense changes in publishing, including print on demand.

The centre's opening date is still

to and take some peppermints, just in case.

I haven't mentioned Bach's *Mass in B Minor* until now. It was written nearly two centuries after the Tallis and Ludford tracks were laid down but I'd never heard of Ludford when I bought my first set of the Bach (Tallis, yes, but I don't think I'd heard any of his music). About 50 years ago I found a place in Collins Street that had stuff like that. All classical. Marvellous. I doubt they could afford the rent now. Anyway, I asked someone at the counter if they had Bach's *Mass in B Minor* and a bloke went into this labyrinth they had there and from the top of a ladder he said pretty loudly, 'Can't see it here, but we've got a Mess in H Moll.' 'Yeah, that'll do,' I said.

[*Wordplay*, 2.11.2003]

KH of Canberra asks: 'What is the difference between *homoousian* and *homoiousian*?' This will take a little answering. For a start they are adjectives, occasionally used to describe opposing schools of thought in the Arian Controversy of the fourth century. The Christian concept of a Holy Trinity — God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost — raises some questions about the nature of Jesus, questions that theologians lump together under the heading Christology. What they come down to, roughly, is this. If Jesus was a human being, isn't it wrong to worship him as God? If he was God, who was minding the shop? Arius decided that Jesus was neither fully man nor fully God, but something in between, a *tertium quid*. The debate about this raged back and forth, with just about everyone agreeing that Arius had thrown out the baby with the baptismal font but not agreeing about much else.

The Emperor Constantine organised a worldcon to sort the matter out and agree on a creed, and this was duly held at Nicaea in May 325. The Arians were thumped early in the business session. Eusebius of Caesarea put up a nice compromise creed, but some bush theologian (there's always one) managed to get an amendment passed that inserted the words 'of one essence [*homoousion*] with the Father' and Constantine decided, 'OK, that's fixed,' and everyone went home, except Arius and a couple of bishops who wouldn't sign, who were banished. Some people weren't happy with the wording of the amendment, especially Eusebius of Nicomedia, so Constantine appointed Athanasius of Alexandria to sort them out. As things settled down, Constantine thought it would be a nice gesture to reinstate Arius. 'No way!' said Athanasius, so Constantine banished him. Soon afterwards, in 337, Constantine had himself baptised and died. The Empire was divided among his three sons — you can read all that stuff in Gibbon.

There are two important things going on here: first, theology had become a political matter, a matter of state, not something to be left to the fans; second, there was a tendency to decide these matters in Rome. For example, at a minicon in Sardica in 343 it was agreed that when bishops were deposed they could appeal to the bishop of Rome for reinstatement. This wasn't a big deal at the time, just good sense, but you can see things happening that were to become pretty important later.

Meanwhile, the people who couldn't accept the *homoousion* provision were tending to mumble *homoiousion* at that point in the creed. The word strictly means 'like essence' or 'similar substance', but these people used it to mean 'equality of attributes', which is slightly different. By the time Emperor Julian (the so-called Apostate) died in 363 the whole matter was getting out of hand, because people were now arguing about the nature of the Holy Ghost — *homo* or *homoi*? — and it's so easy to lose the thread that I think I'll just drop it. The Trinity that Athanasius believed in was one God leading a threefold personal life; the Trinity adopted at the second worldcon, Constantinople 381, was a God made up of three personalities and an abstract, impersonal essence. The Nicene Creed was revised: the one you know, if you know it, is not the one adopted at the Council of Nicaea but the one approved at the Second General Council 56 years later. And what has all this to do with shamrocks? Blessed if I know.

[*Lessouris dansent* 1, August 1993]

Notes from John:

Kim Huett in Canberra really did ask this question, among others, in a fanzine he still publishes for ANZAPA, the Australian and New Zealand Amateur Publishing Association, established 1968. Thirty-odd people send their publications to a central mailer, who returns a set to each member. My wife joined in her own right in the early '90s, and asked me for a title for her zine, preferably with cats in it. I came up with *Le chat parti*, the first part of the French for 'While the cat's away the mice play' (and also a pun on 'chat party'). Then I couldn't resist doing a zine called *Les souris dansent*, the second part. Sal has done over 100 issues of *Le chat* while I have managed only four of *Les souris*.

A version is available with John Bangsund's elegant page layout. [See the PDF](#)

TOP

Dinner meeting report - AGM

A jovial group of Society members attended the Society of Editors (Vic.) Annual General Meeting on 22 July at the English Speaking Union. After some casual drinks and nibbles in the lounge, including a complimentary glass of sparkling wine on arrival, guests helped themselves to a lovely main meal in the ballroom. Appetites sated, official proceedings got underway, with each committee office bearer presenting their report and elections for new committee members taking place. Some well-deserved dessert and tea and coffee followed.

Below are some photos from the AGM, taken by the all-seeing Kerry Biram. Other photos Kerry took at the AGM can be viewed [here](#).

The office bearers' reports from the AGM are included in this edition of the *Newsletter*.



subject to building practicalities, so watch this space as our involvement there takes shape.

Membership matters

Eight new associate members were welcomed in July: Sharon Harrison, Lauren Johnson, Margaret Langdon, Dyani Lewis, Chee Chee Leung, Lynne Mitchell, Karyn Noble and Tanya O'Loughlin. We also welcomed five full members: Rhonda Barson, Jennifer Cossins, Silvia Dropulich, Kirsten Rawlings and Tony Vella. We hope you find your memberships useful.

Ron Thiele
Membership Secretary

IPed Notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors Limited
www.iped-editors.org
July 2009

Many editors took advantage of the early-bird discount and registered for this year's accreditation examination by 30 June. Registration for the exam, which will be held on Saturday 12 September, is now closed.

The other big event for the profession this year is the *4th National Editors Conference* from 8–10 October. The conference is being organised by the Society of Editors (SA), an esteemed member of IPed, which has chosen the marvellous Adelaide Festival Centre as the venue. Program details and an online registration form can be found at www.editors-sa.org.au or via www.iped-editors.org.

The Annual General Meeting of IPed will be held in association with the national conference on 7 October. One item on the agenda will be the appointment of new councillors (each member society has one delegate to the Council). Some existing councillors may seek to be nominated again as delegates from their society; others may wish to retire: check with your committee.

