

BOOK WORM

newsletter of the society of editors (wa) inc.

September 2003

From the Chair

As we mentioned in last month's newsletter, a CASE working group has recently completed its investigations into options for developing a national accreditation scheme for editors in Australia. The group's findings have been compiled into an informed and thoughtful draft report, which will be sent to you separately and which will also shortly be available on the SOEWA website.

Members from all Australian societies have been asked to provide comments on the report, in order to take the process to its next stage—a final proposal for developing an accreditation scheme. This proposal, which will be complete early in 2004, will then be voted on by the members of each state and territory society.

On Saturday 22 November at the Alexander Library, SOEWA will be running a workshop designed to facilitate detailed discussion about, and feedback on, the draft report. Obviously, it's crucial that as many members as possible attend the workshop so that the views we return to the working group are truly representative of our membership.

We will be sending out a formal notice and more details about the workshop closer to the date; in the meantime please make a note in your diaries. (If you aren't able to attend the workshop, you will be able to email your responses to us.)

See you at the Phoney Festival on 2 September!

Anne Surma

Editorial

One of the good things about being editor of a newsletter such as *Book Worm* is that you get to write whatever you like in the editorial. Ah, the power!

I've been approached on several occasions by editors of other newsletters asking

for permission to reprint items from our journal, and I have gladly given the go-ahead, as I believe that raising our profile (notoriety at last?) can only aid the spreading of our message.

In this edition, Mar Bucknell offers some amusing tales about a couple of simple prepositions. And in answer to your last question here, Mar, yes. He's also thrown open an opportunity for us all to get involved in the naming of his column. Personally, I favour "Pedant's Corner". (And the sharp-eyed among you will notice the change in the column's punctuation. Edpower!) My reason for this is that, as Pedant Mar Bucknell is the author of the column, and the only contributor to it, it should be presented as being "owned" by him. Thus, the singular possessive is appropriate. What do others think?

Sadly, I have a diminished bank of contributions for this edition, so our journal is necessarily briefer than earlier *Book Worms*, but I'm sure you will all rally to my call for articles for the October issue.

HELP! Please do send me anything you think appropriate.

Promotions Working Group: delegates wanted

The enthusiasm expressed at the editors conference for enhancing the profile of editors led to the call for a working group to develop a strategy (or a "strategic process kit") for promoting the profession.

Are you keen to become involved in this group? You will have the opportunity to "meet" (by email and teleconference) colleagues from around the country and to be part of an exciting initiative. The commitment isn't arduous, and you'll be making a valuable contribution to your field.

Please contact Anne Surma (a.surma@murdoch.edu.au) as soon as possible to register your interest.

New software for making books

Tom Jenkins

I was one of the people who took advantage of the joint WIP/Society of Editors initiative

in organising demonstrations of software at Desktop Applications. I know it was designed to sell stuff, but it was also a valuable learning experience. I've designed lots of books on various versions of Adobe PageMaker, but the well-done presentation on a big screen of Adobe's new software, In Design, convinced me, and I've just bought it—for a good price, too, because Adobe wants to promote the new stuff and kill off PageMaker.

One of the discoveries I have made in working with authors is that many, perhaps most, computer users are fumbling about in the dark, under-using their machines and software. I suspect we editors are not vastly different.

I found the WIP/Society demo an eye-opener and hope for more, maybe on such fundamental stuff as word-processing. We could all learn.

Editing-related courses at Australian universities

If you're interested in finding out more about tertiary-level courses in the field of editing, go to the SOEWA home page and click on "Education".

Pedant's Corner

Mar Bucknell

Does anyone care whether this spot should be called "Pedant's Corner", "Pedants' Corner" or "Pedants Corner"? They're all supportable. Any comments, the more flip the better, will be received with a wry raise of the eyebrow and perhaps a knowing chuckle.

Recently I've been asked to check several reprints—work which has been written by a professional author, copy-edited and proofread before—and I've discovered that many authors and even editors have a lot of trouble with "onto" and I even found an amusing problem with "into". So, at the risk of boring those who already know, "onto" is *not* synonymous with "on to" and there are many occasions when to assume this produces amusing errors. A rough guide is that "onto" means "upon" and if you're having difficulty working out whether it should be "onto" or "on to", speak the sentence aloud with "upon" in place of the "onto". If it sounds wrong, and especially if it sounds just

plain silly, then use “on to”.

