

BOOK WORM

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS (WA) INC.

June 2005

From the Chair

Mentoring programs

In August of last year—following advice from previous mentors and mentees of the Emerging Writers’ Program—we were approached by the State Literature Centre with a proposal to prepare a joint submission for funding for a mentoring program. This program was to run from 1 June 2005 to 31 December 2005.

The submission was formulated to involve two experienced editors working with two emerging young writers/illustrators aged 30 years or younger. Unfortunately, the submission was not accepted by the funding body, the Australian Council for the Arts.

In September our 2005 combined seminar with Women in Publishing considered the benefits of mentoring. Ann Kennish, Small Business Development Corporation and Kim Lisson, Coach School, put forward their positive views on mentoring. Their views were confirmed by Anne Surma who spoke of the value, to her, of being mentored through a program at Murdoch University. The feedback from participants of the seminar was in favour of mentorship to assist editors.

In the days before editing courses were introduced into schools and universities, editing was learnt mainly on the job, and even today—when courses are available—there is still a need for on-the-job-training, as each client has different needs and every piece of text differs from the previous one. However, this type of training is now very rare. Mentors can provide, not only important guidance in the actual task of editing, but also background information about the world of editing, including an understanding of the networking process, that involves interacting with professionals in the editing field.

Experienced editors acting as mentors can also help the less experienced avoid editor/author misunderstanding by demonstrating the importance of a written brief to provide a clear understanding of the job, how much editing is expected of the editor, as well as the level of responsibility.

We should try to keep the momentum for mentorship alive and think creatively about ways to obtain funding to implement programs. If any

members would be interested in working with the committee on this important issue, we would like to hear from you. Please let me know.

Betty Durston

Editorial

I want to take the opportunity to encourage members to come to the website meeting this month—see details below. I believe that the site could be a great marketing tool for us all, if we organise it properly. It could also demonstrate the sort of professional knowledge and solidarity that might serve to discourage dodgy clients of the type discussed at a recent meeting.

Regarding the 'Reply' and 'Reply to All' issue being discussed recently on the Yahoo e-mail list, I think it's simply a matter of stopping briefly before choosing the option Reply/Reply to All and asking oneself "Do I want everyone to see this? Does everyone need to see this?"

I have been doing some different sort of work lately, transcribing interviews with mental health patients living in the community. The social workers conducting the interviews ask the interviewees various questions about the quality of their lives, their challenges and their hopes for the future. In transcribing the result, it is hard to know how much of the fill-in verbal 'rubbish' to include—all the "you know" and "basically..." sort of words that some of these people use—and the way they never complete a sentence (arrgh!). In some cases, including it all helps the reader to understand how ill the person is, at that point in time. On the other end of the scale, it is a revelation to hear how articulate some of these people are, though grappling with bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, etc. Despite being quite draining work, experiencing these interviews certainly makes me feel fortunate.

Tanya Marwood

Forthcoming Meetings

June Meeting: Designing the SOEWA Website

The June meeting will be your chance to contribute to the redesign of the Society's website, the main contact point for many people.

Having looked at the websites of other Australian Societies of Editors and some overseas, we thought that ours could be improved. Des Carne, a member who is a web designer, and Ceri Clocherty who keeps our site up-to-date, have done a great deal of (unpaid) work in the last three months. Now it's your turn!

At the meeting, Tom Jenkins will point our thoughts in a progressive direction with a short talk about how books have evolved to work in the digital age; they

have become a lot more like websites – and there are lessons for creators of books in that.

Then Des will demonstrate changes he has made to our prototype website – and we will ask you, the members, to tell us what you want. We hope to do this using a laptop computer and big screen. What should be the main purpose of the site? Do you like the new logo, or the colour used? Do you feel the Register of Members is easy to get into and that it works for you? Do you want more links?

This is an important opportunity to contribute to the Society and its future. Be there!

You can link to our current website [here](#).