The Institute of Professional Editors Limited is a not-for-profit Australian company (ACN 129 335 217) limited by guarantee. The councillors are directors of the company and carry the responsibilities of such. They play a crucial role in pursuing IPed's overall objective: 'To advance the profession of editing'. The IPed Council needs people not just with experience in editing but also with skills in all the other fields in which it must operate, including finance and administration, website development and maintenance, publicity and promotion, and professional development, to name a few. Their work is challenging and interesting. You might like to consider if there is a role for you on the Council.

The Council met by teleconference on 14 May and 17 June. Two sessions were needed to complete a packed agenda. Topics discussed included the budget for 2009–10; organisation and implementation of the 2009 accreditation exam; a proposal for an annual professional development calendar; the need for a national 'brand' for the profession; upgrading of the IPed website; and the urgent need for Council 'succession planning'. An on-screen exam working party headed by the NSW Councillor Pam Peters reported good progress and an excellent response to the call for volunteers for the trial on-screen exam held this month. We'll

President's report

I am concluding my fourth year as president with this report and, despite the job's many challenges, I would have to say it has been one of the most rewarding and satisfying periods of my professional life.

With some trepidation I agreed to continue on from last year's AGM, and while I feel I have stumbled somewhat to the finish line this year, I am extremely proud of what we have achieved over the last 12 months – probably our most challenging year in my four as leader of the group. The most notable reason for our successes this year I believe is the strength, commitment and expertise of the committee, and I would like to acknowledge and congratulate you all on a fine year's work.

All of our activities will be expanded on in committee reports to come, but on reflection when writing this report, I had to marvel at how much we do each month for our members. We must be a little crazy, but we most certainly also see the Society as a most important part of our professional lives.

I decided to focus on a few things that I think are our most important achievements as a group this year and leave the finer details to the rest of the committee.

First, I think the establishing, at last, of a paid administration officer is a most important step forward for the Society. I believe if we had not done so this year, the committee would have imploded! We just couldn't keep up with the commitments and plans we had and that's the bottom line. Ron, Melanie, Philip, Liz Atkinson and myself were involved in the development of the job specifications and we were delighted when Lu Sexton accepted the position. We are still fumbling along with how it is to work but generally Lu has taken on a range of jobs we were finding very difficult to do well – and the role is evolving. She is being very patient with us as we sort out how we can use the hours we have allocated most effectively. We are sure it is going to work well for us as the Society's membership continues to grow. It most importantly gives the committee a chance to concentrate on some new ideas rather than always having to push those aside as we deal with the day-to-day, week-to-week activities. As you will see, the Society's financial position is very healthy and we can well afford to employ someone to take on some of the many tasks we are required to do week to week to keep things moving along.

Related to this ever-increasing growing membership was the issue of managing our finances. Liz Atkinson worked very hard to take over as Treasurer from Charles Houen and we sincerely thank her for all her efforts. The job was enormous and Liz's ill health finally meant she had to step down earlier this year. In the absence of a volunteer, we decided to ask Charles to come back to us as a paid employee and manage our affairs. We were immensely relieved when he said yes, and as expected, he has been a meticulous and wonderful financial officer. Our financial records will show you that we are no longer dealing with a small budget and we need a trained accountant to manage our books. It was too much to expect a volunteer to take on such a role. Thank you Charles and please stay on board!

Another major achievement for this committee is the ongoing support of the accreditation process and the successful first accreditation exam held in October last year – the first of many to come. In those last few weeks before the exam I had a lot to do with the Accreditation Board and IPEd and I was absolutely staggered by the commitment and the hours spent by many people on analysing and sorting every detail. I congratulate them and I congratulate the cohort of editors who were brave enough to take the plunge and sit the first exam. It is very hard to maintain the voluntary momentum for such a process but the group strives on and we are hopeful the next exam in September will once again be supported across Australia. I would like to publicly acknowledge the continued support of the process by Renée Otmar and her hard work, and the ongoing commitment of our IPEd delegate Rosemary Noble. This year we have been expertly assisted by the wonderful Julie-Anne Justus and I thank Julie-Anne for not only her hard work as Victoria's accreditation delegate, but I would like to acknowledge the freshness and expertise that Julie-Anne brings to the accreditation board and the committee.

Last year I urged all members to think seriously about what a national accreditation scheme means for editors and why some people have spent over 10 years working towards its development. The aim is to raise our professional profile and, in the long term, develop better employment conditions and remuneration for editors across the country. We are all going to benefit from that. The scheme is still in its infancy though and it needs your hands-on support – we can agree that it is good for our profession, but we need some new faces committed to keeping the process moving forward. The scheme must also be communicated to editors beyond the freelance area and become part of general training for editors. IPEd needs assistance with communication and development of the scheme – are you interested enough to make such a commitment?

I would like to think that in five years, some publishing houses will automatically pay for staff to sit the exam as part of their ongoing in-house training – but they need to know about the scheme and why it can benefit them and maybe that's where some of you can be proactive and volunteer to help promote this important part of our professional future. Rosemary needs an assistant and so does Julie-Anne – if you believe in the accreditation process please volunteer to help.

Briefly I would like to thank the other committee members for their hard work. Many thanks to Eve Recht - who is stepping down as dinner meeting secretary - for another year of great meetings with wonderful speakers. You have also found us a wonderful venue at CQ functions – enjoy not having to deal with all the complications of organising even just one dinner meeting.

Christina Ratcliffe – thank you for your hard work as bookings officer too. You made members old and new feel very welcome and part of our group. You have also done some great work with establishing contacts with literary festivals in Victoria and in the freelance lunch area – well done. You are stepping down from the committee and we wish you well with your travel and family plans.

Philip and Peter – an excellent team whether attending to the needs of producing another *Freelance Register*, delving into the complications of indemnity insurance or dealing with the many and varied issues freelance editors query the Society about – thank you for another hard year's work. Philip is staying on for another year but Peter is leaving us, so Peter please accept our thanks for your commitment to the Society over the last two years. Particular thanks for your excellent work on researching the indemnity insurance issues and proposals for members.

look at the outcome of that in future IPEd Notes.

When confirmed, the minutes of the latest meeting will be placed on the IPEd website.

Ed Highley
Secretary

The Independent Type: a must-see

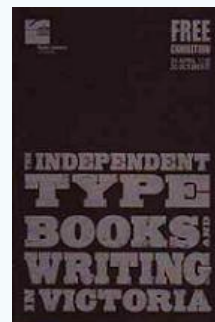
The Independent Type: Books and Writing in Victoria

Until 25 October 2009

Open 10am–5pm daily (to 9pm Thursdays)

Free exhibition tours Tuesdays and Thursdays 1–1.30pm

Keith Murdoch Gallery, State Library of Victoria



From traditional Indigenous narrative to the buzzing writing scene of today, Victoria's storytelling history comes to life in this exhibition of documents, artefacts, ephemera and books. The longwinded process of developing work for publication is emphasised, with due attention paid to the part played by editors, booksellers and publishers in bringing authors' stories into the world.

