

## From the President



### The year ahead

Around the dawn of the new year, I get together with a friend over coffee to map out our goals for the coming year and review how we did with the year just gone.

There are some goals that seem to get resurrected each year but generally, I accomplish about two-thirds of what I set out to achieve. It's my big 'to do' list.

The committee has put together a 'to do' list for the Society this year – most is not set in stone but we've got some great ideas. In February, two representatives from Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance will speak about the benefits of joining this group. Donna Ward, Managing Editor of Indigo literary journal, will speak in April about her experiences in setting up a forum dedicated to promoting Western Australian writers.

We are planning sessions on technology, blogging, editing Indigenous work, courses available to editors, and possibly a publishing panel. We will be holding our AGM on 23 March to elect new office bearers and present the year's reports.

It's here that you can volunteer as a committee member – don't hold back in nominating yourself if you'd like to contribute! We have also been in discussions to decide whether to hold the national editors' conference in Perth in 2013. We've had a positive response and after some more research, we'll let you know our final thoughts and next steps. My personal view is that we must grab the opportunity to promote the profession of editing and related industries to our markets, and at the same time promote Perth, not as the most isolated city in the world, but as a vibrant, creative community that links the east coast and Asia in a vortex of inspiration.

This year the Society has representatives on several committees including WritingWA, the Writing Program Consultative Committee for ECU, and a committee for the development of Indigenous editing. We'd love you to stay involved in your Society by attending functions, networking, and giving us feedback.

Happy editing

*Robin*

**Robin Bower — President**

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**Advance Notice: AGM 23 March 2010, 7.00pm**

Please note the AGM will be held on the third Tuesday and NOT the second Tuesday in March.

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**This month's Members' Meeting**  
**Tuesday 16 February, 2010 at 7.30 pm**  
**'The Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance**  
**- why join?**

Michael Sinclair-Jones and David Cohen discuss what the Alliance is and how it can help you as an editor.

**Venue:** Subiaco Community Centre (Activity Room), 203 Bagot Road, Subiaco. Enter by the glass double doors opposite the courtyard (Activity Room is on the left)

**Cost:** \$2 members; \$5 non-members

**Parking:** street parking and Crossways Shopping Centre car park opposite

**RSVP** <[robinb@westnet.com.au](mailto:robinb@westnet.com.au)>  
**Mark your diary now!**

## Christmas with the birds

a report on the end-of-year function

by Amanda Ellis

*As day became night  
and the temperature  
cooled,  
a group of editors met  
for a Christmas party  
with a difference.*



The 2009 Society of Editors (WA) end-of-year party, Christmas with the birds, was held in mid-December at Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre in Wembley.

The annual get-together had a conservationists' theme and featured a nature walk at dusk along the banks of the lake by award-winning wildlife educator, Pam Ghirardi.

Organised by committee member and long-time conservationist, Jan Knight and partner, Peter Wilmot, the walk was a memorable, two-kilometre stroll through the restored wetland.

A number of rare birds were observed during the walk – including one sighted first by *Bookworm's* 'eagle eye' proofreader Michèle Drouart.

After the spot of exercise, editors and guests headed indoors for Domain Catering canapés, wine and entertainment – in the form of two-man jazz outfit John Bannister and the Charisma Brothers.

Editors WA president, Robin Bower, gave a speech in which she thanked Christmas party volunteers and editors for their support, outlined some of the achievements of the Society in 2009 and shared her vision for 2010.

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**DEADLINE**  
for copy for the  
**NEXT ISSUE**  
of *Bookworm* is  
**Tuesday, 2 March, 2010**



## Highlights from the 2009 IPEd Conference: *Getting the message across* by Cheryl Bettridge



It was a fantastic experience to go to Adelaide and enjoy the wealth of knowledge shared at the 2009 conference. There were many highlights for me, attending my very first IPEd conference, and I thought I would write a short article for *Bookworm* sharing just a few of the more memorable ones. It was an absolute delight to sit and watch our own Amanda Curtin discuss the ups and downs of being on the receiving end of an editor, as a writer, and Natasha Stott Despoja was an inspiration!