There are fewer problems with “into” but an amusing instance in a book —yes, a reprint by a renowned author —I proofread recently shows the need for care. A character is described as escorting someone “into dinner”. Now the ensuing paragraph was not a salacious description of sexual play with food, so I think it’s safe to assume that they were going “in to” the room where dinner was served, where they sat down and mundanely ate dinner. To use this as a good example of the problems with “onto”, if they had then moved “onto” the dessert, again we could expect lurid details of sexual play with food, whereas moving “on to” dessert suggests nothing more extravagant than putting away the plates and getting out the bowls and spoons.

By the way, how come I never get to work on the books where they really did move onto the dessert? Am I working for the wrong people?

Apostrophe catastrophe

The apostrophe, according to an item in the newspaper on 22 August, faces redundancy.

“According to research for the Oxford Dictionary,” said the story, “the misuse and omission of apostrophes has become so common that it threatens to undermine what has long been a strict rule of grammar. The researchers examined hundreds of millions of published words and found that the use of apostrophes had become something of a random affair.”

A neighbouring item in the paper reported that “reality TV”, “SARS” and Harry Potter’s “Muggle” are among 3000 new entries in the latest Oxford Dictionary, along with, God help us, “turntablist”, for disk jockey. Which leads even the most devoted COD fan to wonder if the Oxford lexicographers have finally lost the plot. Are they up to the job of sorting out the apostrophe?

No-one doubts that there is a problem —indeed, a crisis, a catastrophe —but it won’t be solved by abolishing the apostrophe. Drive past vegetable shops whose blackboards offer “cauli’s” and “banana’s” and, yes, you are tempted. Read your e-mail and shudder at occurrences of the possessive “it’s” that have acquired an apostrophe.

But why in any case does the correct possessive “its” lack an apostrophe when

almost every other possessive has one? Should we perhaps have more apostrophes, not fewer?

Imagine a world without apostrophes. Its not likely, is it? I simply cant imagine coping with a language derived of that interesting, cheerful, upward punctuation. From a purely visual point of view, apostrophe's, like dash's, quotation mark's, question mark's and exclamation mark's, relieve the tedium of text, dont you think? [Ill say. *Ed.*]

Forthcoming meetings

Please note: The September general meeting on 2 September is the annual joint function (see below) and will not be held at Tresillian.

Annual SOEWA–Women in Publishing joint function: “The virtual reality of quoting”

The Society of Editors (WA) and Women in Publishing (WA) invite members to attend what promises to be a stimulating evening when the client panel of judges for the Phoney Festival Quoting Challenge announce the “winning” quotes, comment on the process of selection, and answer questions from participants and the audience. This is a golden opportunity to learn from expert assessors, as well as from your colleagues.

Our judges are Joanne Malone, Principal, Concord Training Services; Marina Valmadre, Principal, Oakridge Communication Group; and Donna Weston, Community Information Coordinator, Department of Environment.

Enjoy great company, a million-dollar night vista across the river, and a delicious supper of éclairs and tartlets, tea, coffee and juices. Guests are welcome.

When: 7.30 – 9.30 pm, Tuesday 2 September 2003

Where: Royal Perth Yacht Club, Australia II Drive, Crawley (parking opposite on verge unless gates are open, in which case you may park in the

grounds)

Cost: \$15 members, \$18 non-members

RSVP to: Michele Crawford

Phone: 9246 4116

Email: dcrawfor@ozemail.com.au

RSVP by: 26 August 2003 with your payment

Payment: Cheques/money orders (made out to Society of Editors (WA)) to Michele Crawford, 8 Basalt Place, Carine WA 6020

October general meeting: TBA

See next issue of *Book Worm* for details of the meeting on 7 October, 7.30 pm, at Tresillian Community Centre.

November meeting

Please note that instead of the general meeting on 4 November, Western Australia's Accreditation Workshop will be held on Saturday afternoon, 22 November, at the Alexander Library building in Northbridge. See next issue of *Book Worm* for details.

Special offer to editors

For a small fee, yet to be determined, Allan Watson will soon be offering editors' special conducted tours of Subiaco / Shenton Park supermarkets. See for yourself these barely believable linguistic phenomena:

“Only trolleys fitted with a breaking system are to be used on the travelators”

“Isle 1 ... Isle 2 ... Isle 3 ... Isle 4”

“Open everyday”

Please be advised that any member who finds the last of these expressions acceptable will be debarred from the tour. The matter will be determined by rigorous cross-examination.

Deadline for October 2003 Book Worm issue: Tuesday 23 September 2003. All submissions gratefully accepted.

Remaining 2003 Book Worm deadlines

Issue	Deadline
October 2003	23 September 2003
November 2003	21 October 2003
December 2003	18 November 2003

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