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NEWSLETTER

Volume 39 Number 8, September 2009

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September dinner meeting

Michael Williams on the Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas

Wednesday, 16 September, 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)

Along with our new selection as an official UNESCO City of Literature, Melbourne's literature and publishing community is also set to celebrate a new arts initiative: the Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas. Opening in early 2010 as part of the State Library of Victoria, the centre will be a hub for literary activity throughout the region, as well as home base for literary organisations such as the Victorian Writers Centre, the Melbourne Writers Festival, the Emerging Writers Festival and the Australian Poetry Centre. Join us as Michael Williams, the Head of Programming, discusses the centre's aims for the present and its plans for the future.

Michael Williams has worked as a writer, editor and broadcaster. After several years at Text Publishing, he spent six months in 2007 in New York working in the office of literary scout Maria Campbell. Since returning to Melbourne he has worked freelance for Random House, Scribe Publications, Affirm Press and others, and has just completed 18 months as one-third of the breakfast radio team on Melbourne's 3RRR. His reviews can be read in the *Age*, *Australian* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, as well as in *Australian Book Review*, *Meanjin* and the *Monthly*. He is also a member of the Judging Advisory Panel for the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2009.

BOOKINGS ARE NOW CLOSED FOR THIS DINNER MEETING

- 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 Sexton at

CONTACT DETAILS

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Dates for your diary

September dinner meeting
Michael Williams on the Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas
Wednesday, 9 September

2009 accreditation exam
Saturday, 12 September

4th IPEd National Editors Conference
8–10 October

Coming training
All courses are full

A 'blog' of 'quotes'

If your fingers have ever itched for a supersized red pen when you're out and about, beset by a proliferation of unnecessary quotation marks, you are not alone. Thanks to Janet Mackenzie for this unnecessary quotes website: <http://www.unnecessaryquotes.com>.

Freelance Register update

By now entrants in the 2009–10 *Freelance Register* will have received PDFs of their entries for approval. This year's register has 120 entries. There are 14 new entrants, and three entrants who returned after missing last year's edition.

It's an experience working closely on the register, a reminder of what a diverse, talented and highly qualified bunch of people freelance editors are. Kath Harper will be indexing the register in September, then Lan Wang will take in the index and the register will be sent off for printing and binding.

bookings@socedvic.org 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.

TOP

John Bangsund's Threepenny Planet

Two excerpts from Michael Quinion's *World Wide Words*:

(27 July 2008)

LAWS Following up comments in this section last week about the Law of Prescriptive Retaliation and McKean's Law, several readers told me about Muphry's Law, which is pretty much identical. One way of putting it is this: 'if you write anything criticising editing or proofreading, there will be a fault of some kind in what you have written.' Wikipedia says that it is attributed to John Bangsund of the Victorian Society of Editors in Australia. A classic example appeared in the Freakonomics blog on the *New York Times* site on 8 July, in which Stephen J Dubner accused *The Economist* of making a mistake when it referred to Cornish pasties, assuming this was an error for 'pastries'. Lots of people put him right, including the editors of *The Economist*, who sent him a genuine Cornish pasty.

(3 August 2008)

ERRORS, SCHMERRORS It was appropriate, following an issue in which I mentioned laws relating to the perils of correcting others, that the first message I should receive last Saturday consisted of the pithy text, 'Blind man's buff? Muphry's Law? Just two after a quick scan ... Do you need a copyeditor?'

'Blind man's buff' is the older and still usual British term for what is often called 'blind man's bluff' in the US ('buff' is short for 'buffet', a blow – the game was once much rougher than it is nowadays). And 'Muphry' was, of course, correct, as a quick google will show. The misspelling was the deliberate act of the creator of the 'law', not me. Several more messages in similar vein followed. Then Michael Grounds noted from Australia that I'd written 'a e-mail', querying gently whether this might be a typo or else 'some subtle modern usage I haven't caught up with?' Congratulations, Mr Grounds, your correction was the first correct correction.

