

# BOOK WORM

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS (WA) INC.

December 2002

## FROM THE CHAIR

It's hard to believe that this is the last 'From the Chair' piece for 2002. In fact, I must admit that it was a complete shock to me this morning when I received a gentle reminder from *Book Worm's* editor that the piece was due. (Thank you, Allan.)

Where did the last month go? The last year? It's been a really interesting one for me as President — I've learnt so much. It could have been an awful one if I hadn't had the generous support of so many SOEWA members. Thank you all. In particular, thanks to Amanda for so patiently answering my endless questions and for guiding me along.

As we approach our tenth anniversary celebration (on 3 December — see below), I'm aware that such a milestone could never have been reached if it hadn't been for the dedication of individuals, working collectively, in representing the interests of editors at state and national levels. Whether presenting at SOEWA monthly meetings, organising meetings and functions, putting *Book Worm* together, developing promotional initiatives, running editing skills workshops, managing our web site or collaborating with CASE members in other Australian states, members have offered their (increasingly scarce) time freely and willingly.

I hope you'll be joining us for a great evening at the Olive Tree Garden Restaurant to acknowledge this huge effort and the rewards it has offered — and continues to offer — us all. On 3 December we'll be reflecting on the past, looking to the future and, most importantly, enjoying the festive present in each other's company.

Have a peaceful and relaxing holiday break. We look forward to seeing you at SOEWA meetings in 2003.

*Anne Surma*

## CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

It's not too late to put your name down for the Christmas party cum tenth anniversary celebration:

Olive Tree Garden Restaurant, 20 Emerald Terrace, West Perth

7.30 pm, Tuesday 3 December 2002

Partners welcome

Cost per person: \$36.50

RSVP: Anne Surma ([asurma@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:asurma@murdoch.edu.au))

The new deadline is Friday 29 November.

Please send cheques (made out to SOEWA) to Anne Surma at 168 Grantham Street, Floreat, WA 6014. Alternatively, you can pay on the night, but please make sure you get your booking to Anne by Friday.

## ADVANCE NOTICE: FIRST SOEWA MEETING IN 2003

If you have your 2003 diary, make a note now for the first SOEWA meeting in the new year.

Many editors suffer from neck, back or shoulder complaints — a by-product of our generally sedentary occupation — and so we have much to learn from occupational therapist and director of CSC Health Ian Wee. Ian, who is an excellent (and entertaining) presenter, will talk to us about ergonomics and musculoskeletal health in the workplace.

Find out what you can do now to prevent long-term injury and avoid surgery [a heartfelt suggestion from Amanda!].

**When:** 7.30 pm, Tuesday 4 February 2003

**Where:** Tresillian Community Centre, 21 Tyrell Street, Nedlands (street parking)

**Cover charge:** \$2

**Bookings:** RSVP to Amanda Curtin ([curtin@highway1.com.au](mailto:curtin@highway1.com.au) or phone/fax 9377 2091)

*Please note: There will be no meeting in January 2003.*

## EDITING WITH DOONESBURY

The word isn't used, but the subject of editing came up recently (as some of you will have noted) in Garry Trudeau's *Doonesbury* cartoon.

A: You publish a daily blog? How do you come up with enough ideas, Dude?

B: Well, it's not easy ... So when I'm feeling dry, I just copy something from the Op-Ed page of the Times!

A: Um ... Isn't that plagiarism, Dude?

B: No. I make it my own. I scrupulously alter the punctuation.

A (reading): 'If, that is where! Mr. Sharon is going? it, will come, to: tears.'

B: Personally, I think it improves the flow.

## **ANOTHER FORTHCOMING EVENT**

### **WALKING ON WATER**

*performance poetry prose plays*  
in conjunction with

*Australian Society of Authors*  
*Australian Writers Guild*  
*Fellowship of Australian Writers*  
*International PEN – Perth PEN Centre*  
*Katherine Susannah Pritchard Writers Centre*  
*Peter Cowan Writers Centre*  
*Society of Editors*  
*Society of Women Writers*  
*State Literature Centre*  
*Women in Publishing*

**invite you to a celebration  
of the Perth writing community**

at  
The WA Rowing Club  
Riverside Drive, opp. Supreme Court Gardens  
Wednesday 11 December, 7.30 – 11 pm

## **GUESTS**

ALICE HAINES

GLYN PARRY

FAY ZWICKY

music by

KEVIN GILLAM

**Book prizes donated by Fremantle Arts Centre Press,  
Artline Press, Magabala Books, FAW, KSPWC, PCWC  
and many individuals**

### **BYO FOOD AND DRINKS – TEA AND COFFEE AVAILABLE**

Waged \$4 Unwaged \$3

Everyone welcome

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Marion 9345 5786 [mjms@smartchat.net.au](mailto:mjms@smartchat.net.au)

The State of Western Australia has made an  
investment in this project through ArtsWA  
in association with the Lotteries Commission.