- [www.chs.ecu.edu.au/org/rhd/writing/resources.php](http://www.chs.ecu.edu.au/org/rhd/writing/resources.php) provides five documents on editing and writing skills for research students
- **A quote from Julian Burnside, AO, QC (Words and language; truth and lies)**  
*Words are betrayed by foolishness, carelessness or malevolence. The latter is of the most concern.*
- **From the debate:**
  - I feel hate, I'm used to hate, I'm a lawyer.
  - Editors are a carbuncle, a pus-filled wart on the flesh of true art.  
No, that's a lawyer.
  - Lawyers are like enemies.  
You hate them till you need one, then you really hate them!

AND ... I learned a new word – execrable!

What a great conference!

In terms of lessons learnt, I took away many, and would like to share just a few with you in brief. If you want to know and benefit from more, come to the next conference, to be held in Sydney next year, and join the uprising that is working towards holding the 2013 IPEd conference here in our very own and beloved Perth!

So, what did I learn about?

- The Fine Print, an online journal found at [www.emendediting.com](http://www.emendediting.com) (NB I went in and checked this out as well as the rest of the site and ended up purchasing a couple of online courses – there's a great range and they are all only \$88 each)
- Wendy McCarthy's mentoring website at [www.mccarthymentoring.com](http://www.mccarthymentoring.com).

See you all at the next conference:  
'New Horizons in Editing and Publishing'  
**8–10 September 2011**  
Dockside on Cockle Bay (East side)! ☺ ■

### INTERESTING FACTS

In the 1400s a law was set forth in England that a man was allowed to beat his wife with a stick no thicker than his thumb. Hence we have 'the rule of thumb'

The first novel ever written on a typewriter was *Tom Sawyer*.

Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history: Spades - King David ; Hearts - Charlemagne ; Clubs - Alexander, the Great ; Diamonds - Julius Caesar .

What do bullet-proof vests, fire escapes, windshield wipers and laser printers have in common? All were invented by women.

In Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes. When you pulled on the ropes, the mattress tightened, making the bed firmer to sleep on. Hence the phrase....'Goodnight , sleep tight'



## Spotlight on Anne Surma



I fell into editing in the late 'eighties, when I landed a job with the British Council, the international cultural organisation, through its graduate scheme in London. I could have been placed in any one of the Council's many areas – education, arts, science – but was thrilled to learn that a vacancy had come up in the design, production and publishing department. Was I interested in becoming a production editor? You bet (even though I wasn't quite sure what that job title meant). I spent the next two years working alongside skilled editors, designers, photographers and printers, learning about and eventually taking responsibility for exciting publishing projects: the Council stand at the Frankfurt Book Fair, a quarterly literary magazine, a panel exhibition on children's literature. For one project, on international education, I accompanied a photographer on a shoot to Turkey. I don't remember much of that trip (apart from the lavish mosques and the magnificent food), but I do recall being petrified as we set up a shot at the top of some monstrously tall tower at a naval college in Istanbul (I'm scared of heights).

The work was brilliant and London was buzzing, but I had to finish my postgrad studies. So I put my head down for a year, submitted my thesis, and migrated to Australia.

It is now nearly twenty years since I arrived in Perth. In those early days, I would wake up in the morning, look disbelievingly at yet another blue sky and

listen to what sounded like screaming newborns, but was, I later discovered, the caw of crows. I did sessional teaching at university, edited several PhD theses and a couple of academic monographs before getting a job as an in-house editor for an engineering company. Two years, several enormous environmental reports and feasibility studies later, I left full-time employment to have my first child. Freelance editing kept me in touch with a world beyond babies, and I did much of it in the evening when Freya had crashed for the day.

Some time after my second child, Loki, was born I was lucky to get a tenured position in the English and Creative Arts program at Murdoch. I've been there ever since, though my work is as varied as ever. Obviously, my focus is on teaching, supervising and research, and most of the editing I do now is of scholarly work. I also occasionally design and run tailored writing workshops in the corporate sector. Combining these activities with the writing of my second academic book on professional writing, a follow-up to my first (published in 2005 by Palgrave Macmillan), is proving a big challenge, especially as far as trying to maintain a life beyond work is concerned. ■

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### **Believe it or not, you can read this.**

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Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht  
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a taotl mses and you can still raed it  
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is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed  
ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a  
wlohe. Amzanig huh?

