



BOOK WORM

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2001

FROM THE CHAIR

With 2002 just around the corner, the SOEWA committee has begun planning for the new year, and we look forward to announcing a stimulating program of meetings and projects for 2002, SOEWA's 10th Anniversary year. At this time, I would like to ask all members to give some thought to how they might be able to contribute to SOEWA next year.

The society is run by a small group of volunteers, all of us busy with our own work and lives, and, while we are 100 per cent behind the membership's and the national body's call for marketing, education and greater professionalism, we cannot continue to develop in these directions without also expanding our 'human resources' base. Please consider this when you receive your nomination form for committee positions next year, or when we call — as we often do! — for volunteers for specific projects. Having said that, I would like to thank the many people — committee members and others — who have contributed their time and talents to make 2001 a significant year of progress for SOEWA and for the editing profession in Western Australia.

Our first general meeting for 2002 will be on 5 February, with the Annual General Meeting taking place the following month, on 5 March.

I look forward to seeing those of you who will be celebrating 'Christmas @ Casablanca' with us on Tuesday, 4 December. To everyone else, I wish you all, on behalf of the committee, a happy and healthy holiday season.

Amanda Curtin

CASE NEWS

The CASE meeting in Sydney last month resulted in a raft of proposals that clarify the way the State societies will work together in future and signal a new round of national initiatives. The SOEWA committee fully supports these proposals and has responded to CASE accordingly, also expressing its appreciation of the work of the CASE delegates and its thanks for the generosity of the other societies that makes Western Australia's participation in national meetings possible. Unfortunately, our CASE delegate, Betty Durston, was unable to participate in the meeting this time, due to a family emergency.

A brief summary of the major points follows, but I will be happy to supply a copy of the full proposals to any member who would like one. These proposals will not proceed as 'national activities' until the endorsement of all societies has been confirmed.

Structure and operation of CASE

CASE will continue to operate as a council of delegates from member societies rather than a body with a formal structure of its own. Up to two national meetings will be held per calendar year, either in Sydney or Melbourne (the most cost-effective central locations), and costs will be met by all societies on a pro rata basis, with proportions determined according to the membership income of each society.

Accreditation

An Accreditation Working Group will be established, convened by Janet Mackenzie (Victoria), to:

- set out why accreditation is being investigated
- research how other organisations and professions handle it
- set out the principles that should underlie any accreditation system for editors
- develop a series of possible models (probably two plus the option of no accreditation) to be put to the members.

Note: SOEWA's delegate for this working group is still to be confirmed.

National web site

Queensland will develop a proposal for a simple national web site, considering various options and seeking advice from webminders and technical people as required.

Note: SOEWA's webminder, Brian Ward, has already contributed some comments for the Queensland group to consider.

Promotional campaign

Victoria will develop a proposal for a promotional campaign focusing on raising the profile of the editing profession, against the background of the development of the standards.

Thesis editing

Tasmania will draft a letter to the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee on the ethics of thesis editing.

Note: This letter, focusing on the editing of postgraduate theses, has already been drafted. SOEWA has offered, for consideration by the other societies, some suggestions concerning the editing of undergraduate student work.

National conference

A national working group will be formed, convened by Queensland, to work towards a national conference for editors in Brisbane in winter 2003.

Note: SOEWA's delegate for this working group will be Bryce Moore.

Amanda Curtin

VALE BRUCE DURSTON

We were saddened to hear of the death of Betty Durston's husband, Bruce, a friendly, gentle man whom many of us had the pleasure of meeting at SOEWA functions. Condolences to Betty from all SOEWA members.

MANUSCRIPT APPRAISAL

Following publication of 'New Pastures for Freelancers' in last month's Book Worm, Christine Nagel offers some comments on manuscript appraisal, having in mind mainly other SOEWA members who might be considering entering this field.

I've been offering this service for many years under my 'literary services' umbrella. Far from being lucrative, it is a time-consuming and poorly remunerated occupation. As Eva Sallis has noted, the writer is getting ten to fifteen hours' exclusive 'master class' input, but is paying only a few hundred dollars for it.