From the Newsletter, August 1991:

I have been enjoying Chris Wallace-Crabbe's book *Falling Into Language*, a kind of literary autobiography, but so far I have found no discussion of that most vexed of questions, poetic justice. So I rang him. 'Do you have any thoughts,' I said, 'on poetic justice?' 'I'm in favour of it,' Chris said. Good. Let me tell you a tale.

Keats and Chapman were discussing poetry.

'I have often wondered', said Keats, 'what exactly is meant by the expression poetic justice.'

'I always imagined it to be a singularly appropriate punishment meted out to some wrongdoer,' said Chapman. 'And such a thing, with respect, seems to happen more frequently in poetic creations than in real life. On the other hand, it may have its origin in some historical occurrence.'

'Such as?' said Keats.

'I am thinking,' said Chapman, 'if you will forgive me, of some possible connexion between the bard and the barred, the court and the caught, the, ah ...'

'I am finding it difficult to forgive you,' said Keats.

'So sorry,' said Chapman. 'But you can perhaps imagine some learned judge, in some far-off time, handing down his decisions in verse ...'

As one entrant said, 'It's always worth being in the register. I got a really juicy job out of it last year.'

Philip Bryan
Freelance Affairs Officer

A month of editing at the VWC

September is editing month as far as the Victorian Writers' Centre is concerned.

It has scheduled three events with an editing theme that, between them, cover a wide range of expertise and interest.

The month began with the start of the **Advanced Editing** course that runs every Wednesday evening for six weeks from 2 September. Conducted by Katherine Steward, the course builds on skills acquired in the VWC's Introduction to Editing course. It is also suitable for those with some editing experience who wish to consolidate their knowledge and practice.

The curriculum covers important aspects of text editing, including editorial style (language level, register and point of view), common grammatical problems (what to look for, what to change) and the editing of different types of text. Classes will include mini-lectures, practical exercises and discussions. Students should be prepared for some take-home exercises and out-of-class reading. The discounted price to SocEd members is \$225 (\$210 concession).

Society of Editors committee member Julie-Anne Justus was host for the second event, the **Getting into Editing** panel session on September 3. Panellists were experienced editors Sarah Brennan, Nadine Davidoff and Ruth Seim who provided editors and writers with an insight on varied aspects of the publishing industry.

The final event, on September 17, is the centre's regular **Let's Network!** session, which this month focuses on editing with society committee member Rosemary Noble as guest speaker. The free event provides an opportunity for like-minded writers from all genres to get together, form new networks, exchange ideas and strengthen literary community ties.

Tony Berry
Liaison Officer

Membership report

SocEds welcomed 16 new members in August. Full members are Anne Burgi, Rachel Delany, Sarah Endicott,

'I cannot,' said Keats.

'... and becoming known far and wide as the Poetic Justice,' Chapman continued. 'I can just see him, addressing some quivering miscreant thus:

*I find the accused a veritable worm!
Sweet Thames, run softly, till you end your term.'*

'Lord preserve us,' moaned Keats.

'Or: *Bid daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
For thou art in the jug for fifteen years.'*

'Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour!' sobbed Keats.

'Or: *The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
But winding slowly o'er the rack's for thee!'*

'Enough! Enough!' cried Keats.

'Really?' said Chapman. 'Do you accept my hypothesis?'

'Oh, certainly,' said Keats, in a rare outburst of sarcasm. 'I don't know how to thank you for this brilliant conjecture!'

'All retributions gracefully conceived,' Chapman murmured modestly.

Ah, they don't write stuff like that any more. Nor do I. That spurious anecdote of Keats and Chapman appeared first in 1974, in *Philosophical Gas* 28. It reappears here because my computer has temporarily given up reading 360KB floppy disks, on one of which is Caroline Williamson's report on our July meeting.

TOP

August dinner meeting report

IPEd Accreditation Exam preparation

Thirty editors attended the dinner meeting on 12 August at the Lanai Bar, eager to find out more about this year's IPEd accreditation exam. Rosemary Noble introduced the evening and talked generally about the exam before inviting several people who sat last year's exam to share their impressions and give their top tips. Parts 2 and 3 of the exam were then discussed in detail.

