



... *the word*

Newsletter of the Society of Editors (SA)

ISSN 1833-3796

May–June 2008

Next Meeting

The exam: Are you ready?

Tuesday, 20 May 2008, 7.30 pm

**SA Writers Centre, 2nd Floor,
187 Rundle Street East**

This is a big year for Australian editors: the very first editing exam, to earn successful candidates the title of Accredited Editor (AE), is to be held later this year. Many of you will no doubt be agonising over whether to give it a go.

Don't be daunted. Anyone who has two to three years' editing experience is expected to pass.

To help reassure those who are weighing it up, we are holding an open forum for questions and answers on the exam, with our SA assessors as the guest panel. Please come along.

SA Assessors: Karen Disney (Chair, Accreditation Board, and SA rep), Celia Jellett (Accreditation Board alternate SA rep), Susan Rintoul, Kathie Stove.

Members are invited to join the committee and the panel for dinner at Café Michael, 204 Rundle Street East, at 6 pm.

**Deadline for copy
(letters and contributions)
for the next issue of
... *the word* is Friday 27 June**

...the presidential word

Susan Rintoul

Accreditation Exam

As the Australian editing profession announces the first Australian editing exam, to be held a few months from now, I feel it is a historic moment for us. I recall that 17 years ago, at one of the early Society of Editors' meetings, I first heard the notion of accrediting editors discussed. The notion gathered momentum and there has been a lengthy process to get to this point. I could almost say that some of us have grown middle-aged in the attempt. The process has seen the brand-new Institute of Professional Editors incorporated first, so the exam could be held under its auspices.

We feel that keeping you as fully informed as possible about the exam is so important that we are devoting our next meeting (20 May) to a question-and-answer session about the process. Last year we held a well-attended workshop discussing the sample exam posted online, and this allayed many of the concerns that the participants had.

Our SA assessors—Karen Disney, Kathie Stove, Celia Jellett and I—will be there to provide you with the latest information and to answer your questions. All members are urged to attend, even if they do not plan to sit the exam this year. In addition to the exam, we will also be providing much valuable information about our future as a profession.

I do urge all members of our South Australian society to seriously consider taking the exam: the initials AE after your name will, in future, become an assurance to your clients of your professional competence.

Congratulations

I would like to say congratulations to members of the Accreditation Board for all their work, and to the Assessors Forum for all theirs, for this triumph in moving the profession forward.

On behalf of all members I would also like to give heartfelt thanks to all our SA members who have worked to make this happen, Gina Inverarity who spent about two years on the initial Accreditation WG, Rosemary Luke who continued the work for three, and Karen Disney for her untiring work and in particular for her current chairing of the Accreditation Board over the past four months. We have 1400 members Australia-wide and Karen has shown her unfailing knowledge, skills, tact, and courtesy in steering the board through the shoals of so many different viewpoints over the past four months, to this high point.

We plan to make Karen Disney our next honorary life member at our annual general meeting on 25 September, which will give us an opportunity as a society to thank her formally.

July meeting

On 23 July we look forward to our next speaker, Mike Ladd, presenter of Radio National's 'PoeticA' and well known poet. This promises to be an exceptional evening so please put it in your diaries now.

Continued on page 2.

Contents

Conference Column
Meeting Report

2
2

IPed Notes
Thinking About the Future

3
4

Upcoming Events
Young Editors Column

4
5

New columns

IPed National Editors Conference 2009 in Adelaide

I am pleased to report that the first of our regular columns by our member Mary Lou Tucker, about the 2009 conference, is featured in this newsletter.

The column will run in every newsletter of the societies of editors in Australia and in newsletters of related professions. This column talks about our signing with the Adelaide Festival Centre as the venue for our conference. Its central position, and marvellous views of the Torrens, will make it an unforgettable venue for the conference. We will feature more exciting news about the conference in each coming newsletter.

Young editors' column

This issue also features a second new column, one that will be written by a different young editor each issue of ...*the word*. The young editors' column will focus on matters of interest to the younger editors in our Society, and will provide a place for this section of our membership to discuss their views about the profession and the future of the Society.

Getting the Message Across 4th IPEd. National Editors Conference

Adelaide 8–10 October 2009

Mary Lou Tucker

The Society of Editors (SA) will host the 4th Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd.) National Editors Conference in 2009.