For example, an appraisal of a manuscript of 50,000 words costs \$300 through my service. (I believe that my rates are comparable with others around the state and country.) The reading is thorough and includes a mechanical edit of the first few pages, plus notes in the margin where a particular point needs to be made. As well, the written report on the work is detailed and examines, among other things, plot, structure, characterisation, dialogue, themes and commercial viability, and often runs to five or six single-spaced pages.

The time it takes to read the manuscript and write a thoughtful and useful appraisal is often in excess of twelve hours, depending on the standard and complexity of the writing. At twelve hours, this works out at \$25 per hour. Hardly lucrative. But to attempt to charge more realistic rates for this service would put the cost well out of reach of most clients, so it's a case of offering a needed service at rates that the market can bear. I'd love to charge \$45 or \$50 an hour or equivalent, but I'd lose business.

I can only endorse the observation that appraisal services are beginning to replace in-house editors, as some publishers will only look at new work if it is accompanied by a positive appraisal from a reputable service. This serves as a 'filter' so that publishers don't get swamped with poor quality, unpublishable manuscripts.

WHAT IS HANSARD?

Michèle Drouart reports on the November SOEWA meeting.

Total ignorance is often a good departure point. How can you be embarrassed about not knowing something when you don't even know you were expected to have heard of it at least? Thus it was that, after we'd wound our way up two flights of the great semi-circular staircase and trodden the carpeted corridors of power at the West Australian Parliament, I stepped up to our 'guide', Chief Hansard Reporter Chris Hall, and asked all the naïve existence and identification questions just like a small child. What is Hansard? Where does it come from? Why such a name? And here is what I learnt.

In London in the 1780s Thomas and (son) Luke Hansard were given a contract to write up and record the House of Commons parliamentary debates. From 1876 this work passed to people who would have been the equivalent of modern-day journalists, but in 1891 the first official staff were employed specifically for the purpose. Recording of Australian parliamentary sessions was set up in the same way. In Federal and State parliaments, these records continue to be known as the Hansard records or reports. In Western Australia the body that executes them is called the Hansard Reporting Services, although today all members of the Hansard staff are part of (or work for) a larger department, Parliamentary Services.

At one time in the West Australian Parliament there were eight reporters working for fifteen minutes an hour for around twelve to fourteen hours at a time. Today there are sixteen Hansard reporters working for up to sixteen hours. The type of reporting here varies. Some reporters, for example, use Pitman shorthand, others computer-assisted transcription (known as 'CAT'), where the reporter works with a stenograph. This humble-looking little machine gives no hint of the expense involved in obtaining it. A Stentura 8000 LX, for example, costs around \$5000. All reporters record on tapes as well, whatever method they are using. The tapes are played back later to help the reporter check and re-check what they have written up.

A parliamentary session is divided into ten-minute segments known as 'turns'. So concentrated and intensive is the work of Hansard reporters, and so quickly do they need to transform the spoken into the printed word, that they do not stay in the chamber, whether the Legislative Council (LC) or the Legislative Assembly (LA), for more than ten minutes in an hour. When only one of these is in session, that time is reduced to five minutes so as to move the reports through faster. At some of the outside committees, however, especially in rural areas, reporters may have to be present and recording the whole time, which could be several hours.

We sat in the gallery of the Legislative Council with our other guide, long-time SOEWA member Bryce Moore, who is now also a Hansard reporter. Bryce made it clear that Hansard reporting is not verbatim like court recording, where a witness's every 'um' and 'er' must be faithfully included. What the reporter hears in the chamber is not what s/he types. Hansard reporting involves some on-the-spot 'translating' of a parliamentarian's speech into readable sentences. In this respect I thought it must

resemble simultaneous interpreting. We were told that with some members there may not be a single complete sentence in a whole ten-minute turn. (The members in question were freely named, their degree of articulateness being more or less common knowledge, though I dare not give those names here.) Before the records are made official, MLCs and MLAs have the opportunity to check them and indicate any places where they believe they have been misquoted or misheard. They may not, however, change the gist of anything they said in chamber.