The structure of the exam is the same as the same as the sample exam, so applicants were urged to become familiar with it. Applicants need to score 80% to pass the exam.

General Tips

Sample exam

- Make sure you do the sample exam, then mark yourself so that you understand where you gained and lost marks. This will help you to identify what you know, as well as any 'gaps' you need to find answers for.
- After the sample exam, go back and look at the assessors' forum on the IPEd website. The forum is useful, as the assessors are highly competent and qualified editors.
- Cross-reference questions and tasks in the sample exam with the relevant sources of information to help you become familiar with your references, e.g. the *Style Guide*, *The Editor's Companion* or Flann & Hill. *The Editor's Companion* is good for answers to procedural-type questions.

References

- Don't overload yourself with references: take the *Style Manual* and a dictionary. You don't have to use the Snooks and Co's *Style Manual*.
- If you want to use a different style guide, bring a bound copy to submit with your exam. If you'd like to use your company's own house style guide, check with your manager first to make sure you're not violating any rules regarding intellectual property.

Rachel Delany, Sarah Emdacott, Samantha Lawry, Rosemary Moore, Anne-Marie Peard, Emily Payne, Leah Ramsey. Associate members are Justin Baines, Nadia Billings, Lin Braun, Thomas Heeren, Martin Heng, Aimee Huxley, Katherine Scott, Natalie Stewart. We hope you find your membership useful and enjoyable.

Ron Thiele
Membership Secretary

PDF of this newsletter

Download a PDF copy of this newsletter [here](#).

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

THE COMMITTEE



- Don't bring too big a dictionary!
- Don't take a pile of books; you won't have time to look at them.
- Don't bring any reference books you're not already familiar with; if it's about something you don't already know, you won't have the time to learn the answer during the exam.
- Before the exam, tag all of the pages in the *Style Manual* that you know you might need.

Timing

- The exam fits nicely into the three hours: you won't have much spare time.
- Work out your times before starting so that you know how long you are going to spend on each section. Write the times down before starting the exam so that you don't freak out when you think you've forgotten a section.
- One of last year's AEs shared his timing: Part 1: 25 minutes; Part 2: 1 hour 15 minutes; Part 3: 1 hour 20 minutes (4 x 20 minutes)
- Pace yourself. Note the mark weighting of each part and question. Budget your time accordingly and stick to it.
- The exam is carefully structured, prepared by professionals. The amount of time required for each section has been trialled.
- Find ways in your initial reading of the exam to save time later on. For example, if you find text to be edited that's already clear, put a mark to show yourself later that only a light edit is needed. One AE suggested times for reading: 5 minutes for Part 1; 5–10 minutes for Part 2; 15–20 minutes for Part 3.

Technique

- Try to keep some objectivity. Ask yourself: 'What is this question really asking me?' 'What do the assessors want to know?' 'What knowledge or skill do I need to show?'
- Your rough notes will be collected, so keep them coherent.

Approach

- Relax and be confident: you know more than you think you do. The main difference between this exam and your daily work is that you are being externally assessed and there is a time limit.
- You can appeal your result if you fail. Results are on a pass/fail basis.
- From doing the sample exam, figure out a strategy based on your strengths, keeping in mind how many marks are needed for each section, i.e. do them in whichever order will work best for you (perhaps leave Section 1 for last since it's quicker to do than Section 2).

Instructions

- Read the instructions carefully and follow them. If the instructions say to do a copy edit not a structural edit, then don't make things harder for yourself by doing something you don't need to do.
- Bring a pen and spares. Do not bring a pencil.

Notes about Part 2

The brief

- The brief is the key. Watch for things the brief is asking you to do; it is quite specific and detailed. Underline key phrases.
- The brief mentions ten queries, so make sure you write ten queries.
- If the meaning of the text is clear, leave it alone.

