

BOOK WORM

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS (WA) INC.

June 2003

From the Chair

A couple of weeks ago we (SOEWA's committee) discovered, quite by chance, that as an incorporated body the society should be covered by public liability insurance. It is not enough that we hold our monthly meetings in a building (the Tresillian Community Centre) that has insurance protection for its users, or that we run practical editing workshops, for example, in similarly protected buildings (such as UWA and Fremantle Arts Centre). As independent occupiers of a room or space within those buildings, we are also responsible for those who occupy that space with us. This is my layperson's interpretation of the story, anyway, as explained to me by an insurance expert the other day.

Having been enlightened about the insurance issue, we decided we should seek cover immediately. At a cost of \$600 annually, SOEWA is now "safe", you will be pleased to hear. This fee may well have some repercussions for our membership subscriptions and for the fees we charge for the practical editing workshops we run. We will keep you informed.

But what about the broader implications of this kind of insurance requirement? What does it mean for small organisations and societies around the country who would cease to exist if they were to seek such cover? The financial penalty must surely be a disincentive for people to come together as groups to pursue shared interests and activities. So do those groups who can ill afford insurance take the risk of continuing as they have done? Or should they be forced to disband, for fear of an accident happening for which they might be held liable? Is this a compensation-hungry world gone mad? Let me know what you think.

Enjoy a safe month.

Anne Surma

Editorial

Doesn't time fly...? It seemed like only a few days ago that I was scrambling to get the last edition of Book Worm out and, suddenly, here's the deadline again! The May meeting was a great success and there's a report on it in this edition for those who couldn't make it. (The bottle of wine was much appreciated!)

Also included in this edition is an interesting article from Tom Jenkins on the usefulness of the Internet and loads of information on interstate workshops and coming events at our own HQ in Nedlands.

I would really, *really* appreciate more articles and inclusions for our Whine list, so if you come across anything pertinent or would like to write something especially for *Book Worm*, please feel free to email it to me at any time. I've listed here the copy deadlines for 2003 *Book Worms* so you can get cracking.

Issue	Deadline
July 2003	17 June 2003
August 2003	22 July 2003
September 2003	19 August 2003
October 2003	23 September 2003
November 2003	21 October 2003
December 2003	18 November 2003
January 2004	23 December 2003

Itll never get off the ground...

by Tom Jenkins

When I think back to a time when I said the World Wide Web would never come to anything, I am acutely embarrassed. The Web and email have become integral parts of my editing work and anyone without efficient access is denying themselves valuable tools.

I have edited several books recently entirely by having the author send me the text as attachments to emails; I return them, edited, the same way (you have to take care with filenames to avoid confusion, but it works very well; anyway, file discipline is good at any time).

I have also been impressed and surprised by the Web as a research tool. For example, I recently suspected that a reference in an author's text to a wartime aircraft as a "Junkers 88" was wrong. Using the extraordinary search engine Google, which seems to find stuff when the information given to it is incredibly skinny, I simply entered "Junkers 88" and got a photo of the plane, which immediately cleared up my doubts (it was actually a Junkers 52, so we avoided an embarrassing error). Working on another book, I came across a reference to "Oshcosh" trucks and suspected it was wrong (though trucks haven't featured much in my life). When I searched for "oshcosh" Google said, "Did you mean Oshkosh?" and led me to Wisconsin, where trucks of that name are manufactured, and to the makers' website, which even had pictures of Oshkosh trucks with the invading forces in Iraq!

Once you start using the Web for research (and, yes, you still need to use your brain to test the reliability of the information), you find that your use steadily increases. Though I have a reasonable reference library including four encyclopaedias (one of them Britannica on CD), I now look up more on the Web than anywhere else.

You can have this freedom, of course, only with good access to the Internet. Having started cautiously with a 10-hours per month Internet plan, then an unlimited one (so I could use the Internet any time), I have just made the change to an ADSL connection. The acronym stands for "Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line" and means I can stop paying Telstra for a second phone line, since ADSL simultaneously uses one line for both Internet and voice, it is always on (no dialling-up) and it is very fast; one claim is that it's 30 times faster than dial-up. It costs me \$49 a month, plus up-front costs for a special modem, etc.

If you do have Internet access, you might find one site of specific interest. Some people may already know this, but a group of editors in Britain has set up a website for editors. The site is www.electriceditors.net/

Their mission statement says: “The Electric Editors aims to become the primary source on the Internet for everyone looking to satisfy a professional need related to the publication of the written word, and the primary medium of communication between in-house and freelance staff. It is a joint venture set up by a group of editors seeking to harness the Internet as an effective medium and resource for professionals across the whole spectrum of publishing activity.”

The site provides three e-mail discussion lists: EDline for general editorial issues, Grapevine for computer-related matters and LANGline for people working with modern languages other than English.