Forget dry and dusty collections of a head-spinning quantity. Curator Steve Grimwade has collected around 300 exhibits across literature, journalism, nonfiction and the performing arts to combine with interactive media, imaginative photography and graphics for an exhibition that can be dipped into and returned to, over and over, for new insights.

Exhibits are given over to the work of award-winning contemporary authors such as Peter Carey and Sonya Hartnett, as well as nonfiction authors including Manning Clark and Germaine Greer. Important early writers such as Marcus Clarke and Henry Handel Richardson are there, as are the typewriter that started the Lonely Planet success story and the literary hullabaloo of the Ern Malley hoax.

In the Peter Carey exhibit, as well as his laptop and research materials is a manuscript page of *True History of the Kelly Gang* – its quirky charm makes it lovely enough to frame. Knopf's Gary Fisketjon has covered the page with the green-inked and arcane hieroglyphics of the hard-copy editing process: a revealing window into the work of an editor who has worked with the likes of Raymond Carver, Richard Ford, Cormac McCarthy and Haruki Murakami. According to Ford, it's not unusual for Fisketjon to challenge 80 per cent of his work, so it looks as if Carey got off lightly with this one.

A page of Marcus Clarke's 1960-ish draft of *A History of Australia* is shown with crossings out and additions. From Alex Miller come notes for an unfinished book...

Membership secretary and public officer Ron Thiele – in your absence, thank you for all your hard work as membership secretary and in managing the e-list and many other membership issues. Your help over the last few weeks in getting this meeting organised and all the issues associated with finishing up another year has been much appreciated. Ron has also started working with the committee on our strategic planning for the future and this is something I hope the new committee will work on in the coming months.

Training officer Melanie Dankel – another year of outstanding training! We are constantly fully booked – training is so well organised, the committee rarely needs to discuss the program or any issues. Congratulations on another year of wonderful work. I would also like to particularly thank a distant member Jayne Shirtcliffe who organised our first regional training session in Warrnambool this year. Jayne is a dynamo – if only she lived in Melbourne we would have her on the committee! I hope another regional session or two can be organised in the next year.

The *Newsletter* team of Jackey and Rachel – your commitment has been massive and you have not only produced a wonderful *Newsletter* every month but also managed to research and plan for our new online *Newsletter*, which you will expand on in your report. I know you have more plans for the coming year, and I thank you for your commitment and expertise in such a time-consuming portfolio. Thank you also to Nonie Sadler for being involved as the *Newsletter* proofreader and to Norma Aplin who partnered Rachel in managing the *Newsletter* before moving to Canberra.

Victorian Writers Centre Liaison Officer Tony Berry – thank you for your commitment to the committee and the work you have done in developing our relationship with the VWC. We remain involved and committed to co-sponsoring events in the VWC program each year and Tony has been our link in that commitment. Tony and Jackey have also had brief discussions with the soon-to-be-established Centre for the Book at the State Library and have discussed ideas about how the Society could fit into the future there, which could be an exciting new connection for us in the future.

I should also mention and thank Renée Otmar and Janet Mackenzie for once again being part of the judging for the Fellowship of Australian Writers Barbara Ramsden Award, which the Society co-sponsored again this year. We have asked IPEd to take up the issue of this award in 2010 and look at its judging criteria and what it all means for editors.

The website – Lan Wang's technical expertise and new ideas are well known to the Society and her management of the website is fantastic. Lan continually supports the committee in a variety of other ways too, for instance with the e-list, moderating our committee email list, typesetting here and there, including the *Freelance Register* (which she does for us each year as a volunteer), the list goes on.

As well as working in their own portfolios this year, committee members have also spoken to groups of authors and students about the process of editing and the publishing industry, for example at the CAE. Through such public exposure, we can promote our profession and establish opportunities for work to be generated to our members.

Our brochures continue to be distributed widely and have just been reprinted again. The Society took part in a number of literary festivals this year and the brochures were well distributed. We have also used them in other festival show bags such as for the Emerging Writers Festival. We are constantly looking for ways to market the Society and our membership and promote editors into new markets.

As you know, the Occasional Series on Australian Editors (OSAE) is a subcommittee of our committee. This hard-working team, lead by Di Brown and which began in 2004, has completed the second *Editors in Conversation* and we congratulate the group on their wonderful commitment and hard work. The Victorian Society is a major sponsor of this historical record-keeping of editing in Australia and we are very proud of that role. Reports on their work are distributed on each table for you to read. We were planning on honouring the members of this group tonight but we will focus on doing so later in the year. *Editors in Conversation 2* will be launched at the October conference and I have seen a sneak review and it is a great read. We are very proud to have been involved again in this group's achievement.

My last few words – I have had lots of ideas over the last few years that I haven't been able to achieve, but that's life. I would dearly have liked to do another Redact intensive training workshop at some stage but it needs planning and maybe a new direction. We did not have the time to organise it. I believe Victoria could set up an excellent mentoring program for young editors – the Queensland Society have been working through a most interesting idea over the last 12 months of matching emerging writers with emerging editors and their mentors and we could do something here if we had the time to set it up – is anyone interested in organising such a scheme?

I believe we should also look into further developing our relationship with TAFE courses that focus on professional writing and editing courses. We give \$500 each year to the top editing student doing the postgraduate course at RMIT and we could also look at creating some similar awards I think with other courses – many of the students regularly attend our dinner meetings. Such involvement can only help to raise our profile as editors.

That's about it – it has been a pleasure and I thank you for the opportunities, education in all manner of things and the many friendships this role has brought to me.

Liz Steele
Immediate Past President

TOP

Treasurer's report

Balance Sheet As of June 2009

Assets

Cash at Bank

Cheque account	\$16,427
Savings account	\$109,812
Petty cash	\$107
Undeposited funds	\$2,980

Total Cash at Bank **\$129,326**

Other assets

Loans to other societies	\$5,000
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notes for an unfinished book, a second draft of *Landscape of Farewell* in typescript and the final product: the paperback copy of *Journey to the Stone Country*.

The 1983 first-submission letter from a 15-year-old Sonya Hartnett is on show, as well as the reply from Rigby's general manager Frank W Thompson, which includes timeless advice for writers:

... Writing is a bit like playing sport – everyone can play most games but only a few play games so well that we will pay to watch them play, and even then they have to practise continually ...'