Style sheet

- Part 2 involves showing you know how to use a style sheet. Think of Part 2 as a segment of a book. Record on the style sheet every decision you make. Think in terms of a book with style problems and queries that may recur 180 pages later; keep in mind any style issues that could be a book-wide issue. Anticipate issues that are likely to recur.
- Make sure you put plenty of items in the style sheet, as you'll be marked on your ability to use one. There are no deductions for putting extra items in there, so put anything you can think of.
- Note unusual words or those you could approach in different ways, e.g. nineteenth century.

Mark-up

Note differences in mark-up. A proofreading mark-up uses symbols or marks in the left and right margins. A copyediting mark-up does NOT use marginal marks: the edit is marked directly onto the text.

Headings

The labelling of headings is subjective; consistency is the most important thing. (And if you want to do anything differently, make sure it's in your style sheet, as well.)

Author queries

- You need to show how you can express an author query, using the notation AQ.
- Author queries should be polite, but you don't have the time to be long-winded. Just show that you know there's an issue that needs to be flagged. Try to include the word 'please'!
- Be tactful and diplomatic (but within the limits imposed by exam).

Notes about Part 3

- For topics similar to those covered in Part 3, look them up beforehand in a reference such as Flann & Hill, the *Style Manual* or Janet Mackenzie's *The Editor's Companion*.
- Scan the overview. Discard questions you don't know the answers to, then select those you know something about.
- Here's a real no-brainer: Do the questions you know.
- Pick only the four questions that are either very quick to do and/or intopics that you already know well. Dog-ear the pages so you can find them easily.
- One group spent some time trying to work out which questions on the sample exam were the specialist questions. After much discussion, they decided on Questions 2, 3, 5 and 6. Although exactly what is a specialist question probably depends on what you spend your work day doing.
- Time is your enemy. Work out your timing and write it down before starting. Allow 20 minutes per question, one hour 20 in total.
- You must finish four questions; no point answering three questions in detail but omitting the fourth.
- Use your reading time at the beginning to decide on your questions for Part 3. Dog-ear or use Post-it notes to mark your questions.

Question 1: Legal Issues in Editing

The issue is plagiarism, which can often be resolved by paraphrasing. Make sure you know your author; will they accept cautionary advice?

Question 2: Picture Research Brief

Identify the theme from the brief. Use this theme to evaluate the relevance of images.

Look for consistency. Note landscape/portrait formats. Ask how to acquire images and if it is practical and affordable to do it.

Question 3: Managing an Annual Report

The issue is how to liaise with stakeholders to prepare an annual report. It is important to show how you would communicate changes to stakeholders. Identify who these are, e.g. department heads. To save effort, there is scope to recycle descriptions from previous reports.

Question 4: Editing American Text for the Australian Market

The issue is converting American English into Australian English. Use a good dictionary, and consider context as well as spelling.

If you realise that a term would need to be changed but you would need the internet or a different reference guide to do it, write a note to the assessor to that effect. For example, if you know that the American term caboose needs replacing in Australian English, but you can't find it in your dictionary. You might get partial credit, at least.

Question 5: Editing and Bibliography or Reference List

The issue is what conventions to use (check the *Style Manual*).

Question 7: Editing a Recipe

The method must be explicit and complete. Confirm temperatures are Fahrenheit or Celsius. Make sure the ingredients have the same names throughout.

Ali Lemer, Chris Kelly and Philip Bryan

TOP

Notes on the accreditation exam 2009

These notes overlap somewhat with the above, but contain plenty of other helpful tips.

It's a new exam

The exam this year will be at least 90% different from the 2008 exam and the sample exam, and you should not expect to see questions repeated from last year. A new extract will be provided for Part 2 of the exam.

The allocation of marks remains the same: 20% for Part 1 and 40% each for parts 2 and 3.

This year, the Part 2 extract will be provided as four loose sheets so they are easier to handle. The style sheet and page for writing queries for the author will be in the bound exam booklet. Make sure all pages go into the plastic envelope at the end of the exam.