The conference committee has recently signed with the Adelaide Festival Centre as the venue for the conference. The Festival Centre looks out over the picturesque River Torrens, a tranquil stretch of water in the heart of the city. The seminar spaces are well placed, with Lyrics Lounge in particular offering impressive views over Elder Park and the river.

The Festival Centre is one of Australia's most active, with theatrical producers presenting critically acclaimed theatre, music and dance programs, as well as art exhibitions and a host of community events including art, craft and food markets. Never afraid to work at the leading edge of arts, the Centre serves the diverse tastes of the community.

Through the provision of well designed facilities, as well as dynamic and progressive programming, the Centre is firmly placed at the heart of the arts.

The Adelaide Festival Centre is strolling distance from Adelaide's central arts and cultural facilities located along North Terrace, including the Art Gallery of South Australia, the South Australian Museum, the Migration Museum, the War Memorial, Parliament House, the State Library and the Elder Conservatorium.

Good food and wine are never far away in Adelaide. There are numerous cafes, wine bars, tapas joints and restaurants to choose from in the Central Market precinct, Hindley Street and Rundle Street in the city, and on Melbourne and O'Connell streets in North Adelaide.

In the coming months, additional information for conference delegates will be available through regular newsletter updates and on the conference website at <www.editors-sa.org.au/conference09.html>. Information is also available on the IPEd website at <www.iped-editors.org/content/conferences>.

Conference essentials

Where: Adelaide, South Australia

When: 8–10 October 2009

Venue: Adelaide Festival Centre

Further information:

<www.editors-sa.org.au/conference09.html> or email <SAPresident@editors-sa.org.au>.

Meeting report

'Life is Fiction' with Deborah McCulloch

Celia Jellett

Although the 15 April general meeting of the Society was not well attended, guest speaker Deborah McCulloch was unfazed, offering those present her unique insights on being a poet, author, teacher, the Dunstan Government's Women's Adviser and, more recently, a lobbyist and worker for marginalised groups. Her interests include health, mental health, and Aboriginal and multicultural issues; she has been involved in the Women's Electoral Lobby, and stood for the Senate in 1996. She is the author of several books of poetry and a manual for lobbyists called *Creating Influence or How to Lobby*.

Under the general topic of *Life is Fiction*, Deborah talked about her long identification with Adelaide and its protestant ethos, which has shaped the community since the beginning of the colony of South Australia. She contrasted this with a brief outline of the history of the Kurna people since that time, a history that is not much dwelt on by the dominant culture. Even in this well-educated group, the history of the settlements of Poonindie, near Port Lincoln, and Point Pearce, near Port Victoria, was perhaps unfamiliar information. As Deborah stressed, this history is invisible to us: even the recent history since the 1967 referendum is poorly reported in our newspapers, with the possible exception of *The Australian*, which has made an effort to report on these issues in recent years.

Deborah has lived in Adelaide for most of her life, and returned from brief stints elsewhere because she values its culture and ethos, at the same time being aware that the culture has been a destructive one towards Adelaide's first inhabitants in the brief history of European settlement. This anglo-protestant culture she sums up as anti-Indigenous and anti-immigrant, almost beyond our power to change.

Her 'story' was full of personal reminiscences, broad experience of philosophy and ideas, and was informed by her own experiences in many different groups in our society. Although Deborah has stopped writing poetry, we are hoping that she will get around to writing the story of her most interesting and passionate life.

IPEd Notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors

Janet Mackenzie, Liaison Officer

The indefatigable secretary of the IPed Council, Ed Highley, managed to reconcile all the councillors' work schedules, travel plans and family commitments in order to convene a face-to-face meeting in Canberra over the weekend of 12–13 April. This was the handover meeting at which the Interim Council transformed itself into the Council that governs IPed as a company limited by guarantee. Thanks are due to Virginia Wilton who offered the premises of her company, Wilton Hanford Hanover, free of charge as the venue for the meeting. Important items on the agenda included the appointment of an honorary treasurer, a position description for a paid, part-time secretary and the approval of the budget. The council also set the levy to be paid by the state and territory societies to the national body.

The Accreditation Board is making great progress, spurred by the desire to hold the first accreditation examination later this year. The board is currently assessing applications for the jobs of developing and coordinating the exam and will be announcing the appointments after its meeting on 7 April. Investigations are continuing into the logistics and costs of conducting the exam on screen or online, but the first exam will be on paper, held simultaneously in all state

capitals and Canberra. More details are in the preliminary notification which is on the IPed website at <www.iped-editors.org> under Accreditation.