For more, go to
www.slv.vic.gov.au/goto/independent-type.

Jackey Coyle-Taylor

BELS Examination 2009

The Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS) will offer an examination on October 7, 2009, in Adelaide, in conjunction with the National Editors Conference. For more information on applying for candidacy and registering for the examination, please visit www.bels.org.

BELS was founded in 1991 to evaluate the proficiency of manuscript editors in the life sciences and to award credentials similar to those obtainable in other professions.

Why certification for editors?

- To provide qualified manuscript editors in the life sciences a way to demonstrate their editorial proficiency.
- To provide employers and clients of manuscript editors in the life sciences a way to identify proficient editors.
- To establish a standard of proficiency for editing in the life sciences.

The certification examination is a three-hour multiple-choice test of scientific editing in English. (The three-hour period includes time for instructions.) It resembles the standard tests used in many professions to certify practitioners. The program is designed to assure employers or clients of editors that a BELS-certified editor has established a high level of credibility. Editors who successfully complete the certification examination may use the designation ELS (Editor in the Life Sciences) after their names.

Scribe launches the CAL Scribe Fiction Prize

Scribe is delighted to announce the launch of the CAL Scribe Fiction Prize. The prize is open for an unpublished manuscript by any Australian writer over 35, who may or may not have been published before. The winner of the CAL Scribe Fiction Prize will be awarded a book contract from Scribe and a prize of \$12,000. The winner will be announced in March 2010. For entry forms visit [this link](#).

For more information [click here](#) or contact:

Susan Hornbeck
Publicity Manager
Scribe
Australian Small Publisher of the Year
2006/2008
PO Box 523
Carlton North VIC 3054

Total other assets	\$5,000
Total Assets	\$134,326
Liabilities	\$0
NET ASSETS	\$134,326
Equity	
Retained Earnings	\$95,160
Current Earnings	\$36,751
EIC Reserve	\$2,415
TOTAL EQUITY	\$134,326

To view the full balance sheet and operating statement for the 2008-2009 year, [click here](#).

TOP

Dinner Meetings report

Meetings Officer's report

This year we held a variety of dinner meeting presentations. We have had practical industry-focused meetings, continued our series looking at the relationships between authors and their editors – and even participated in a delightful and very noisy storytelling performance.

We have used two venues – meeting at the English Speaking Union for our AGM and end-of-year gathering, and otherwise at CQ Functions, also known as the Lanai Bar, in the city. Both venues have advantages, but having data projection facilities available, at no extra cost, has allowed us to offer a wider range of presentations.

In September last year we crowded into the Duke of Edinburgh Room at CQ for a hands-on, highly practical Accreditation Exam preparation meeting.

In November we were entertained as well as informed about the process of creating illustrated non-fiction for children when author / illustrator John Nicholson and his editor Sarah Brenan spoke to us.

In December we held our end of year festivities in this room, including our second Spicks and SBooks quiz.

In March this year we met long-time booksellers Graham Davey and Richard Bennett. As well as this being a very informative session, looking at educational publishing from a different perspective, no-one who was there could forget our rousing rendition of Jill Murphy's book *Peace at Last*.

In April we returned to core business with a panel session on research and permissions. We heard from three practitioners about what they do, and their advice on being successful and avoiding problems.

In May we were at CQ again to hear author and RMIT Professor Catherine Cole talk about how an editor can either enhance or damage a manuscript, especially at the early stages when no other professionals have seen it.

In June Society of Editors member and technical wiz Lan Wang put a forceful case for keeping up with changing technology – if we want to achieve our income goal efficiently and in the least possible time, then we need to keep up with what's new, and keep developing our skills.

There is a great report on this and other meetings in our newsletter archives – these are well worth looking at for quick refreshers, relevant websites and a miscellany of useful tips.

Various people have written those newsletter reports, and I thank them all, and also our photographic team, especially Kerry Biram. Also a big thank you to the many people who have helped with everything from ideas and contacts to tidying the tables after meetings.

Christina Ratcliffe was a superb Bookings Officer, a friendly first point of call for all of you, as well as making life easier for me. Thank you Christina.

And what's next? We hope to continue the mix of the practical and the inspirational. On August 8 there will be another Accreditation Preparation workshop, and later possible topics include technical writing and small publishing houses.

I wish the next incumbent as rewarding and enjoyable a time as I have had with this portfolio and on the committee generally.

Eve Recht
Dinner Meetings Officer

Bookings Officer's report

They say you only get one chance to make a first impression. Having spent years in PR I know that's true, and why, as your former dinner bookings officer for nearly two years, first as a non-committee volunteer and then as a committee member, I felt privileged to be one of the front line of SocEdVic.

It's important that our guests know exactly where the meetings are and how to get there by a variety of transport. I ride a bike these days, or take a tram, but I know how the Melway, or the spectacles, can go walkabout. It's so much easier to put it all the details on the invitation or the booking confirmation, so you can print it out in 24pt fluorescent if you need to.

Then there's all the other stuff you ask. Can you pay in advance or on the night, and do we still, *really*, not take credit cards? Can we cater for allergies or wheelchairs or latecomers – and can a non-member on vacation from an overseas uni have the student discount? There's *policy* involved. Emails to and fro. Tact and sympathy. It's *highly intricate*, taking bookings.

We don't get many no-shows – that is, people who simply don't turn up, without warning, and you do wonder why – because I noticed in my time that those who ignored our Treasurer's polite request for payment haven't come again. Whatever the reason, there is a case to be made for paying in advance.

Our members are commendably considerate and if they are forced to cancel after deadline most will also ask how to pay for their missed dinner. We do, after all, accept that condition when we book, because caterers charge per person. Cancellations made by telephone are usually delivered in a voice that demonstrates that the caller is definitely better off in bed than stoically infecting the rest of us.

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HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

THE COMMITTEE



Can we sit with whom we choose? is another question. Yes, indeed, and feel free to move around and network. Bring your business cards and make yourselves known to each other. Members are full of helpful suggestions when you ask how they would handle the problem you're having at the moment – and we talk about editing too. For some of us it's one of the few times we get to see those who have become good friends through the society.

It's been a real pleasure to meet and welcome so many of you, first by email, and in time to put a face to your name and personality. In a way, it felt like a compliment when the 'regulars' booked and didn't keep repeating that they were full or associate members, or students, and no longer added their phone number as the meeting notice asks us to. It sort of implied they no longer felt like strangers.

