

BOOK WORM

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS (WA) INC.

May 2006

From the chair

Greetings all.

We have more new members, a new regular venue, requests from other organisations for all kinds of information and a committee that is working hard to bring you the best speakers and informative subjects for our meetings in the year ahead. Please let me know if you have particular topics or aspects of editing that you would like to learn more about or expertise that you would be willing to share with others at our meetings. As you will see in this edition of *Book Worm*, long-time SOEWA member Anne Surma will honour us with an address at our next meeting. Bring your questions along!

We welcome Cheryl Pech to the position of SOEWA secretary. She brings her professional organising skills and enthusiasm to the position, which she will be fitting in around the needs of a husband and 18-month-old daughter. Thank you, Cheryl.

Two or three events and courses on aspects of editing have come to my attention during the past month. For members' information and interest, I have decided to post messages about such items on our electronic message system as they arrive, with the following caution. Except for official SOEWA activities, we cannot and do not endorse particular courses or events. Anybody thinking of taking one should exercise due care. At the same time, I would like to hear from members who have taken part in events/courses to hear if they have found them helpful or not. If you have questions about using the message group at Editors_WA@yahoogroups.com, take advantage of the fact that the society's distinguished vice-president and moderator is James Hansen, who is endlessly knowledgeable, helpful with advice and a stalwart of the Society. Remember also to keep your entry up to date at our website www.editorswa.com.

Finally, requests for information from other organisations and individuals are increasing. In the past, James has used his personal knowledge and initiative to summarise for them whatever the current situation was. An idea under consideration now is for the committee to look at producing a handout that would provide students, aspiring editors and writers etc with the information they seek. Once written, it would be fairly easy to keep up to date. The committee will need to decide what should be in it, and a volunteer or small group of volunteers will need to undertake research and write it. The handout would be good PR for the society, and a good opportunity to provide reliable information about the editing

profession. If you would be interested in contributing to this project, please drop me a line.

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Kerry Coyle

Editorial

This issue sees the introduction of a new column reporting the work of the Accreditation Board, 'CredAbility', by Amanda Curtin.

We also have a report on the last meeting from our new secretary, Cheryl Pech. Whilst this might look a bit lengthy, I suggest that members who were unable to attend the meeting take the time to read it, as it offers practical advice and examples concerning the process of becoming accredited.

In the next issue we will be distributing information from SOE (Tas.) about the national conference, which this year is being held in lovely Tasmania.

Finally, I apologise if this newsletter is late in arriving, as its time frame has been affected by the holidays and the limited availability of those involved in its production and distribution. Thanks very much to Allan Watson for proofreading this edition at short notice.

Tanya Marwood

Forthcoming meetings

May Meeting: Talk by Anne Surma

SOEWA member Anne Surma will talk about her work as a **Senior Lecturer in English and Professional Writing at Murdoch University**. Although she has held various in-house and freelance editing roles in the past, these days Anne's role as an editor is integrated with her responsibilities as undergraduate teacher, postgraduate supervisor and researcher/writer.

The hotly debated topics of student literacy skills, the English curriculum and postmodernism are among those that influence Anne's own practice, and she looks forward to discussing these with society members.

When: Tuesday 2 May 2006, 7.30-9.00 pm

Where: CWA House, 1174 Hay Street, West Perth, third-floor Boardroom (enter via back door and take the elevator. Free parking is available at the rear of the building.)

Cost: \$2 members, \$5 non-members

RSVP to Kerry Coyle, phone 9482 3143, e-mail kcoyle@westnet.com.au

Report on April Meeting: IPed Accreditation Workshop

SOEWA's April meeting at CWA House was a workshop on the IPed accreditation scheme presented by Amanda Curtin, SOEWA's representative on the Accreditation Board. It followed an initial workshop at the national conference in October. The Board envisages that a further workshop (or workshops) will be conducted in all states, closer to the call for applications in the first half of 2007. By that stage, there will be set guidelines for applicants and revised Standards.

Amanda strongly encouraged members to download the Accreditation Final Report and FAQs from the IPed site www.iped-editors.org/ (click on accreditation, then download Final Report (October 2004) and FAQs (March-April 2005 [CASE Notes 4]) from the list of documents). This provides the background and details of the accreditation scheme, which is based on a portfolio of evidence, and many examples of what can be included in the portfolio.