One question from Part 3 will also be provided as loose sheets. These pages must go into the envelope as well, whether or not you attempt this question.

Write your candidate reference number on all loose sheets.

This year 30 minutes will be allowed for preparation: 20 minutes for reading time and 10 minutes for writing candidate reference numbers on every page of the exam booklet and loose sheets.

Some lessons from the 2008 exam

- Manage your time
- Stick to the allocation of time suggested in the note to the sample exam (most people last year did finish the exam). There is no point in achieving 100% in one part of the exam if you fail to complete other sections. Every exam room has a large clock, so keep an eye on it. Remember that doing a written exam is a skill in itself that needs practice. Before you go into the exam, decide on the order you will tackle questions, and work out the times to start each section so there are fewer decisions to make on the day. We recommend you allow 30 minutes for Part 1, and 1.25 hours each for parts 2 and 3, including review time. This reflects the allocation of marks across the exam.

Editing questions in Part 3 and the extract in Part 2

We realise that candidates will be working under pressure in the exam, and that you would normally check your work carefully, which you may not have time for in the exam. We have allowed for this by generally allowing a safety margin of marks, so that you can pass and even get full marks without doing a perfect job. We think this is a common-sense approach to exam conditions, rather than a matter of accepting second-rate work.

The accreditation exam and the sample exam

The sample exam has been revised this year to make the format of questions more like the style of questions used in the exam. Questions in Part 3 are generally broken into sub-questions to make the direction of answers clear – there will be no 'essay'-style questions where only one question is asked.

A new extract has also been prepared for the sample exam. This focuses on sound copyediting skills and also includes a substantial table to be edited

and marked up. You should always expect something in the extract in the exam that tests more than language skills, like the table in the new extract in Part 2 in the sample exam.

The sample exam gives you an idea of the style of questions and the kind of subject matter that you might find in the exam itself. You should not expect to find the same content in the final exam. If similar content does appear in the exam, you should take extra care to read the question, as it may be slanted differently from the sample exam.

Work through the sample exam under self-imposed exam conditions and mark your work using the answer guide. Recognise areas where you could have done better, and work on improving them. Spend some time reading and reminding yourself where things are in the *Style manual*. It's worth setting some time aside in the weeks leading up to the exam for reading or working through the remaining questions from the sample exam and honing your exam skills.

If your work has become very specialised over the years, you might also want to refresh your memory on the basics.

A Style manual update

A query arose from the sample exam last year about the duration of copyright as described in the answer guide. The *Style manual* was produced before the most recent changes to the copyright law – it does not, for instance, include information on the change to the duration of copyright, which is now life of the creator plus 70 years, and matters such as moral rights and parody. To bring yourself up to date on copyright matters, visit the Copyright Council's website and look at the free fact sheets there. You can take these into the exam only if you have them bound (you can just use the comb or wiro binding that office machines can do).

What you should take into the exam

There's limited time for looking things up in the exam. Take a small dictionary that is easy to use and will fit on your desk, and Snooks & Co.'s *Style manual for authors, editors and printers* (you can tag pages for quick reference) as a minimum. If you have a specialist reference or dictionary you use regularly, take that, too, but do limit the books you take, for your own peace of mind.

You can take *Australian Standards for Editing Practice* into the exam and things like Copyright Council fact sheets (mentioned above) provided they are bound.

You might also want to take a ruler and calculator (but it must be stand-alone, not part of another electronic device such as a mobile phone).

Part 1

Do only what you need to – Part 1 requires you to answer 20 questions, but you can answer all 24 questions. Answering all questions allows you to pick up some bonus marks in Part 1, but it's not a good idea to do that unless you finish early and have plenty of time.

Part 2

Pay close attention to the style sheet you create – a sound copyedit usually depends on creating a sound style sheet. If you aren't used to using a style sheet when you edit, read up on the topic in the books recommended in the note to the sample exam. This is worth 20 marks in Part 2, which can make the difference between a pass and fail in that section. You gain marks in Part 2 for a sound edit, not just the number of changes you make.