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**MORE INTERESTING FACTS**

It was the accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month, which we know today as the honeymoon.

In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts ... So in old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them, 'Mind your pints and quarts, and settle down.' Hence the phrase 'mind your P's and Q's'.

Many years ago in England, pub frequenters had a whistle baked into the rim, or handle, of their ceramic cups. When they needed a refill, they used the whistle to get some service. 'Wet your whistle' is the phrase inspired by this practice.

## Using Semicolons – Three Rules

### Sources

<http://www.englishspark.com/en/blogs/stumpers/395-semicolon-rules>

<http://www.grammarbook.com/punctuation/semicolons.asp>

<http://www.writersrelief.com/blog/post/Three-Essential-Semicolon-Rules.aspx>

Semicolons are like spices; they shouldn't be overused. As spices complement the main ingredients in a dish, semicolons should complement your writing – not overpower it. When used correctly, semicolons can add variety and increased readability to your writing.

Many writers find semicolons to be the most confusing of the punctuation marks. Some pepper their pages with semicolons, and others never use them for fear of using them incorrectly. However, as with the other marks of punctuation, using semicolons is not difficult if you keep some basic rules in mind.

**Rule 1:** Use a semicolon in place of a period to separate two sentences where the conjunction has been left out. A semicolon may be placed between

two stand-alone sentences that are closely related in theme.

*Tom earned his bachelor's degree last summer; his sister earned hers the previous year.*

Where the two statements are unrelated, as in the following example, the use of the semicolon is not appropriate. *Jane drove to Mandurah to visit her parents; her parents' dog had to go to the vet.*

**Rule 2:** Use a semicolon before introductory or conjunctive adverbs (such as however or finally) and transitional phrases showing comparison, contrast, cause-effect (after all, as a matter of fact, for example, in addition, etc ) that join independent clauses.

*Philip is studying engineering; however, he is also interested in pursuing a degree in music education.*

*Cindy has published several novels; in addition, she has published a volume of poetry.*

Compare the following examples:

*Angela fell and injured her leg last month; nevertheless, she was able to compete in the race today.*

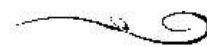
Here the semicolon is placed before the conjunctive adverb *nevertheless* since the adverb begins an independent clause.

*Jim has always been an exceptionally hard worker; his co-workers, moreover, have nominated him for employee of the month seven times.*

In this example, the semicolon is placed before *his* since *his* signals the beginning of the independent clause. The conjunctive adverb in this sentence (*moreover*) is simply serving as an interrupter.

**Rule 3:** Use the semicolon to separate units of a series when one or more of the units contain commas.

*For her son's birthday, Jenny purchased a chocolate cake with chocolate frosting, sprinkles, and candy topping; a pair of shoes with white stripes, laces, and light-up heels; and a new racetrack complete with cars, people figurines, and miniature buildings.*



For a more fun explanation go to <http://theoatmeal.com/comics/semicolon>  
Thanks to Darren Speers for sending this link to Editors\_WA@yahoogroups.com

## David Wray writes ...

*An article that examines recent research findings on the relationship between handwriting and creativity, published in Literacy Plus, November 2009, Issue 45, an Educational magazine published in the United Kingdom.*

Handwriting, writes David Wray, is traditionally considered a matter of presentation. 'Getting it neat' is generally something that children are expected to do after they have composed interesting text. Many schools use drafting as a way of achieving this, with an initial writing draft where the children focus on what they want to say, and a second where they focus on presentation. However, a substantial body of international research is now suggesting that handwriting may be more important than we have thought and may affect how children compose.

At the University of Warwick, we have recently carried out a couple of research studies\* of the writing of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in local schools. The results have convinced us that handwriting is an important factor in the creation (or composition) of written material by children. To give you a flavour of the results, we found that we could pretty much predict the score that both Year 2 and Year 6 children would achieve in their Writing SAT from the number of letters of the alphabet they could legibly write in one minute. The Writing SAT at both Key Stage 1 and 2 principally measures composition, but it appears that the results are substantially affected by children's abilities to

handwrite fluently. Moreover, a significant proportion of children seem to suffer from low levels of handwriting automaticity (the ability to generate letters without giving this too much conscious attention). This is likely to be interfering with their ability to compose. If a child has to give mental attention to generating letters, then this will almost certainly impair that child's ability to select ideas, words, grammar and spellings.