Many tasks have to be completed to ensure that the inaugural exam runs smoothly. The Accreditation Board is working on application forms and guidelines for candidates; guidelines for examiners, invigilators and markers; measures to preserve the security and confidentiality of exam papers; and promotion and publicity. A major area is liaison with the societies of editors, which will be encouraged to hold training sessions before the exam and will provide venues and invigilators on the day. The meeting of the IPed council in mid-April confirmed the fee for the exam, which will be posted on the website.

Member profile

Kate Deller-Evans

I left coordinating Professional Writing at the Adelaide Centre for the Arts in order to take up a doctoral scholarship in Creative Writing at Flinders University. I'm supplementing that income by tutoring a creative writing workshop course in English, as well as by lecturing in communication for Engineering at Flinders. I've recently begun my new writing/coaching/editing business, The Write Coach, and have already sent out my first invoice! Lastly, I seem to be asked by my eldest two children, now at university, for assistance with their assignments—generally with fifteen minutes to go before their submission deadlines. Interesting times. Oh, and my doctoral work has transmogrified from a young adult fiction to a verse novel. I'm currently writing an abstract for a conference paper on the process!

I reviewed most of the Fringe and Festival Shakespeare productions and am working my way through a bedside table mountain of books for *Independent Weekly/InDaily*. The Oxford University Press text, *Essential Skills for Science and Technology* (co-written with Zeegers, Egege and Klinger) came out late last year, and at this year's Writers' Week the *Australian Book Review's* Peter Rose launched *Best of Friends: the first thirty years of Friendly Street Poets* (co-written and edited with Steve Evans).

... missed metaphor

David Schubert



Interesting Website

Jakob Nielsen Usability Site

<www.useit.com>

This site will be of value to anybody who works with online content, from websites to newsletters. Focusing on usability, this site contains everything from usability testing to making things work online.

Thinking about the future

Susan Rintoul

One of the indulgences of presidents is that they feel they have an opportunity to be quite self-indulgent in musing on their particular hobbyhorses, and I warn you I am no exception. Do please feel encouraged to email me or talk to me at the next meeting, or any time, and tell me whether your perceptions are similar or different— I welcome your views as professional colleagues.

So, without further ado, on to my preoccupation: I am increasingly convinced that professional organisations such as ours will survive only if we take immediate positive steps to attract and keep younger members. Regular surveys taken at national editing conferences confirm the depressing fact that nearly all editors in Australia are over 40, and most are over 50. That suggests that many of our current members are planning or taking retirement—so when they decide not to renew their membership we need long-term, younger editors to replace them. Rosemary Luke's recent excellent survey of members found that we have about the same number joining and then not renewing the following year. The reasons for this are varied, but the result is the same: our numbers in SA remain at about 100. But with an older cohort retiring soon, we need to replace these or our membership numbers will fall.

We are not the only society faced with this problem. For example, three of my neighbours in the same street invite me to occasional evenings with their service organisation. The attendance at these meetings averages only 20–25 and a recent joint meeting with their adjoining organisation raised only 25 bums on seats. Their average age is a bit higher than ours and it is a service organisation rather than a professional one, but I believe this is not atypical of many groups. At a local Meals on Wheels branch the volunteers are often older than the recipients; many are 70 or more.

Recent surveys have found that in general fewer Australians are joining clubs, groups and societies as time spent on other leisure activities such as going online increases steeply, and fewer volunteer.

The combination of older members retiring, and fewer new members generally, may be a problem we need to consider seriously in terms of our own society membership, now, while numbers are relatively stable.

It is hoped that when Accreditation is established the result will be a regular influx of new long-term members, as to gain accreditation candidates need to be a member of a society of editors. This is a positive step for professionalism in editing and may well halt any natural decline in membership (as older members leave they are replaced by younger ones), but it will probably take a few years to come into effect.

Few are probably aware of our excellent track record a few years ago, when the presidents of the other societies of editors complimented South Australia on having the youngest known SocEds president at 30 years of age, Gina

Inverarity. Gina coughed deprecatingly and told us softly, 'Actually, I'm 27'.

As well, I am pleased to report we have three excellent younger members on our committee, Bethany Clark (website expert and conference committee member), Michelle Goryniuk (conference committee) and Leticia Supple (our newsletter editor).