In the case of the sample exam, for instance, including a note in your style sheet that ship names are shown in italics will get you marks not only for the ships that you have marked as italic in the extract, but also the names already in italic – that's because you have shown your decision in the style sheet. This applies, for example, to things like the treatment of dates, numbers and measurements, too.

Good mark-up of the extract – manuscript editing should be completed in the spaces between the lines, like the sample mark-up of the extract in Part 2 on the website. Many candidates also used proofing symbols, placing edits in the margins. No one lost marks for working this way, but it does make the edit unnecessarily difficult to follow, and above all it wastes time!

You will be able to work more quickly, more efficiently and more clearly if you do an editorial rather than a proofreading mark-up. Start practising today if that's not the way you usually work, but rest assured that markers do not deduct marks unless errors are introduced to the edit.

Specialist questions

When the first sample exam was tested with society members, people asked for some specialist as well as generalist questions in Part 3. Each year, four specialist questions will be included. It's important that you attempt these questions only if you have professional experience in the area. It's unwise to think that you will be able to produce a good answer to these questions from general editorial knowledge. There are still eight generalist questions from which you can choose.

Don't touch the specialist questions in Part 3 unless you're a specialist – you need to have professional experience in the area to answer these questions properly. The structured sub-questions mean you won't be able to bend a question into a more familiar area, as markers will be looking for a sound knowledge of the topic. In 2009 the four specialist questions are questions 9–12 in Part 3.

Follow the brief

Just as you would for an editing job. Most questions will provide a brief or outline the situation under discussion, and questions are very specific. Make sure you read carefully – you can't use highlighters on the exam paper, but you may find it useful to underline significant parts of the brief and question to help you stick to the point in your answers.

Accreditation matters

The exam development team aims to provide a fair exam that tests all the standards in the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*. It is recommended that editors not attempt the exam unless they have at least two to three years' full-time editing experience, or equivalent. IPEd has established the accreditation scheme so that experienced editors have a qualification that indicates that their work is of a high professional standard. You should therefore expect the exam to challenge you and demand maximum effort from you over the three hours. It is not meant to be 'easy'.

Canberra Society of Editors

TOP

IPEd notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors Limited

www.iped-editors.org
August 2009

The big news at the beginning of this month was that the 2009 accreditation examination will go ahead on Saturday 12 September. There are some 90 registrants for the exam, 13 of them not being members of a society of editors. Clearly, the value of having 'AE' after one's name is being recognised.

The IPEd Council met by teleconference on Sunday 2 August. The budget for 2009–10 was a major topic of discussion. The Institute is in a financial position that will allow it to fund routine activities and current projects. However, to implement major future projects such as, for example, the research and development of on-screen and online exams and training materials, we will almost certainly need to find support from outside funding bodies.

Another topic discussed was the report of the survey of members conducted earlier this year by Rosemary Noble, the Society of Editors (Victoria) councillor, on behalf of the IPEd Council. This is an interesting and illuminating document that identifies, among other things, the wide range of activities that the members of the societies would like to see IPEd engage in.

A copy of the report is on the IPEd website.

The council endorsed a letter to be sent to Peter Garrett, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, expressing IPEd's concern about the possible implementation of the recommendations of the recent Productivity Commission (PC) research report 'Restrictions on the parallel importation of books'. A copy of the letter is on the website.

The main recommendation is as follows:

The Government should repeal Australia's Parallel Import Restriction (PIRs) for books. The repeal should take effect three years after the date that it is announced.

The council believes that such a move would have a severe negative impact on many people in all areas of Australian publishing, starting with local authors and flowing through to editors, book designers and typesetters, publishers, paper suppliers, printers and booksellers. The sole benefit promoted by the PC is a reduction in book prices, which we are not convinced will occur.

Our South Australian colleagues are working hard, refining the program and logistics for the 4th IPEd National Editors Conference to be held in Adelaide on 8–10 October 2009. Registrations are already well above 100. The latest program can be found at or via the IPEd website. There are some wonderful speakers, and just about every presentation has an intriguing title. You'll want to be there.