When a reporter is approaching the end of his/her 'turn' in chamber, the new reporter must be in place alongside the one recording. As soon as the new reporter is assured of working in tandem with the one who is there, s/he taps the table once with the hand in a certain spot where the first reporter can clearly see it. This means the first reporter can leave. Right in the middle of a speech by One Nation's Paddy Embry on the State Government's fiscal responsibilities (with the occasional heckle from Jim Scott of the Greens), Bryce managed to catch and point out to us that special moment when Hansard recorder Elaine — using Pitman — was passing her work over to the famous Barbara — using a stenograph — who is known for her record of 210 words per minute. It was a great privilege to meet Barbara and her fellow computer-assisted reporter, Anne Marie, in their office afterwards when they were editing on screen. (Did I say that all these people must also be good editors?)

While all this writing is happening, there are other types of recording going on, not least of which is the audio-visual. In a small room in the basement we watched several screens at a number of consoles, all displaying — from different angles — the Legislative Council where we had been sitting in the gallery earlier. Our attention zoomed in and out with the cameras, up close on this member, then on that one, and occasionally on an empty seat.

Finally we visited the sub-editing room, scene of the last stage of labour before the daily report is ready to be delivered into the world. Well, not quite, since it goes into a Weekly Report first. Each turn, after being uploaded onto the Internet, is given its own separate document and goes through at least one full editing, then a proofreading and then another proofreading. When all approvals have been given and corrections made, these turns/ documents are collected into a Daily Report, and the Daily Reports are gathered up into the Weekly Report and sent off to State Law Publishers. As we stood looking on at the work of sub-editor Joan Meaghan (also a SOEWA member), we were also aware of the old (leather-bound) and new volumes of reports in shelves all along two walls and up to the ceiling. In the old days a set of these went to each member as well as to the department. Now that State printing has been privatised, the cost makes this prohibitive and members, alas, no longer have their own sets.

Chris, Bryce and the others we met that night were most generous with their time and all happy to share their tea, coffee and sandwiches with us visitors at the end of our extremely informative and interesting tour with them. Many thanks from all of us who took part.

SCHOLARSHIP WIN

Robin Bower has been awarded the 2001 Innovation in Work Practices Scholarship offered by the Department of Training. She will research electronic publishing and investigate WestOne's capability to provide customers (primarily WA TAFE Colleges) with electronic versions of its content via the Internet.

WestOne is an institution set up by the Department of Training under the Western Australian VET (vocational education and training) Act. It was created to facilitate the development and growth of flexible learning within WA through the production of innovative technology-enabled learning materials and services (publications, videos, online training, television broadcasts through Access 31). WestOne currently produces around 4000 print publications for the VET sector.

Robin's proposal will look at innovative ways of electronically publishing content to cover a broader market and to bring to the WestOne workplace the ability to search and retrieve electronic versions of publications for download from the WestOne electronic bookstore at <http://estore.westone.wa.gov.au> and consequent sale to customers worldwide. The electronic publishing of content in PDF format will allow TAFE lecturers to use a downloadable file that can be customised to suit their requirements. Content can then be sold as a whole book or, if required, by chapter or in sections of relevant content.

Robin's research will take her to Melbourne, Sydney, the US and the UK, where she will be talking to organisations at the cutting edge of electronic publishing to discover the best publishing and financial models for use at WestOne. She is happy to discuss the proposal with anyone interested, and is especially keen to garner information from anyone involved in electronic publishing or who has relevant contacts in the places she will be visiting. You can reach her on robinbower@hotmail.com.

Congratulations Robin!

NURTURING AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE

This report by Tim Bugler on a meeting of the Society of Editors (Queensland) is reprinted from the May issue of OffPress, the society's newsletter, with the permission of that organisation and the author.