But then I had to find the missing information from their previous bookings, or email back to get their guest's details, and that all took time. Please give all the information you're asked for, because the volunteer who takes your booking next time may be someone who doesn't know that you are an honoured and honorary life member, or you brought along the record number of visitors last month, or bushfire prevented your receiving your accredited editor certificate.

Until we can organise a central database, don't feel offended if official memories are short and somewhat impersonal. That's just the way it is with organisations like ours that depend on volunteers to 'give it a go' and be flexible enough to move on to a new task, not only to keep the show on the road but also to help release their own and the society's untapped potential.

I enjoy being with fellow-pedants, people who care where apostrophes and hyphens go and whether a name is spelt correctly. Some of your names I learned very quickly, because you kept taking your name tag home and I had to print out another. Please leave yours behind after meetings, and if you have any spare tags, or empty holders, recycle them at SocEds. Learning others' names is one of the best ways to get the most from our membership – by meeting other professionals face to face while learning (and learning about) our craft.

Growth of successful organisations like ours often necessitates the automation of routine tasks. I hope we can keep the personal touch. Making you feel welcome and ensuring that your visits to our meetings are as easy and pleasant as possible remains important to us, because it's important to you.

Your new bookings officer, as you know, is our newly appointed administration officer, Lu Sexton. I wish Lu as much fun, feedback and friendship as I have had, from our members and our volunteer committee, these past two years.

Christina Ratcliffe

TOP

Training Officer's report

The 2008/09 period has been another successful year for training. We've come out ahead financially, which is great news. Some courses were particularly popular, and this has allowed us to trial a few new options.

The training programme was completely revamped this year and several new courses were introduced, such as Editing Foreign Languages, Marketing 101 and Building a Website. We also expanded our InDesign offering to cater to both Mac and PC users. Almost all the training sessions this year have been sold out, and sold out early. Because of this, we have tried to improve our response time to members' needs and have been able to offer additional courses (such as the proofreading refresher) where there has been a sizable waiting list. We are also offering more courses this year than ever before - we've offered ten courses in the last financial year, with another six scheduled until the end of the year.

In other exciting developments, this year we offered regional training for the first time. I'd like to highlight the great work Jayne Shirtcliffe has done in organising a grammar refresher in Warrnambool. We hope to be able to offer more regional courses like this in the future.

I believe we offer members a robust and varied programme. I have been contacted by other Societies and other organisations wanting to 'borrow' our trainers or our training programme, which is a huge compliment to the training we have on offer. As always, we love to hear your ideas for courses, so please keep those coming.

I'd like to thank all the trainers who have run sessions for us this year - they are a very talented bunch. I'd also like to thank all the members who have supported the training programme and enable us to offer the number of courses that we do.

As I am stepping down from the training role, I'd like to say how much I have enjoyed this role, and especially meeting so many people through the courses. I hope the next training officer enjoys the portfolio as much as I did.

Melanie Dankel
Training Officer

TOP

Accreditation Board Delegate's report

The Accreditation Board is a committee of IPed that comprises delegates from each of the seven state editors' societies, the Assessors Forum and IPed Council, as well as the Lead Exam Assessor. As the Accreditation Board delegate for the Society of Editors (Victoria), I represent the interests of editors in Victoria and act as liaison between the national and state bodies in the interest of national accreditation.

After many years of planning, the first Accreditation Exam was held on 18 October 2008 in seven capital cities across Australia. A total of 170 candidates sat the exam; 112 – just over 65 per cent -- passed, earned the rank of Accredited Editor, and are now proudly calling themselves AEs. Of those 112 AEs, 39 are here in Victoria. The Society celebrated this achievement at a dinner meeting in February by awarding the certificates in person.

One month before that dinner meeting, the Accreditation Board began to plan for the 2009 exam, and held its first face-to-face meeting for the year, in Adelaide.

In the months since then, a new exam development team has been appointed and a new exam developed. The overwhelming response after the 2008 exam was that it had been a fair and appropriate one. But the Accreditation Board also received feedback regarding the length of the exam and the time allotted, and was committed to addressing this feedback in a constructive way for the 2009 exam.

My particular portfolio within the Accreditation Board is Exam Trial Manager, and it was my job to plan,

manage and report on a trial of the new exam a few weeks ago and to provide the results to the Accreditation Board. Those of you who are AEs will remember the appeal we made, for volunteer AEs to sit the exam again, in order to give us some feedback particularly relating to time and comparative level of difficulty. In this regard I'd like to acknowledge the wonderful, generous efforts of six AEs, who gave up their Saturday afternoon, donned their hair shirts and sat a second exam under exam conditions to make sure that the next cohort of candidates have the best possible – and most fair – exam in September. They are Phillip Bryan, Lan Wang, Rosemary Noble, Rosemary Luke, Rhonda Barson and Tess Moloney. (You'll be glad to know they all passed for a second time!) I'd also like to credit Renée Otmar, Heather Jamieson and Celia Jellett for volunteering their well-honed skills as markers.

A new sample exam has also been developed and is available on the IPEd website. If you are considering registering for the September exam, please take the exam under exam conditions to evaluate your own level of competency.

The Accreditation Board is currently trialling an onscreen exam with a view to offering this as an alternative in 2010. We'll keep you posted.

I had no idea when I took on this committee role that it would be quite as demanding as it is. We have a teleconference every second week, on Thursday night, for an hour and a half on average. As the exam draws near, these teleconferences can be weekly. We have one scheduled for the Saturday after exam registrations close, in order to assess the response in each state. In describing these activities, my intention is to acknowledge the enormous load of work done by volunteers, many of whom are freelance and who could actually use those hours to generate income, but who choose instead to contribute their time for the benefit of editors across the country. I have enormous respect for the huge hours put into this work by these people in the interests of our profession. In this regard, I'd also like to acknowledge the Distinguished Editors, or DEs. They deserve your recognition, and your applause.

I know many of you here are Accredited Editors, and hope that many other editors will support the accreditation scheme by committing to the exam and after that, to the advanced accreditation scheme. In my 10 months representing the Society of Editors (Victoria) – that is, all of you – on the IPEd Accreditation Board, I have come to understand that while the intention of accreditation is to recognise competence in editors, accreditation also establishes a new editorial cadre, a college, a refreshed professional community. Please continue to support the scheme and in doing so, to enrich the profession of editing in Australia.

Julie-Anne Justus
Accreditation Board Delegate

TOP

Freelance Affairs Officers' report

We have been the Freelance Affairs tag-team for the last 12 months. We've shared out the queries between us, while Pete looked after the Professional Indemnity insurance deal and I looked after the *Freelance Register*.