Ed Highley
Secretary

TOP

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Minutes of Society of Editors (Victoria) Annual General Meeting

English Speaking Union, Toorak Road, Toorak, Victoria, Wednesday, 22 July 2009

1. Rosemary Noble opened the meeting at 7.50 pm.
2. Apologies for the AGM were received from Christina Ratcliffe, Ron Thiele, Robyn Whiteley, Elizabeth McDowall, Carole Pearce, Diane Brown, Sharon Harrison, Sylvia Dropulich, Lynne Mitchell, Nonie Sadler, Robert Laden.
3. Minutes of the 2008 AGM were accepted. (Moved: Tony Berry. Seconded: Kerry Biram)
4. The following officer-bearers presented their reports:
 - Liz Steele (President)
 - Philip Bryan read the Treasurer's report on behalf of financial officer Charles Houen
 - Melanie Dankel (Training Officer)
 - Jackey Coyle-Taylor and Rachel Saffer (Newsletter Co-editors)
 - Philip Bryan and Peter Riches (Freelance Affairs Officers)
 - Rosemary Noble (IPEd Delegate)
 - Julie-Anne Justus (Accreditation Board Officer)
 - Eve Recht (Meetings Organiser)
 - Eve Recht read the Booking Officer's report on behalf of Christina Ratcliffe
 - Lan Wang (Website Manager)
 - Tony Berry (Victorian Writers Centre Liaison Officer)
 - Kerry Biram read the OSAE working group report on behalf of Di Brown.
5. Returning Officer Beryl Hill announced that the following people have nominated for the 2009–10 committee: Philip Bryan; Melanie Dankel; Rosemary Noble; Ron Thiele; Jackey Coyle-Taylor; Rachel Saffer; Tony Berry; Julie-Anne Justus; Ali Lemer.

In addition there were two nominations from the floor:
Bridh Hancock (Nominated: Gabbi Stefanos. Seconded: Melanie Dankel)

Ann Philpott (Nominated: Liz Steele. Seconded: Janet Mackenzie).

All nominees accepted and passed unanimously. (Moved: Gabbi Stefanos. Seconded: Kirsten Rawlings)

6. Election Officer Beryl Hill announced there had been only one nomination for president (Melanie Dankel). According to the Constitution, Melanie is elected unopposed.

7. Treasurer's Report accepted. (Moved: Eve Recht. Seconded: Nic Learmonth)

8. Office-bearers' Reports accepted. (Moved: Melanie Dankel. Seconded: Janet Mackenzie)

9. Rosemary thanked returning officer HLM Beryl Hill, acknowledged the members who are standing down, and closed the formal business of the meeting at 9.15 pm.

TOP

Membership Secretary's report 08-09

The financial year saw a continuation of the steady increase we have experienced in our membership over the last several years.

During the year we accepted 89 new members, bringing our total paid-up membership to 519, an increase of 25 for the year. This figure does not include our 18 honorary life members. The growth in membership is also increasing slightly: for the last three years it has been 5.0%, 4.8% and 4.6%.

At the end of the year we had 285 full members, 62 full members (distant), 153 associate members and 19 associate members (distant). The SocEds diaspora also continues to expand: we now have members in China, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates and the USA, as well as in most states and territories.

The percentage of members resigning was broadly at the same level as last year and continues to be significant. Although we do not investigate reasons for resignation, members sometimes offer them, with retirement from work, leaving the industry or moving interstate being the most common. Our highest rate of resignations is from newly joined members (over the previous one or two years): we can only surmise that they have tried the society and decided it does not suit their needs.

Thank you for all the kind and supportive comments made by members to me during the year and to those of you who caused problems, well, you know who you are! The Membership Secretary carries a significant voluntary workload and by complying with our various procedures and requirements you help keep this manageable. Membership fees are the society's single largest source of income and ensure we can continue to provide and expand the range of services to members.