When: Tuesday 7 June, 7:30pm until 9:00pm

Where: Tresillian Community Centre, 21 Tyrell St, Nedlands

Cost: \$2

Report on the May 2005 Meeting:

Editors and Mandatory Sentencing

A presentation by **James Hansen**; this summary is taken from his notes.

James began with a discussion of simple, compound and complex sentences. Firstly, simple sentences with their subject, object and conjunctions were discussed. Then he looked at the compound sentence, in which conjunctions such as “and”, “but” and “or” link sentences. Joining two (or more) simple sentences using coordinating conjunctions results in a *compound* sentence.

Eg. “Doris dived into the pool. Doris swam twenty laps.”

Becomes: “Doris dived into the pool *and* swam twenty laps.”

James explained that when this joining happens, the simple sentences are renamed ‘clauses’: either principal or main or independent clauses.

Discussion then moved on to complex sentences: those made up of one main clause with one or more subordinate clauses. The three classes of subordinate clauses – *noun* clauses, *adverbial* clauses and *adjectival (relative)* clauses – were explained.

James then talked about analysis of sentences to reveal structure; especially where there is a problem that needs remedying. He offered a 5-step process for this analysis.

After that, James touched on word order in sentences and made the point that because Modern English has lost many of its inflections, appropriate word order is vital.

Through the 'Problem Pieces' supplied by members, James then covered such topics as 'run-on' sentences; word order; loose, periodic and balanced sentences; and the punctuation integral to all the above. There were good discussions of all the 'Problem Pieces', even some healthy dissension on important usages!

Despite the technical nature of the discussion, some of the 'Problem Pieces' elicited a laugh, eg:

“Blessing the people from the balcony in St Peter’s Square, an assassin shot at the pope twice.”

(Picture the assassin absurdly waving his gun in a sign of the cross before shooting!)

As usual, this presentation by James Hansen was thorough and of great practical use. Those members who would like notes on the material covered, please e-mail James on jehansen@starwon.com.au

Occasional Series on Australian Editors – Update

The February meeting of CASE enthusiastically endorsed the proposal by the Society of Editors (Vic.) working group—Diane Brown, Kerry Biram, Janet Mackenzie, Renée Otmar and Anitra Nelson—to embark on a publishing project profiling some of our best and most interesting editors.

The aim of researching and publishing these profiles is to increase the visibility of editors and promote the editing profession. The concept for this project was inspired by Anthony Barker’s *One of the First and One of the Finest: Beatrice Davis, Book Editor*, commissioned by Lisa Berryman and published by the Society of Editors (Vic.) in 1991.

The working group has a national vision and calls for expressions of interest and offers of support for the project from other state and territory members. The group is particularly interested in hearing from others who would like to contribute to the *Series* as researchers, writers, editors or publishers.

We have met twice already to scope the project, to develop an efficient structure for the group and to plan future activities. We are calling for suggestions for editors to profile and for other background details from close contacts who are willing to be interviewed about their work practices, or to offer samples of their work and other biographical data.

Complementing its print publishing program, the working group is currently setting up a database on editors, their work and influence. The Victorian working group will promote the project and its aims and will also report to the 2005

national editors' conference in Melbourne. It is also organising a panel session at the conference focusing on Life Members.

Kerry Biram will post news about the *Occasional Series* and future activities of the working group on the Society of Editors (Vic.) website soon. Visit the website for regular updates and progress: <http://www.socedvic.org/>

If you have any queries about the *Occasional Series*, please contact Diane Brown, Convenor of the Victorian working group: diane@netspace.net.au

New Members

We welcome the following new members to SOEWA:

Su McLeod, 25 Glenbar Road, Duncraig, WA 6023; e-mail: su.mcleod@ap.jll.com

Anne Ryden, 10 Hill View Tce, St James, WA 6102; e-mail: a.ryden@exchange.curtin.edu.au

Deadline for July 2005 *Book Worm* issue:

Tuesday 21 June 2005.

All submissions gratefully accepted.

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