Laurie Hergenhan, guest speaker at the 2 May meeting, was introduced as 'one of the tribal elders' among those concerned with the nurturing of Australian literature. He came to the English Department of the University of Queensland in the 1960s, and has been an emeritus professor since his retirement five years ago. He spoke to us not just as an academic, but as an academic editor (and a member of our society), for he has been editor of the *Journal of Australian Literary Studies (ALS)* since 1963. He is also general editor of the UQP Portable Australian Authors series. In recognition of his many achievements, he was made a member of the Order of Australia in 1994. Now

that he has retired from the university and is handing the reins of *ALS* over to Leigh Dale at the end of the year, he hopes to devote more time to his own writing.

Laurie started by telling us that, as a member of the society himself, he is always overwhelmed by the 'marvellous diversity' of work encompassed within our membership. Although the role of an academic editor is not always the same as that of other editors, there are many similarities. And like many other members, he didn't set out to be an editor: 'One finds oneself [to be] an editor and asks, what does one do?' Laurie's path to the profession was through Shakespeare, or more generally through textual study, in his early days at the University of Sydney. He looked at the development of Shakespearean texts, for example: what we can learn about the plays from the abundant differences between various quarto and folio editions. Thus he became aware of how textual production, the mechanics of handwriting and printmaking, allow typographical mistakes to appear in a text. Errors obscure the writer's original intent and render texts unreliable. Literary criticism is often about the attempt to recover an author's text, even when the author is no longer alive (or is otherwise reluctant to comment).

It was this training in the traditional methods of textual analysis that brought Laurie to editing. He was asked by James McCauley to take on the role of editing a new journal. At the time Laurie protested that he had no knowledge of Australian literature, but McCauley insisted that his historical appreciation and training were invaluable skills.

ALS is now a senior journal in its field, and Australian literature is considered an acceptable area of university study. But at the time of the journal's inception in the early 1960s, this was not the case. The prevailing attitude was of dismissive condescension. Laurie related that Miles Franklin, when talking about Australian literature at a dinner, was asked, 'My dear, is there any?' Of course there is, and that might seem obvious now, but *ALS* came at an opportune, even necessary, time. The work of Laurie and many others reminds us that our country's literary traditions actually began before the 1890s, even though most of us tend to remember only the turn-of-the-century names like Lawson and Furphy. (In fact, Laurie expressed his suspicion that *ALS* started the fashion of interest in nineteenth-century writing, though he sounded another cautionary note here: 'One has to watch fashions and try to stand against them.')

Laurie's easy, friendly manner did not hide his clear passion for his subject, or his concern that we might be circling back to dismissive, ignorant times. He cited the difficulties currently faced by the University of Queensland's Fryer Library, and the problems of gaining research funding in the English Department. At Australian universities generally, literature and history are in decline, being replaced by cultural studies. The canon is no longer fashionable; but where, Laurie asked, where are we without the canon?

Such a question could easily sound plaintive, but he posed it with resolute optimism. The canon of great works of English literature, he said, will always be part of the common ground upon which literary studies are based, whatever critical theory is currently in vogue. The danger lies in placing theoretical fashions before academic rigour. In contrasting *ALS* with *Meanjin*, Laurie suggested that the latter has tried to hop

on the cultural studies bandwagon and suffered thereby. (The problems he observed in *Meanjin* – such as a superficially trendy but poorly laid out contents page, in white on black – will be familiar to many readers.) *ALS*, on the other hand, is often called conservative. Laurie doesn't entirely accept that charge, preferring to call the journal 'traditional', and emphasising the need to balance change with continuity. Don't go all out on change, but don't shut the door on it either.

But no matter how much things change, some things can be relied upon to remain constant. Among the recurring banes of a journal editor's life, Laurie told us, are sloppy academics and authors who won't listen to reason. One might expect more of the highly educated, but plenty of scholars simply won't follow a style sheet. He still spends a lot of time telling writers not to be too obscure.