Over the last decade, teaching and policy have prioritised composing and reduced the attention given to handwriting. However, at the same time, a substantial international research programme has produced some exciting new insights into the role of handwriting in composition. These research studies offer the possibility that handwriting intervention can actually improve the content of written material for many children, particularly boys. Handwriting is critical to the generation of creative and well-structured written text and has an impact not only on fluency but also on the quality of composing. At a time of concern for boys' writing in the UK, this is a totally new approach to the struggle with writing that so many children face. Our findings suggest that educators have seriously underestimated the role of handwriting in the production of written material by young children. In concentrating on the possible benefits to spelling of well-formed, joined handwriting, it seems that the necessity for speed and automaticity in handwriting has been neglected.

Our research suggests that it is time to reconsider. Automatic letter production appears to free up working memory to deal with the

complex tasks of planning, organising, revising and regulating the production of text. In this way, automatic handwriting facilitates writing for children.

Research undertaken into the predictors of writing competence suggests that automatic letter writing is the single best predictor of length and quality of written material in the primary years, in secondary school and even in the post-compulsory education years. This is an amazing finding, given the relatively low status and lack of attention given to handwriting in school.

Handwriting has not been an important aspect of literacy for teachers in the last decade, but it has been the subject of important research. It is time this research was made more accessible to educators and began to contribute to the progress of pupils. In examining widely held assumptions about writing and handwriting, we may be able to make writing easier for many children.

Full details and papers published so far at [www.warwick.ac.uk/go/handwriting](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/handwriting).

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## Snippets

### Self Publishing

Our November members' meeting topic, First the word – then the product, provided three perspectives on self publishing. Serendipitously, an interesting article on the *Challenges of self-publishing* appeared in the December 2009 issue of 'Blue Pencil', the newsletter of the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. It is now available online at [http://www.editorsnsw.com/pdfs/blue%20pencil/bp%202009/bp\\_dec\\_09.pdf](http://www.editorsnsw.com/pdfs/blue%20pencil/bp%202009/bp_dec_09.pdf)

### Societies of Editors' Newsletters from around Australia

ACT (Canberra) <http://www.editorscanberra.org/news.htm>

New South Wales <http://www.editorsnsw.com/blue.htm>

(Monthly newsletter *Blue Pencil* which our Society regularly receives in hard copy)

Queensland <http://www.editorsqld.com/join/newsletter.htm>

(*Offpress* and *Offshoot* November 2007 last issue available by download.)

South Australia <http://www.editors-sa.org.au/?q=node/10>

(*the Word* bimonthly May-June 2009 last issue available by download.)

Tasmania <http://www.tas-editors.org.au/index.html>

(Quarterly newsletter *Catchword* not available by download from site but which we regularly receive in electronic form. They also have a monthly electronic publication *eTextpert* which I have now requested our society receive)

Victoria <http://www.socedvic.org/publications/newsletter.html>

Monthly newsletter *Society of Editors Newsletter* May 2009 last issue available for download from their site but which we regularly receive in electronic form)

Western Australia <http://editorswa.com/bookworm>

(Monthly newsletter *Bookworm* available for download from this site)

NOTE: Back copies from all states are available online and each of the sites has material worth browsing.

The **2010 Perth Writers Festival** is the largest literary event in WA's 2010 calendar. In collaboration with the Festival, and supported with funding from DCA, WritingWA is preparing a specially designed exhibition that will **showcase 50 leading contemporary West Australian writers and books**. The exhibition will be installed on the UWA campus for the duration of the Festival, and will then travel to other sites throughout the year.

Visit <http://www.perthfestival.com.au/Events/perth-writers-festival/> to download the festival program or sign up to receive a hard copy.

### Congratulations to:

Elaine Forrestal, Moira Court, Sally Morgan and Ambelin Kwaymullina, whose Fremantle Press picture books will feature in story-time segments on national television in 2010. For details, visit the Fremantle Press

<http://www.fremantlepress.com.au/news>

and to:

Jenny Gregory who was recognised in this year's Australia Day Honours with an AM for 'service to the community as an historian and academic and through the promotion and preservation of local and regional history in Western Australia'.