It's pleasing to have these younger members but we would like to see more younger members representing us in any capacity. The national conference in Adelaide, for example, provides a myriad of opportunities for short-term and long-term involvement. We have mentors on the committee who want to work with you as younger members. All sorts of interesting tasks are there for you including publicity, social program, entertainment, conference organiser at the event, etc. We hope you'll enjoy it. As well, joining networks such as these are where you can expect to find professional support and valuable information about all sorts of opportunities, including possible employment opportunities.

Another opportunity for involvement is to send in a piece for our new young editors' column. We'd like this column to be written by different young editor each issue, and it allows you to have your two cents' worth of input.

If you would like any further information and/or are interested in joining the conference committee please email me at <SAPresident@editors-sa.org.au>. Our committee meetings are marked by interesting, friendly colleagues and a glass or two of wine.

Meanwhile, we need as a society to be mindful of the need for new and younger members. We would appreciate it if all members took the time to welcome all newcomers to meetings when they see them, in any event, and to make sure that the younger ones feel particularly valued.

Upcoming events

Carmel Bird: 'On Being an Editor'

Friday 30 May, 2-3.30pm

Adelaide University, Napier Building, room 618.

Presented jointly with the South Australian Writers' Centre

Carmel Bird's novels *The Bluebird Cafe* (1990), *The White Garden* (1995) and *Red Shoes* (1998) were shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Award. She has also published short stories and guides for writers, including *Dear Writer* (1998) and *Writing the Story of Your Life* (2008). Her most recent fiction is the collection *The Essential Bird* (2006) and the novel *Cape Grimm* (2005). Among the works she has edited are *Daughters and Fathers* (1997), *The Stolen Children: Their Stories* (1998) and *The Penguin Century of Australian Stories* (2000).

She has worked as fiction editor at *Meanjin* and at *Australasian Post* and also edited journals *Syllable* and *Fine Line*. Much of her work concerning workshops and writing courses involves particular aspects of the editing process.

Carmel Bird will also give a talk about her writing to the Friends of the University Library on Thursday 29 May at 6.30pm.

EdEx: Canberra Society's biannual conference

2 August 2008, Old Parliament House, Canberra

EdEx 2008 will look at the three stages of your life as a professional editor.

The first stage will look at how you become an editor—where you can get training, the type of editor you might choose to be, where to find your first job and how to refine your skills, leading to accreditation. The second stage will examine your middle career—where you choose to work, the difference between working in private enterprise and government, juggling a career and family life, how to set up your own business and how to establish and maintain clients if you choose to work freelance. The third stage will look at the later part of your career—the type of editorial services you can provide on a consultancy basis in both government and private enterprise, how to maintain your skills and knowledge of new technologies, how you can move between full-time and part-time employment as a transition to retirement, and opportunities for you to mentor younger editors.

For more information about EdEx, keep an eye on the Canberra Society of Editors' website at <www.editorscanberra.org>

Young editors' column

Leticia Supple

Welcome to the first young editors' column! This new column will appear regularly in ...*the word*, and we are looking for a different young editor to fly the flag each issue.

The Society's committee believes that as part of the drive to get younger editors more involved with the Society, we need to have a place where the younger editors among us can have a say in real issues that affect them, the profession, and the Society as a whole. This column is one way in which those of us who are relatively new to the profession can have our say. It is always daunting to speak up when we are surrounded by our elders, editors who have been working in the field for many years; but it is becoming important that we do.

As Susan notes in her *Thinking about the future* (page 3), there is a real need for younger editors to start getting more involved with Society activities, and that this is getting more urgent as each year passes. Susan notes most of the editors in Australia are over 40: meaning that as editors in the country move towards retirement, younger editors are needed to take their place.

Although there must be many younger editors out there, we often don't see them and nor do we hear about them.

Many aren't keen to join a Society or to become involved in such groups. While this trend is not specific to organisations such as the Society of Editors but is common to groups and organisations of many types, it is worthwhile thinking about how we as a Society can start to remedy the situation.

For this first young editors' column, I'd like us to think about whether the memberships that we offer are hitting the mark. Are we offering the type of membership, benefits and services that younger editors are seeking?

A quick glance through the websites of societies of editors across the country shows that the societies are beginning to modify their membership benefits. The Tasmanian, West Australian and Victorian societies, for example, offer benefits that are above and beyond information and discounts to professional development workshops. The Tasmanian society offers discounts for bookshops, training providers, and membership of the Media, Arts and Entertainment Alliance. The WA society's membership now provides a membership card that provides various discounts and exclusive offers, and the Victorian society's membership also offers similar benefits.