Of course, the editor of a leading academic journal has able helpers. The *ALS* has professional staff to do proofreading and office administration, but, particularly in the early days, Laurie did everything else. A wide range of tasks is involved in producing a journal, all of them requiring diligence and care. James McCauley gave Laurie the compliment he most treasures: '*ALS* is handmade.' And, as Laurie put it, that's what editors do – they mould, shape, craft texts. The addition of proofreaders and assistant editors has allowed him to concentrate on the scholarship, argument and style of contributions (because, as he put it, he has editorial assistants to deal with copy editing and 'correspondence with stupid authors'). He enjoys nurturing young writers and turning drafts into something more refined. Editing is a highly creative task, though its results are invisible. Laurie reminded us that you don't have to write to create.

BELS EXAMINATION TO BE HELD IN AUSTRALIA

The Board of Editors in the Life Sciences in the United States has an accreditation process for life science editors, centred on a 3-hour written examination. The qualifying examination is to be held, for the first time in Australia, in March next year.

The aims of certification are:

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

Currently, there are a few hundred certified members, but the number is growing rapidly as the qualification becomes better known.

Eligibility and registration

To be eligible for the certification exam, you must have a bachelor's degree and at least two years of experience as a manuscript editor in the life sciences. Some substitution between education and experience are allowed.

You don't need to have an academic background in science, although you do need experience in editing scientific material. Many general editors have taken the exam and passed it.

If you want to take the examination, you must register well in advance. To register, you submit to the Board an academic transcript, your CV and three letters attesting to your editing experience. When this has been accepted, BELS will send you a study guide. Your registration lasts for three years, during which time you may apply for any of the scheduled examinations.

Australian examination

The first Australian examination will be held in central Sydney on Saturday 30 March 2002. The venue is the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, and the 3-hour examination will begin at 9.30 a.m.

Costs

Registration is US\$25 and the examination costs US\$100 (Australians can pay by Mastercard or Visa).

Further information

An information booklet is available, but all the information in it is also on the BELS web site: www.bels.org. If you would like a copy of the booklet or if you have any questions, contact Rhana Pike on rhanap@ozemail.com.au or (02) 9562 5317.

NATIONAL DISCUSSION LIST

South Australia has offered its Editalk discussion list as a national forum for CASE member societies. To subscribe, simply go to the link below and click on 'Subscribe'; unsubscribing is just as simple.

<http://www.editors-sa.org.au/html/editalk.htm>

THE AUSTRALIAN WRITER'S MARKETPLACE

If you think you might be interested in the 2002 edition of this publication, click on the pdf that came through with this issue of *Book Worm*.

SITUATION VACANT

Consulting engineering firm Brown & Root is seeking a highly experienced editor to manage the Adelaide office's busy Editing & Graphics department. Amanda Curtin has a pdf of the advertisement that appeared in last Saturday's *Adelaide Advertiser* and will email this to anyone who is interested (curtin@highway1.com.au or phone 9377 2091). Note that applications close 30 November 2001.

VIRUS ALERT FROM JAMES

Fortunately, we all seem to have survived the recent virus attack — with the exception of Gillian Lowe, whose computer is seriously ill. When I realised what a dangerous situation was developing, I contacted Virex antivirus software support by email and received a prompt and expert reply from Mr Luke Maslen of PICA Software, which enabled me to then advise you. Below is a (slightly edited) transcript of our exchange of emails which I believe members will find instructive. It should raise awareness of just how malicious the Internet can be. Mr Maslen has given his permission for his email to be published in *Book Worm* and would welcome any feedback you may care to give him. He apologises for the 'Macintosh' slant and says this is unusual as most antivirus advice is written for Windows users.

Dear Pica Support,

Some friends and I seem to have picked up a virus called PE_MAGISTR.B which infects the address list of the email program and then proceeds to send out mail with infected attachments to people on the list using messages from one's own files or from some other source, all without one's knowing it!