## **IN THEIR OWN WORDS**

*The October issue of Blue Pencil, the newsletter of the Society of Editors (NSW), carried the transcript of a talk given by Shelley Kenigsberg on editing, training and developments in the profession. Shelley teaches editing at Macleay College and is the current president of the society. The piece is reproduced here with the kind permission of the author and the publisher.*

Africa, which is where I come from, is important for me. I have a huge longing for it. I just weep at what's going on in Zimbabwe — it's so desperate and so sad. And infuriating.

I'd just finished university when I left Zimbabwe. I wanted to be an actor or a singer — some kind of performer — but my father thought nice Jewish girls don't go on stage: 'Teaching's always a good fallback for a nice gel; go teaching.'

I had studied African politics and history and languages and philosophy. I didn't specifically aim at teaching. It was never directed. And here comes the confessional: I don't think anything in my life has ever really been directed.

I don't feel that I found a vocation and explored it. I long for that. Having said that, I continued with editing because I have a feel for it and it does something inside me. It makes me happy to do the things that I'm now skilled to do.

I had my training in house. It was fantastic — an extraordinary opportunity. I'd worked in publishing in South Africa, but as a generalist: a bit of writing, a bit of editing, a bit of typesetting on an old Compugraphic.

When I came here a friend in publishing saw an ad for a paste-up artist at Harcourt Brace Jovanovich and that became me. I persuaded them that I could draw a straight line and that I could stick bromides through a wax machine, and that was what I did for months.

Then I said I wanted to be an editor. We had weekly meetings; we had exercises; I had a mentor. It was just wonderful. After several months they let me loose on a text.

The range was interesting. Educational from primary through to tertiary and a small list of academic monographs. The first work I did was minimal, on a book called *Optical interferometry* by a man whose name was Hariharan Paramiswaran — it was a mass of science and data. I used to run his name through my head over and over, the thrill of the sound somehow added to the romance of the work (!), and the thrill of editing got me right then.

Starting to commission at HBJ was the next thrill: developing ideas and working with authors. That's still the biggest thrill — making something, as opposed to working on something almost made. It's alchemical. I haven't done a lot of fiction editing; I find it quite intimidating. The little bit of fiction that I've done I've enjoyed, but I have felt anxious about it, so there's been some impediment to the

untrammelled joy.

I really like structural editing. I enjoy rearranging the skeleton, putting the limbs back in the right place. Later you can append the clothing, the words. How else are you going to work with a text if it's all in the wrong place? I teach structural editing at Macleay, and I'm always surprised when I hear about other courses that don't cover it.

I'm also astonished that so many people still come to be trained, given the tightness of the industry and the difficulty in getting a viable job. Somehow the image of glamour hasn't been eroded. I've tried my level best to puncture that one. At the beginning of the course I make it very plain that it's a difficult world to get into — and move from, if you've chosen a particular area and want to move genre.

But for most who are there the thing that resides is the love of text. A lot of people say, 'If I only edit for myself, that's okay'. Student profiles are changing though. I'm getting a lot more writers — they want to make the best attempt they can to get published. That's an interesting shift.

Teaching's different from editing; it's a different part of me. It's also a chance to interact with twenty-five people and have that ongoing collaboration. Freelancing can be very isolating. It's that sense of team I miss, the exchange of ideas that doesn't happen when you're sitting in front of a computer. I've only been freelancing this time for four years, the last time for three. What drew me back last time was the isolation. There have been a few offers to go in-house again, but it's hard to give up my autonomy — although it's tempting to have somebody looking after the computer and doing the photocopying.

Travel is a bit of a bug for me. I've lived and worked in Indonesia; I call Bali my spiritual home. I'm about to go next week again. I worked as a trainer on an aid project that was set up just before Soeharto was overthrown. The project was to look at textbooks, curriculum and examinations throughout the secondary school system. My role was to work with the editors, designers and writers, and to train them in production and instructional materials design. It was a fabulous time.

I arrived three weeks before Soeharto was overthrown, and we were evacuated the week before he left. It was all very dramatic ... the first time I've ever thought 'I could get knocked off here'. A friend said, 'I'm coming to fetch you in two hours; pack your bags'. It wasn't as if I had all my things there, but I did have photographs and books. I didn't have my passport because it was at the

Immigration Department being stamped with my visa — no travel papers. There was this very scary ride to the Australian Embassy in an armoured car with a guy with a gun on the front seat.