Resources include a library of macros to assist on-screen editors (for example, a Word macro which will get rid of double spaces!) [*Hooray! Ed.*], a list of Internet links to do with editing, access to dictionaries, style guides, information on grammar, word processors, bibliographical data and translation.

The site is not perfect; I had trouble making some links and some of its design is archaic, but I have found answers I needed on it.

I have been using MSWord “track changes” with some clients, but had some misgivings and on this site I was able to read what other people thought (they had doubts, too).

Policy for editing academic theses

by Anne Surma

In 2001 CASE sent a proposal to the Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee regarding the editing of academic theses.

To date, and despite a couple of follow-up letters, the AVCC has offered no formal response. Nevertheless, it has been agreed by most state societies that we adopt the proposal as guidelines for practice. SOEWA also recommends that you follow the guidelines (reproduced below) when editing theses, to help you navigate the sometimes blurred boundaries between the roles of author and editor.

1. That where a thesis or dissertation is to have input from a professional editor, the candidate must obtain written permission for editing from the supervisor. The candidate should supply to the editor a copy of this permission, along with the manuscript.
2. The name of the editor and a brief description of the service rendered should be printed as part of the list of acknowledgements or other prefatory matter near the front of the work when it is to be presented for examination.
3. If the professional editor’s current or former area of academic specialisation is similar to that of the candidate, this too should be stated in the prefatory matter,

as it may suggest to examiners that the editor's advice to the candidate may have extended beyond guidance on English expression to affect content in the thesis.

Whine list

Sentences of the form "I bought some fruit, vegetables and went to see Charlie"—from which we may legitimately extract, "I bought some went to see Charlie". A real-life example commonly heard: "Available from ABC Shops, Centres and good bookstores." *Alan Watson*

Clients who send me PDF files and want a "quick proof read" after the entire brochure has been designed, laid out, and is ready" for printing.

Chris Nagel

What happened in May

The May meeting was a workshop on "Quoting for Work — and Getting Paid", led by a panel with experience in different editing fields — Christine Nagel (manuscript assessment), Rhonda Bracey (electronic editing), Tom Jenkins (self-publishers), Jan Knight (government publications) and Janet Blagg (book editing).

Each spoke for 5-10 minutes. Then there was a lively question and answer session, at the end of which everyone (including the speakers) seemed to have learned something. There appeared to be a consensus that, as a profession, editors could be tougher in insisting on adequate payment.

Rhonda Bracey spoke of the importance of dealing directly with the "accounts payable" person in a client company. She also said that for rush jobs she would ask for time-and-a-half. She had once got a client to pay up by going to his house accompanied by her 6ft 3 husband, "who looks like a cop."

Christine Nagel said she charged by the hour for editing books, but had fixed fees for manuscript assessment, which she required to be paid before she

started work. She also required the client to provide return post and packaging. Tom Jenkins described a written agreement which specifies progress payments at the start, halfway and at the end of a book-editing job. His aim is to price a job, including printing, so that if clients sell most of the books printed, they get their money back. Clients often need computer lessons and tricky text formatting can take ages to fix.

Jan Knight said government departments expect you to charge by the hour. She keeps accurate logs of how long it takes. She also charges for “admin. time” on such tasks as downloading files and printing. Most government departments took six to eight weeks to pay.

Janet Blagg gave examples of book edits where 124 estimated hours of work turned out to be 150 hours. She showed examples of extremely detailed quotes, covering not only editing but such tasks as discussion with the author, briefing a designer and dealing with miscellaneous items such as captions, permission to use illustrations and acknowledgments.

Janet said she had found herself chasing publishing houses for payment three months after the job was completed. Amanda Curtin said that in Singapore a publisher had told her he normally paid when the book was launched, not before. During discussion, it was pointed out that a designer would charge \$80 an hour — more than most editors ask for. Information was shared about help available in getting paid, including a pre-paid legal service, which can get you the services of a consortium of lawyers.

©Copyright and the Internet — what are the rules?

by Chris Nagel

I was recently offered an article for inclusion in *Book Worm* that had been downloaded from the Internet. When I enquired as to its provenance for permission to reprint, I was advised that it was on the 'net and its origin was unknown. As editors, we are often in the position of having to alert writers to their

responsibilities to copyright law, particularly where other published works are being quoted. The same applies to text obtained from the Internet.

Now, while it may seem that anything on the Internet is fair game and in the public domain, in fact, it isn't. You may have noticed in your browsing that some articles claim copyright and allow downloading for research, academic and personal use, but not for republication or commercial gain. You may also have noticed that other articles invite readers to download and promulgate them willy-nilly. So what can you use and when?

What needs to be remembered is that the Internet is a publishing medium like any other: its contents are subject to the same copyright laws that protect writers (and that includes many of us, gentle readers) in any other media, so each article should be treated as if it is © unless it is specifically offered as freely available to use as you will.