Unfortunately, one of the addresses was for the email group for which I am Moderator and one of these wretched messages (+ uncleanable attachment 'weight.com') has gone out to all our members! My version of Virex has checked the hard disk on my Macintosh and found nothing. Have you heard of PE_MAGISTR.B? Help!

James E. Hansen

Hi James,

First the bad news. PE_MAGISTR.B is quite a nasty virus that has appeared recently, just over two months ago. Different antivirus products give it different names, but all of them include the name MAGISTR.

Now for the good news. This virus is a Windows-specific infector. It will not infect your Macintosh and will not automatically send itself to lots of email recipients from your Macintosh. The only way to spread this virus from a Mac is to blindly forward the email to a Windows user.

Virex 5.7.1 was included with MacWorld magazine in 1998. It is very old and is not capable of using the monthly definition updates that are released each month for use with Virex 5.9 and newer. The current version of Virex is Virex 6.1. It is compatible with System 7.5.5 to Mac OS 9.x. It includes a facility to make it easy to keep the virus definitions up to date. The upgrade currently costs \$60 including GST and postage. It is not available as a download but ships on CD.

Having said that, Virex 6.1 and older do not detect Windows-specific viruses. Virex 6.1 detects Macintosh-specific viruses (of which there are still less than 100) and the many

thousands of cross-platform macro viruses which one might receive in a Word, Excel or PowerPoint document. It does not detect the 50,000+ PC-specific viruses and so would not detect the PE_MAGISTR.B even if it was right up to date. Virex 7.0 for Mac OS X does detect Mac-specific, PC-specific and cross-platform macro viruses. However Virex 7.0 is very basic at this stage and does not provide the automated scanning available in Virex 5.7.1 to 6.1.

So what should you do now?

- Verify that a virus really does exist. Visit <http://www.webimmune.net>, create a free account for yourself using your email address and an easy-to-remember password. Then scan the file 'weight.com' using this web-based service. Does it verify that the file is infected?
- If so, has the attachment been sent to the list? It is a good idea to be sure of this before unnecessarily alarming the subscribers.
- How does the list work? Do subscribers send an email to one address which automatically distributes the email to everyone on the list? If so, is your list server on a Mac or PC? If it is on a PC, update its antivirus software and keep it up to date so that this cannot happen again.
- Alternatively, do subscribers send their emails to you and then do you manually forward the email to everyone on the list? If so, did you forward the attachment? It is extremely important to never forward attachments if you don't know what they contain or if there is something odd about the email or the attachment.
- If you do have to manually forward emails to the distribution list, consider the following strategies:
 1. The best strategy is to prohibit attachments from being sent to the list. This will avoid most viruses from being sent to the list.
 2. Prohibit the use of HTML formatting in emails sent to the list, as virus code can be hidden within it. These kinds of viruses can harm only Windows PCs, so you can safely eradicate the formatting on your Mac before forwarding the plain-text email to the list.
 3. If you are forwarding the emails from your Mac, check any PC or unknown attachment by visiting <http://www.webimmune.net> before forwarding the attachment to the list.
 4. If you are forwarding the emails from a Windows PC, update your antivirus software and keep it up to date.
- Finally, if you are sure that a virus has been distributed to the list, send an immediate email to the list with a subject similar to the following: VIRUS - delete prev email & attachment. You can include some brief text to the effect that the previous email and

attachment should be deleted and that it is important not to forward it to other people. Users of computers other than Windows PCs will not have been infected by the virus. Windows users should update their antivirus software immediately. Information and updates for a couple of the most common antivirus products are available from:

McAfee VirusScan & Dr Solomon's AntiVirus:

<http://vil.nai.com/vil/virusSummary.asp?virus_k=99199

Norton AntiVirus:

<<http://securityresponse.symantec.com/avcenter/venc/data/w32.magistr.39921@mm.html>

Virex 6.1 (from PICA software)

Please let me know if you have any further questions regarding Virex or viruses.

Regards,
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DEADLINE FOR NEXT EDITION: Tuesday, 22 January 2002

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