I went back to the Jakarta Aid Project in another role eight months later. I think I was in a really privileged position — not in terms of status, but I was in a position of trust. Often the receptivity of people in projects is questionable. You can be seen as a walking purse. People are polite, but it's a mercenary exchange on some level. I was fortunate that the people I worked with were open to my being there: we had fantastic collaboration. It was a real exchange. There was a new mood in Indonesia, great optimism and opportunities.

I hadn't been to Jakarta before I worked there, but I liked Java. On Bali there's a huge antagonism to the Javanese. They can be arrogant and autocratic, but when you're in Java, it's different. I did quite a bit of travelling there. Just exquisite. I don't know why, but I have an affinity with the place.

What sort of change have I seen in editing in Australia? Any change has been minute. The days of invisible mending are still hailed as the good days. I'm not so sure it's such a worthy description. I'm not suggesting we come up front, but I'd like to see more understanding of what we do, more appreciation of the possibilities of the collaboration. The thing that has changed is that there are fewer in-house editors and there's very little in-house training. Editing is more specialised. If you're a publisher choosing between somebody who's a generalist and someone who has a specific skill, you're going to go for the specialist. If you are concerned about deadlines and time and money, you'll try to find someone who is already involved in a particular genre, so the preamble — the familiarisation — has already been done.

The changes I'd like to see are more real understanding of what we do rather than rhetoric by clients and top management. There is a fairly rapid move to the American definition of editor as publisher in a lot of large Australian houses. This confuses the issue of who does the commissioning and who works on the detailed developmental editing and who is taking the text through to completion — roles are blurred.

At writers' festivals that have anything related to working with editors there's a hackneyed session where a few authors schlep with their editors and give them some token recognition with, 'Of course, if it hadn't been for Jo's help I wouldn't have achieved this ...', but the genuine collaboration is rarely trumpeted.

I'd like to see the relationship dealt with in a more realistic way, one that

acknowledges the depth of the process. Most people aren't game to do that. I don't want to knock anybody off their perch — writers have an incredibly tough job. Olin Miller said the only thing tougher than writing a book is wrestling crocodiles. It can be an excruciating process, and I don't want to take away from that, but so is editing if you do it right. It's a rigorous pursuit, and if given its due it shouldn't be seen as antagonistic to writing.

We're not all working with high fliers who won't have a word changed, and wanting acknowledgement isn't just a matter of overblown egos. Of course, the more secure writers are in their craft or their knowledge, the happier they are to be edited. But I think people are nervous of any form of assessment or change. I think we have to approach the promotion of editing from a different angle. I haven't quite nussed out how to sell the message, but I'm a bit dubious about bumper stickers saying 'Editors rule, OK'.

## **COPYRIGHT COPYING**

*A note from the Editor:*

Has anyone else tried to print out Information Sheets from the Copyright Council's web site? Have you shared my experience of many Postscript errors (preventing printing) and system crashes? I would be interested to know.

In case you're wondering, I did manage to capture a few. But I can't afford the time to handle the crashes, and have had to bow out.

## **ONE THING AND ANOTHER**

*The following article was originally published in the newsletter of the Canberra Society of Editors for October 2002 and is reproduced here with the kind permission of the publisher and the author, Elizabeth Murphy.*

I'm back! Not sure for how long, but this is the first of a new series in which I'll look at one thing and another that strikes me as being useful information for editors. This month's topic was triggered by a request for a ruling on the punctuation to use with *however*, *nevertheless*, *therefore* and similar words.

The accepted format for all such words is the same, but the word *however*

causes most problems because it can be used as both a conjunction and an adverb. It can mean *nevertheless* (conjunction) or *in whatever way* (adverb).

*However* as a conjunction or connective:

I like your hat. However, I do not like your dress.

I like your hat. I do not, however, like your dress.

I will be at the meeting; however, I am likely to be late.

I will be at the meeting; I am likely, however, to be late.

In these examples, *however* at the beginning of a clause must be preceded by either a semicolon or a full stop because it introduces a new whole sentence (main clause). It is followed by a comma. In the middle of a clause, it must have a comma on either side of it. In all these instances, *however* is not part of the clause, so must be set off by punctuation marks on either side.

When it's used to introduce a clause, *however* must not be preceded by a comma. A comma is not a sufficiently strong punctuation mark to indicate the end of a complete thought (whole sentence; main clause). The *Style manual* prefers the use of a semicolon before it. I would allow either a semicolon or a full stop, depending on how closely related the first and second clauses are and how much emphasis you want to show — the full stop conveys greater emphasis.