Freelance Register

This is the second year I (Philip) have done the FLR. It's also the second year the FLR will be coming out in September. The publication date was shifted two years ago to allow members who joined at the start of the financial year to put an entry into the *Register* rather than wait six months for the next edition.

I have a theory that it's the third occurrence of any event that creates a pattern, but even though this is only my second Register, some patterns are beginning to emerge:

- 80 per cent of entrants wait until the last week to put in their listings.
- Three reminders per month is not enough to speed up the rate of entries. It doesn't matter how often I send out reminders on the e-list, I know that the note you've written to yourself about doing your Register entry is stuck in the bills pile somewhere under the Medibank bill.
- About 15 entrants drop out of the FLR each year, usually because they're moving, changing direction, retiring or returning to full-time work.
- There are about 15 new listings each year, plus a few people returning to the fold.
- From keying in addresses into Excel (a program I now know far more about than I ever wanted to know), I know that the majority of freelance editors live in the northern suburbs, in a broad swathe running from Carlton and Fitzroy up through Northcote and Brunswick to Coburg and Preston. I have no idea what this means.

However, the new FLR *is* under way. So far it has 32 entrants, 25 of whom I've sent receipts, so if you've sent in an entry and not received a receipt, don't fret; I will get around to it. It also currently has 80 blank pages, one of which could be yours for a bit over \$2 per week. I'd also like to publicly thank Lan Wang and Kath Harper for their work on last year's FLR, especially because they knew more about publishing it than I did.

Freelance Lunches

Freelance lunches have been a bit of a moveable feast this year. We had two lunches at The Calabrian, and a wonderful lunch at La Bussola, which was organised by Christina Ratcliffe. We intended to have more Freelance Lunches than transpired, but we're still looking for that ideal location that is convenient, reasonably fast with service – and without a billing system that turns the whole thing into a school excursion.

Queries

The other thing we've been doing a lot of over the last 12 months is answering queries. Recently I spoke to an aspiring editor and we discussed the following issues; my answers were of course entirely subjective, with a bias all of their own:

- Which is the best course?
- Which computer programs?
- Which Word version?
- Can I earn 30K part time?
- What's the difference between proofreading and editing?
- How do you get an associate membership of the Society of Editors?

Then one query that was totally new: What are the attributes of an editor? So, let's see how well you do. Imagine it's 3 o'clock on Friday and you've been answering queries from Society members. What would you answer?

[Ed: A flurry of calls from the floor elicited these attributes: patience, persistence, tact, obsessiveness, attention to detail.]

The attributes I actually suggested were attention to detail, tact, judgement, bit pedantic, good vocabulary

and grasp of grammar. See, there you go: anyone can answer freelance queries. Thank you!

Professional Indemnity report

As co-Freelance Affairs officer, and an editor who has had to take out professional indemnity insurance in the past to meet client requirements, I (Peter) took it upon myself to investigate the options for negotiating a Society rate on behalf of members.

Many of the people here tonight will have completed the original survey we conducted late last year. The purpose of this survey was to gain information about the nature of our work as editors which we could then pass on to brokers to obtain quotes for PI insurance.

Interestingly no respondent to the survey has ever had to make a professional indemnity claim, and a couple of respondents questioned the value of taking out insurance. There could be an argument mounted that the Society should lobby government agencies and corporate organisations against requiring this type of insurance for editors.

The fact remains however that other members have missed out on work because they were unable to have the requirement removed from a contract, and the cost of taking it out was too high to justify. I also heard anecdotal accounts of editors who had stated they had PI insurance in order to get a contract, hoping they were never required to provide evidence of their non-existent policy (let alone have to make a claim).

I would be happy to support anyone in future taking up the challenge of lobbying our clients to remove or reduce the requirement for PI insurance in contracts. In the interim however, I feel a discounted rate for Society members is another concrete way for the Society to offer value to our members.

The offers we received from brokers were each quite different in nature, making it difficult to decide which offered the best value. In the end, and after consultation with other committee members, it was decided that a group policy would offer the best value for members while still providing adequate coverage for our arguably low-risk field.

A few months ago the Society made an exclusive arrangement with insurance broker Aon to offer professional indemnity insurance for our membership at a special discount rate. Members can contact Aon directly and apply for coverage.

Aon's policy offers:

- Coverage up to a maximum of \$5 million for any single claim against a member of the arrangement.
- Up to five claims of \$5 million within each 12-month policy period for all members of the arrangement (\$25 million in total).
- All members are bound by the same overall claim limitation. That is, the combined coverage for all members is \$25 million per year. If a member makes a claim for \$5 million, the total coverage remaining for all members of the arrangement is \$20 million for that coverage period.
- An excess of \$1,000 per claim.
- Unlimited retroactive coverage so all scheme members are covered for claims made during the coverage period, even if these claims arise from prior services.
- An option to add public liability cover of up to \$5 million. (Note: Additional costs apply.)

For rates and to download the application form, please refer to the dedicated page on our website (<http://www.socedvic.org/freelance/insurance.html>).

Please note that only full members of the Society of Editors (Vic) are eligible and proof of current membership must be provided with your application.

Philip Bryan and Peter Riches
Co-Freelance-Affairs Officers

TOP

Web Manager's report

Well, another year has passed and the Society of Editors website keeps on keeping on. Since it was redesigned and restructured last year it has maintained the levels of popularity achieved at the end of the last financial year.

We enjoyed an average of 148 unique visits per day over the entire year, with maximums reaching as high as 270 daily visits. This equated to around 4,500 visits per month and over 54,000 visits over the entire financial year. There were also more than 144,000 pages downloaded and over 380,000 hits.

The most consistently popular pages of the website include:

- the front page (not surprisingly)
- the *Freelance Register* in its various editions
- the training page
- the membership page
- various issues of the *Newsletter*

All of which reflect the excellent services that are provided by the Society.

While of course most of our visitors are from Australia, we have also had visitors from distant shores such as Hungary, Côte D'Ivoire, Poland and Niue, not to mention Trinidad and Tobago, Kenya, Ghana and the Czech Republic.

As I said last year, the website is a model of impermanence and it is expectantly waiting for all suggestions for improvement. We hope that you find the site useful and that you continue to visit it regularly as your source of information about all things societal.

And finally, I'd like to say thanks to Liz. You've achieved fantastic things over the last four years and you will be sorely missed.