For instance, with the article by Gary Sloan in last month's edition ("Sleuthing patriotic slogans"), I emailed him for his permission to reproduce the piece and he gladly granted it. All he asked for in return was a copy of the *Book Worm* it would appear in (*Book Worm* goes abroad!). No problem. But, if I had simply whacked it in without bothering to get that permission, I would have been inviting a lawsuit for breach of copyright.

Simply put, treat the Internet as if it were a book or any other publication with the © symbol and an author's copyright claim on the frontispiece — just because it costs you nothing to read the articles, doesn't mean you can use them as if they were public domain.

June meeting: Grammar workshop part 2, presented by James Hansen

This session will be aimed at meeting some of the needs of editors facing text from clients who are, frankly, poor writers. Using the notes already distributed for last November's workshop (or available from Amanda — see below), James will lead discussion of as many of the following topics as

time will allow:

The importance of word order in English

Run-on sentences

Ellipsis

Parallelism

Defining and non-defining clauses

Who, which and that

Present participles and gerunds

Subject–verb agreements.

Members are encouraged to bring in examples from their own editing experience that may relate to these topics.

When: 7.30 pm, Tuesday 3 June 2003

Where: Tresillian Community Centre, 21 Tyrell Street, Nedlands

Cost: \$2 cover charge, plus \$5 for a set of James's notes if you didn't get them last time (if you want a set, please advise Amanda)

RSVP: Amanda Curtin (phone 9377 2091; curtin@highway1.com.au)

Advance notice of July meeting: Defamation

Editors should be able to identify possibly defamatory text, where legal review might be required. Our special guest speaker Lloyd Davies, an expert on the subject, will raise your awareness of criminal defamation, civil defamation, accidental defamation, intentional defamation, and the ethics of defamation, using actual case studies.

When: 7.30 pm, Tuesday 1 July 2003

Where: Tresillian Community Centre, 21 Tyrell Street, Nedlands

Cost: \$2 cover charge

RSVP: Amanda Curtin (phone 9377 2091; curtin@highway1.com.au)

Events, workshops and conferences

Promotional writing workshop: Making words work harder

Writing copy that sells: copywriting/blurb writing/media releases

Presenter: Jo Bramble of Bramble Marketing & Communications

Whether it's for book blurbs, media releases, catalogues, information sheets or advertising, you need to make maximum impact with marketing and communication materials. You need to get results. So what do you need to know about writing copy? About layout and design for non-designers? What are the basics of a good design brief? Find out at this full day seminar. It's designed to take anyone involved in creating copy through the basics of good communication and promotional writing. You'll learn how to improve any copy you write. You'll go through the steps of good copywriting to make that book cover/blurb/media release the best sales tool it can be! This step-by-step seminar includes guidance and tips for success with: research, basic layout for non-designers and a copy quality checklist. As well as gaining insight into consumer behaviour, you'll cover troubleshooting, problem solving and identifying opportunities for improvement in your copy. Jo will also guide participants through workshop activities to refine their skills in identifying copy that works well and correcting common problems. The emphasis is on ensuring that all participants gain practical skills in better blurb writing. There will be a combination of presentation, discussion and workshop activities.

Sydney

When: Friday 13 June 9.00 – 4.30

Where: Medina on Crown Hotel,

Melbourne

When: Wednesday 11 June 9.00 – 4.30

Where: Novotel, St Kilda

Cost: \$335 members (APA; Society of Editors; Galley Club; AGDA): \$380 non-members. Twenty per cent discount applies when five or more attend from one company.

More information available from Libby O'Donnell at Libby.Odonnell@publishers.asn.au (Ph: 02 9281 9788).

Indexfest

“Indexing the World of Information”, an international conference hosted by the Australian Society of Indexers, is to be held at the Carlton Crest Hotel, Sydney, from Friday 12 to Saturday 13 September 2003.

Proposed presentation/panel topics are: indexing biographies; difficult names; teaching indexing; website, intranet and database indexing projects; information architecture; thesaurus construction; taxonomies and classification; metadata development. There will be software demonstrations and workshops.

Cost: Australian Society of Indexers members \$330, non-members \$380.

Contact: Glenda Browne

Email: webindexing@optusnet.com.au

Phone: 02 4739 8199

More information: www.aussi.org

Glynis sings again

A former SOEWA secretary, Glynis Traill-Nash, is about to hit Perth again in her jazz-singer persona. She'll be launching her first CD and singing her little heart out at the Perth Jazz Society one evening this month.

Date: Monday 23 June

Time: 8.30 pm

Venue: Hyde Park Hotel, cr Fitzgerald and Bulwer Streets, North Perth

Cost: \$12 for non-members (non-members of the Jazz Society, that is)

Members who do not remember Glynis might remember the entertaining

disquisition she sent for presentation at our tenth anniversary dinner.

When she was living in the UK Glynis performed at Ronnie Scott's, the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival and the Soho Jazz Festival among other places and events.

Deadline for July 2003 issue: Tuesday 17 June 2003. All submissions gratefully accepted.

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