Ron Thiele
Membership Secretary

TOP

Victorian Writers' Centre program for 2010

The Victorian Writers' Centre is close to finalising its program for next year

The centre's program manager, Mary Napier, welcomes any input from Society of Editors members for its 2010 program. Her deadline is the end of September.

She plans to begin the year on February 3 with a weekly Wednesday evening course titled **Editing your own work**. Although this is hardly something the society's freelance members are likely to recommend or feel too enthusiastic

about, Mary is at least seeking an editor to be the course tutor. No one has yet been approached to take this on so if there's anyone keen to put in a good word for professional editing, give me or Mary a call.

The **second event**, as yet untitled and still being planned, is scheduled for March 24. Speakers will be a manuscript assessor, a mentor and an editor. Again, speakers have not been confirmed and offers are welcome.

September will once more be the centre's editing theme month with the popular **Getting into editing** seminar on September 8 with a host and two or three speakers.

An **advanced editing course** begins on September 15 and consists of a two-hour session one evening a week until October 20. This is tailored towards those who have completed the centre's previous introductory courses or who have basic editorial skills. It is also considered suitable for editors needing a refresher. As yet, no tutor has been arranged.

Should any SocEd member wish to help in any way, your involvement will be very much appreciated.

Let me know if you are interested in being a tutor or panel member or simply want more information about the centre's program. It is a good place to spread the word about what we editors do.

Tony Berry
Liaison Officer

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Dear Ed ...

Dear Ed

Since I began my freelance editing career five years ago I've found your column immensely helpful. However, there is one problem that's weighing heavily on me; in fact, I am weighing heavily on me!

I can't seem to do my best work without something to nibble, and as the jobs pour in, so has my hankering increased for the finest quality comestibles to inspire me through my working hours. For example, Cadbury's just doesn't satisfy any more – it has to be organic and fairtrade. But a single bar will no longer suffice and I've found the need to set up an account with the importer, as well as my local patisserie and David Jones, who luckily all deliver as it is now problematic leaving the house via the door.

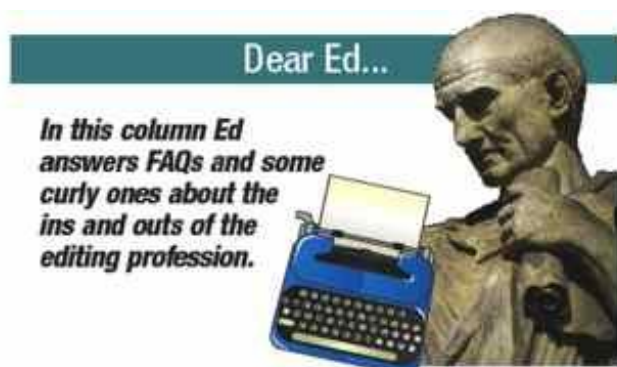
I find my office furniture no longer fits and I require the largest size of pyjamas; sorry, I mean work clothes. Even my husband has noticed my excess avoirdupois. Now a client has requested a meeting at his office in a fortnight and won't take no for an answer. What should I do?

Lucida Grande

Dear Lucida

Anyone who can serve up avoirdupois and comestibles in one letter has my immediate attention. Ah, yes: avoirdupois. Typical of the Brits to steal a word from the French then apply it to an entire system of measurement when all it means is 'having weight'.

But let's get down to tintacks. Have you considered replacing the front wall of your home with a Roll-A-Door? It would allow ease of access without impinging on your intake of quality antioxidants. I say this in all seriousness as there are three things I cannot live without: coffee, chocolate and sleep.



If that doesn't work, try shock therapy: change the font you use on your documents and emails to Helvetica Neue Ultralight. Looking at all those stick-thin ascenders and descenders all day will speed up your thyroid gland, and the extra energy used up in trying to get your eyes to focus on them will soak up extra kilojoules without you knowing it.

And if that doesn't work, I suggest that you change your name to Lucy Stick, as often our names map out our destinies. You never know, there could be something in it.

Cheers,
Big Ed

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