Website statistics 2008–09

Month	Daily average				Monthly totals			
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
Jun-09	1,143	727	439	193	5,795	13,199	21,825	34,308
May-09	1,062	707	419	162	5,038	12,997	21,918	32,930
Apr-09	939	636	334	131	3,934	10,039	19,106	28,175
Mar-09	1,015	677	350	137	4,251	10,874	20,988	31,483
Feb-09	971	660	352	135	3,800	9,865	18,506	27,205
Jan-09	849	577	300	115	3,594	9,306	17,914	26,349
Dec-08	763	516	300	113	3,506	9,307	16,009	23,666
Nov-08	1,110	785	454	148	4,453	13,631	23,569	33,307
Oct-08	1,199	898	484	158	4,918	15,013	27,850	37,190
Sep-08	1,046	774	410	136	4,081	12,314	23,224	31,382
Aug-08	1,158	874	466	168	5,227	14,465	27,107	35,919
Jul-08	1,274	884	427	179	5,550	13,257	27,432	39,506
Totals	12,529	8,715	4,735	1,775	54,147	144,267	265,448	381,420
Averages	1,044	726	395	148	4,512	12,022	22,121	31,785

Lan Wang
Web Manager

TOP

Newsletter Coeditors' report

What a big year for the Society and the Newsletter!

At the beginning of the 2008-2009 year, there were two new, inexperienced *Newsletter* coeditors at the helm, trying to navigate their way through the process of getting the Newsletter through to publication each month.

Now as we stand here in front of you, we are two slightly more experienced coeditors, one of whom (Jackey) stepped in as a replacement only seven months ago, and we have just launched an entirely new, online version of the newsletter.

Before we get into the launch of the e-newsletter, I (Rachel) would firstly like to acknowledge Norma Aplin, my original coeditor, for all her work in the first few months of the position.

A huge thank you also goes out to Jackey Coyle-Taylor for taking over Norma's position in December when Norma had to resign to move interstate. While most committee positions are filled by one person, I have been lucky enough to be able to share this position with both Norma and Jackey, making this voluntary role much more manageable.

Thank you also to everyone on the committee, both for their article submissions and their trust in our ability to fill our positions, especially Liz Steele, for her constant encouragement and support. Even with everything else going on, she always managed to find time to check how we were going each month.

Thanks to Nonie Sadler for her wonderful job proofreading the Newsletter, Kane Marevich for designing it up until last month, and everyone else who has contributed to the Newsletter and those who have provided feedback. A special mention to Kerry Biram's photography of SocEds events. We really appreciate all your contributions. And Jackey sends out a huge vote of thanks to Rachel for her hard work researching options for the e-newsletter.

We have also been delighted to introduce a number of new columns to the newsletter this financial year, such as 'On your bookshelf', 'From the newsletter archives' and 'Say What?', in addition to the mainstays. In what we hope will become a regular feature, John Bangsund is back contributing his unique take on all things editorial. We welcome other column ideas, so feel free to drop us a line if you have any suggestions or if you would like to write something. We are always on the lookout for reports of our dinner meetings, so if you'd like to put your name down for a future issue, we'd love to see you tonight or hear from you.

As you all probably know, last month we launched our inaugural electronic newsletter. This has been a very exciting and challenging development, which we're all very proud of. We thought we would take the opportunity tonight to officially launch the e-newsletter and highlight its features and benefits.

Firstly, you may all be wondering why we decided to change the format of the newsletter. The majority of our members have been receiving the newsletter by email for a number of years, so aside from the obvious issue of changing with the times, there were several other reasons for the move.

The main one was that it means that we now have control over the whole Newsletter process. In the past, once we received and proofread articles, all the copy and changes had to be entered by an external designer. This process was time-consuming and, sometimes, pretty frustrating. With the e-newsletter, we simply paste all our text into the web-based template and format it as we want. Importantly, we can edit it within the template, so we can input our own corrections and updates, including any last-minute additions or changes.

There is also a financial benefit, in that we no longer have to pay a designer each month. Even after a one-off fee to customise our template and an annual subscription fee, we will save a significant amount of money each year on a system that offers much more flexibility.

Some of the key features are that regular columns will remain, images can be uploaded, and we can have direct links to websites, email addresses etc.

Feedback has been generally positive – mentioning how easy it is to access articles from the links at the top and how much cleaner it looks. Some people have raised issues of difficulty in viewing the newsletter this month, and this raises some concerns over differences in monitor sizes and variances between some browsers. We are looking into this and will ensure that the Newsletter is not as wide in future editions. Although the new format was viewed and approved by many eyes in draft stage, it is only since publication that some members have reported different reading experiences.

What can you do to ensure you can view the newsletter in optimum quality? Make sure your email client settings allow images to be viewed. If this still doesn't work, you can view the Newsletter online by clicking on the link at the top of the email. We will also include a link to a PDF of the Newsletter within the email. This can be downloaded and saved to your computer. Finally, if you are still having trouble, send an email to newsletter@socedvic.org and we will do our best to help you out.

While this new format presents some challenges and learning curves, we feel confident that it is the right system for us. We are both continuing as Newsletter Coeditors and look forward to building on what we've achieved this year.

Jackey and Rachel
Newsletter Coeditors

TOP

OSAE report

Kerry Biram read the report on behalf of Diane Brown, who was unable to attend the AGM.

The Occasional Series on Australian Editors project is currently in its sixth year.

Since November 2004 various working groups have carried out the project's main aims which include historical and cultural research, the interview program, the oral, print and digital archives and publication. We have documented the working lives of Australian editors, in particular honorary life members, and their professional involvement with state and territory societies of editors, and their wider contribution to the editing profession and publishing industry.

Last year we were busy with the interview program and our focus then shifted to publication of *Editors in Conversation 2*. The interview program was suspended while we concentrated our efforts on sponsorship and manuscript preparation.

In 2008 the working group completed its second round of interviews, secured \$4000 towards book publication and obtained permission to include an abridged version of a talk by Julie Watts to the Society on *Mao's Last Dancer*. Julie's talk tied in neatly with one of the interviews for the book, so we were keen to include it. Portrait photos of subjects were selected, permissions for text and artwork were secured, a designer was engaged for layout and cover art, and we approached Deakin Print Services to handle the printing.

Pamela Ball, honorary life member and founding president of the South Australian Society of Editors, accepted our invitation to launch *Editors in Conversation 2* at the 4th National Editors Conference in Adelaide as part of the official conference program. Promotional material for the book has been prepared and beyond the launch copies will be sold at monthly dinner meetings or ordered online via the Society's website by clicking on **Publications** and following the links to the order form, or you can [click here](#).