*However* as an adverb:

I will get to that meeting however long it takes me.

In this example, *however* is an adverb modifying *long*. No punctuation is required with the word at all.

*Michèle Drouart had a sneak preview of this article in her role as proofreader. She wants to add something:*

I find this discussion of *however* incomplete. There are the rare occasions when *however* (meaning *nevertheless*) may be added at the end of the clause (as a kind of afterthought); in such cases it is always preceded by a comma:

She said she would definitely not be attending. She did turn up, however.

(Where 'but' cannot be used in this way, 'however' is acceptable. That is because 'however' is not at any time a conjunction, but is an adverb, only an adverb with a different meaning when used in this way.)

Another point: When used as an adverb modifying an adjective, while it requires no punctuation, *however* may be preceded by a comma in a longer sentence:

They all promised they would try their hardest to attend that meeting, however long it might take them.

*Editor's note: Not sure about that last one, Michèle. And I hope you're not trying to ban the ultimate but from colloquial speech. That would be a pity. I can see where you're coming from, but.*

## COMPOUND ADJECTIVES

You dear, sweet, kind people. Not one of you pulled your Editor up on an error he made in his comments in August's *BW* on the new edition of the *Style manual*. I failed to see the distinction between

surface to air missiles

*and*

a San Francisco based author.

The first is rendered as 'surface-to-air missiles' according to the *SM* (page 92) — and wouldn't we all agree — but did you ever see 'San-Francisco-based author'?

The latter is where the *SM* recommends an en rule, as in 'anti-harm minimisation stance' and 'hepatitis C-positive person' (page 108).

What does the membership think? Are you happy with those last examples? And do you think it makes any difference (except, perhaps, to another editor) to put an en rule rather than a hyphen? On the other hand, would you be happy to let through your hands 'San-Francisco-based author'? Or is there a case, in these cases, for making them exceptional and leaving the expression bare of horizontals: 'San Francisco based author'?

*Michèle decided to contribute on this question as well, setting an excellent example to all:*

I find this use of the en dash confusing. I haven't seen it anywhere else, and can't understand where the *SM* got it from. For compound adjectives of this kind it has always been only hyphens — though these are going out of fashion, it seems, in most English-speaking countries. En dashes are for things like 'the Perth–Melbourne train'. Use hyphens or leave them out, but don't use the en dash!

*I think we know where Michèle stands on this one. And she doesn't seem to have any hesitation about 'San Francisco-based author'. Is it just me (well, I) who feel(s) uneasy about it? For the record, I have seen the en rule used a few times as the SM prescribes, and in at least one instance it was in a publication that could not have been influenced by the manual. From the USA, I seem to remember.*

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:** Tuesday 21 January 2003

## **CONTACTING SOEWA**

### *President*

Anne Surma, 9287 1494, [asurma@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:asurma@murdoch.edu.au)

### *Vice-President*

Janet Blagg, 9337 4352, [jblagg@q-net.net.au](mailto:jblagg@q-net.net.au)

### *Secretaries*

Susan Green (minutes), 9335 8071, [greens@mail.iinet.net.au](mailto:greens@mail.iinet.net.au)

Ffion Murphy (membership), 9450 1546, [ffion@iinet.net.au](mailto:ffion@iinet.net.au)

### *Treasurer*

Linda Browning, 9266 2253, [tbrownin@cc.curtin.edu.au](mailto:tbrownin@cc.curtin.edu.au)

### *Education and Training*

Betty Durston, [bdurston@cygnus.uwa.edu.au](mailto:bdurston@cygnus.uwa.edu.au)

### *General Committee Members*

James Hansen, 9293 1972, [jehansen@starwon.com.au](mailto:jehansen@starwon.com.au)

Wendy Bulgin, 9243 5660, [wendybulgin@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wendybulgin@yahoo.com.au)

Amanda Curtin, 9377 2091, [curtin@highway1.com.au](mailto:curtin@highway1.com.au)

### *Newsletter*

Editor: Allan Watson, 9381 3732, [allanwatson@optusnet.com.au](mailto:allanwatson@optusnet.com.au)

Researcher: Lorna de Courtenay, 9386 5766, [ldecourt@echidna.id.au](mailto:ldecourt@echidna.id.au)

Proofreader: Michèle Drouart, 9382 2930, [mdrouart@hotmail.com.au](mailto:mdrouart@hotmail.com.au)

SOEWA Web Site: [www.editorswa.iinet.net.au](http://www.editorswa.iinet.net.au)

Colin Muller, [colin@twobluedots.com.au](mailto:colin@twobluedots.com.au)