Societies around the country are also increasingly providing members-only space on their websites, where financial members can gain more information and news than the public. Given that young people are increasingly incredibly web-savvy, this might prove to be a wise move. The Victorian society has gone one step further, and maintains a group on the social networking site Facebook—a group that anybody can join, whether they are a member of that society or not. A vast number of young people use Facebook regularly, so this move can only show younger members that the Victorian society is moving with the times and is maintaining its relevance.

Upgrading or changing any element of the Society's membership or way of working requires time and effort, and people who can spare both. Members of the Society's committees are already stretched, and going an extra step might therefore be difficult. While it is good to hope for an influx of enthusiastic members who would be rapt with greater involvement in the Society, it is worth thinking about whether, if we don't get extra hands to help out, we can make that extra stretch. If it helps to ensure the longevity of our Society, will it not be worth it? Input from all members, not just those presently on the committees, will, I believe, also be necessary if we are going to make a significant move to make membership and involvement more attractive to the youngsters among us.

Have your say

If you are a young editor and you would like to contribute to this column, please email your contribution to <eds@editors-sa.org.au>.

From the other societies

'Reflections on Accreditation', in *The Canberra Editor*, Vol.17, No.3. April 2008. Access this article at: <www.editorscanberra.org/April08.pdf>

This is an interesting article about some of the concerns that one editor has about the accreditation process, and the credibility of the IPed exam.

'Editing in a museum'. *Blue Pencil* (newsletter of the Editors Society of NSW), April 2008. Access this article at <www.editorsnsw.com/pdfs/blue%20pencil/bp%202008/bp_apr_08.pdf>

This article is a report from the Society of NSW's general meeting, in which Jennifer Blunden explained why museums and art galleries are rewarding and demanding work environments. The article provides an insight into this intriguing area of editing.

'We've been Facebooked!' *Society of Editors (Vic) Newsletter*, February 2008. Access this article at <www.socedvic.org/cms/image/Image/Soc%20Eds%20Newsletter%20Feb%2008%20issue.pdf>.

This brief notice in the Victorian Society's newsletter was intriguing because it shows how they are keeping in touch with their membership. Anyone can join the Vic Society's newly launched Facebook group.

'Anne who?', *Bookworm* (newsletter of the Society of Editors WA), April 2008. Access this article at <www.editorswa.com/documents/bw_archive/bw0804.pdf>

This is a short but entertaining article about spelling snobs, and the universal law of media writers who pick on spelling making their own mistakes in the same publication.

Remarkably insightful quotes from AFL Footballers

'I owe a lot to my parents, especially my mother and father.' (Shane Wakelin)

'Nobody in football should be called a genius. A genius is a guy like Norman Einstein.' (Mick Malthouse)

'Luke Hodge, the 21-year-old who turned 22 last week.' (Dermott Brereton)

'He's a guy who gets up at six in the morning regardless of what time it is.' (Kevin Sheedy)

'Chad has done a bit of mental arithmetic with a calculator.' (Mark Williams on Chad Cornes)

'I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body.' (Luke Darcy)

'If history repeats itself, I think we should expect the same thing again.' (Andrew Demetriou)

And finally, when asked whether he'd ever thought about writing his autobiography, David Schwartz replied:

'On what?'

Society of Editors (SA)

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Address news, reviews or comments for ... *the word* to the Editor: <eds@editors-sa.org.au>

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Membership

To join the Society send a completed application form <www.editors-sa.org.au/pdfs/Membership0708.pdf> to the address above, or by email to <eds@editors-sa.org.au>.

Membership of the Society is open to anyone who is engaged professionally in any aspect of editing for publication, on a full-time or part-time basis, or who has had such experience in the past.

Associate membership is open to any interested person.

Subscriptions and freelance register fees are due on 1 July each year. You need to be a full member to be included in the freelance register.

\$65 full membership

\$30 associate membership

\$60 freelance register

If you have an inquiry about your membership status, please send an email to: <eds@editors-sa.org.au>.

Freelance register

The Freelance Register is available at:

<www.editors-sa.org.au/FRregister/FreelanceRegister.htm>.

Please contact the Society if you'd like your details to be included. Full membership is required for inclusion.

Society meetings

General meetings are open to all members and prospective members and are held (unless otherwise indicated) in the Seminar Room of the SA Writers' Centre, 2nd Floor, 187 Rundle Street East, with drinks from 7.15 pm.