Over the summer months the working group finalised its selection of Occasional Series archival material to be deposited with the State Library of Victoria. Written permission from interview subjects for their material to be deposited was obtained. The archives were stored with Kerry Biram during the bushfire season and will remain with Kerry until the deposit is made. The selection, collation and printing of archival material have taken almost two years and archival boxes will be delivered to the State Library in the next few months.

Since the project's inception in 2004, working groups have achieved a great deal. After the October launch, the current working group will step down for a well-deserved rest. As outgoing convenor, I acknowledge the commitment of all involved. A handout has been circulated tonight which acknowledges and lists these members. However, I want to publicly thank Kerry Biram (a founding member) and Jenny Craig. Both have worked closely with me to keep the Occasional Series project on track. Their energy, enthusiasm, expertise and in-kind contribution have been major factors in the project's success to date. Well done, team.

Finally, we thank Liz Steele for her tireless work and support. She has been a truly amazing President and advocate for the Society and the Occasional Series project. And we invite members to express their interest in continuing the work of the Occasional Series project beyond the life of the current working group. We'll continue to work with the Society until we step out on a high note, with the national launch of *Editors in Conversation 2* at the Adelaide conference.

Diane Brown
Convenor, Occasional Series on Australian Editors
OSAE working group: Diane Brown, Kerry Biram, Jenny Craig & Wendy Owen

TOP

Dear Ed ...

Dear Ed

My friend Cynthia says that words are actually symbols. Is she lying to me?

Loren

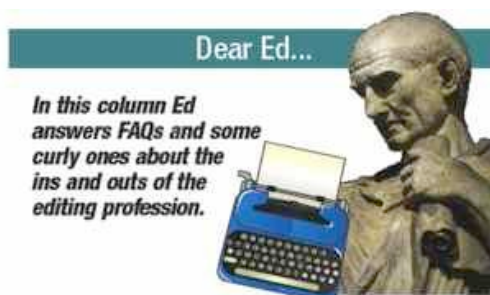
Dear Loren

Your friend Cynthia is not lying to you, or at least not on this occasion. Strangely, I'm up to my eyeballs in symbols this month and it's all because of Jorge Luis Borges, but we might as well blame it on Cynthia. My aim this year is to read my way through all the books I've bought and never read. They were accumulating at such a rate that I was considering giving away all the books I've read and just keeping the books I haven't read because they were taking up more shelf space. Maybe I should discard my unwanted books on benches in the local parks, where they can be picked up and treasured as found objects.

Anyhoo, to get to the heart of the matter, I found this quote in a slim tome by Jorge Luis Borges called *The Book of Sand*, which has been waiting 28 years to be read: 'Words are symbols that assume a shared memory'. I stopped reading at that point, which probably wasn't Borges's intention. But what happens if that assumption is incorrect? What if you and Cynthia don't share the same memory of a very basic word, such as *table*? So there I was, thinking about words and symbols, when I stumbled over these gems and went sprawling in the grass.

Perspective drawings are good for communicating scale, portion and space

This is especially true when it's lunchtime and you're lined up at the deli with your nose glued to the pie warmer looking at the scale and proportions of a chunky beef pie. If you're really hungry and eat too quickly, you can lose all sense of portion and have to go back for seconds.



Cash withdrawal at the counter

Well, yeah, it was in Queenscliff. There's nothing wrong with providing service and honesty at the same time. Take out some money, talk about the weather, how the crops are going and how well and/or badly the Seagulls are playing this season, and didn't Macca take a screamer in the goal square last week?

He attempted to break the drought by firing canons into the air

I wonder if anyone asked the canons if they minded? Perhaps praying for rain would have been a more humane approach. But it was the Federation Drought, and it did go on and on and people became desperate.

Kung fu and karate are marital arts

Sorry, I'm lost for words on this one: my brain spends all its time marvelling at the imagery and no words come out. But martial arts outfits *do* look a bit like pyjamas.

Tom went home today with the flue

Which probably explains why the Coonara isn't working too well and the room has filled with smoke. Hopefully he'll be back tomorrow; until then, there's always the windows.

40% off Sumer clothing

They say fashion goes in cycles, but I hadn't realised that the trend started so long ago. Perhaps those early cuneiform tablets the Sumerians were so keen on were actually sales brochures. After all, civilisation started in Mesopotamia, so that probably includes shopping.

Many players do not eat adequate quantities of iron containing foods

That probably explains the busloads of footballers I see having a feed at Sims metal recyclers in Brooklyn, munching on the remains of old Comeng trains. Bulk up, boys!

Biomechanical principals are made more relevant and meaningful

It's not really fair, is it? Teachers already cop a beating for doing one of the hardest jobs on the planet, and now they're about to be replaced by Roboprofs.

You're probably wanting to know if it was worth waiting 28 years to read *The Book of Sand*. Mmm, not really. But it does contain two good strong stories, neither of which features footballers eating Comeng trains, and it is written in (or translated into) such clear simple English that it makes your heart sing. *The Book of Sand*, now with added symbols, coming soon to a park bench near you.

Cheers,
Ed

In response to last month's Dear Ed ...

Dear Ed

There is no need for Gill Sans to hire a debt-collection agency to get On the Nose to pay up. As long as they still exist, the simplest method is to apply for a hearing at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Sure, it costs you \$33 (or did so when I last used this method), but the moment you send the defaulter a copy of the hearing time and date, as required under the VCAT regulations, they pay up. Mine did, anyway.

Kim Lockwood

TOP

SocEds at the Melbourne Writers' Festival

Although the Society has missed out on active participation in any of the several hundred events and seminars scheduled for this year's Melbourne Writers' Festival, we will be making our existence known through inclusion in the festival's show-bag.

The bags will be handed out free to the more than 3000 enthusiastic writers, readers, publishers, agents (and hopefully editors!) who will gather in Federation Square from 21-30 August.

Each bag will include the Society's brochure *Why You Need An Editor*.

It is a low-cost promotion that we believe will go to the heart of one of our prime markets.

Next year, it is hoped the Society will resume more active involvement in the festival by having members once again presenting seminar sessions and taking part in panel discussions. Close contact has been established with festival management and discussions, as they say, are continuing.

Meanwhile, this year's event promises a very wide range of everything literary and bookish, from the erudite to the prosaic and downright entertaining. Admission to most events is a very reasonable \$16 and several are even free.

Tony Berry
SocEds Liaison Officer

TOP

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