Accreditation centres on the five Standards contained in the "Australian Standards for Editing Practice". These can be downloaded from the IPed or SOEWA sites www.editorswa.com/. The Standards are now under review and will include, for example, expansion of the project management Standard and introduction of an online editing Standard.

Applicants will receive an information kit prior to submitting their application. Applications will be submitted to the IPed secretariat and forwarded to an assessor not known to the applicant. The assessor makes a recommendation to an accreditation panel, which makes the final decision. There will be an appeal process in the event that an applicant is unsuccessful.

Each state society will nominate distinguished editors to assess the first round of applications; thereafter any accredited editor will be eligible to be appointed as an assessor. Janet Blagg and Anne Surma have accepted nominations as initial assessors for Western Australia. To maintain anonymous assessment, members in this state will not be assessed by Janet or Anne.

Amanda made a number of key points:

1. The portfolio of evidence can be compiled from anything that proves that the Standards are met, including author queries, correspondence, style sheets, or a work in progress showing marked or tracked changes. For substantial works, a representative section is sufficient.
2. The Board will focus on minimum standards of competence.
3. The scheme aims to make accreditation within the reach of working editors.
4. Accreditation is an opportunity to improve workplace practises by encouraging an evidence-gathering mindset.

5. As stated in the Final Report, the applicant is expected to demonstrate editorial skills both in the evidence submitted (i.e. editorial problems are understood) and by their ability to present information clearly to a target audience (i.e. the assessors). Some of the evidence may apply to more than one Standard; brevity is a virtue.

There are three parts to the application for accreditation: Part A is a form, Part B is the portfolio of evidence (not expected to exceed 100 pages), and Part C is a statement of no more than 1000 words explaining how the evidence in Part B demonstrates compliance with each Standard. Project constraints such as time, budget or client instructions may be indicated in Part C. If the client does not take up a perfectly reasonable suggestion it does not matter, as long as evidence of an understanding of editorial principles has been provided in the portfolio.

The focus on minimum standards of competence means that only those Standards relevant to the applicant's work apply. The five Standards (A-E) cover twenty-two sections (A1, A2, etc.); addressing these sections would meet minimum standards. Of the subsections (A1.1, A1.2, etc.), only those that apply to the applicant's work need be addressed. As an example, one member noted that she does not deal with "Legal and ethical concerns" (A3). Amanda explained that it may be sufficient for an applicant to have prepared a copyright statement, or used non-exclusive language. A second example was that demonstration of an awareness of the next stage of publishing following editing would meet the Reproduction Standard (A6).

Various Standards overlap. For example, Standards A2, A4 and A5 are contained in the Overview (A1), but A3 is not covered elsewhere. This means that an applicant could use a single piece of evidence to demonstrate competence in more than one Standard.

Confidentiality may be an issue for some editors, and the Board is seeking legal advice on this, however some confidential material could be used once published and permission has been granted. Assessors will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

The final part of the workshop involved working on handouts. The first set was used to emphasise that there are multiple editorial solutions and that the accreditation assessors will be cognisant of this. Amanda also mentioned a book relevant to this issue, "One Book/Five Ways: The Publishing Procedures of Five University Presses" by Joyce Kachergis. As editors we identify the editorial problems (structure and substance, content and style, and formatting) and find workable solutions. An imperfectly edited handout containing errors of addition and omission was also provided as a very poor example for inclusion in a portfolio.

The second handout was used to demonstrate how an editorial report could be used as evidence of communication skills.

The third set of handouts illustrated how a portfolio could be commenced from a single project and that only a few pieces of evidence are required. They also demonstrated the different types of document that could be used as evidence of skills. Amanda recommended selecting one project and identifying the Standards that are met. This would show that a few documents can be used to address multiple standards, and would also identify Standards for which further evidence is required. This may require documenting conversations, or writing a brief or a confirmatory letter.

Finally organisation of the portfolio of evidence was discussed. Guidelines will be available, but there may be many different ways to present Part C. Two methods are a narrative form with Standards indicated in brackets, and a statement addressing the Standards consecutively. An example of the latter was provided in the third set of handouts. Importantly, the clarity with which the application is compiled and written carries weight.

In answer to a question, Amanda replied that if it appears some Standards cannot be met, it should not mean that an editor must diversify. As stated in the Final Report, the background information provided in Part A will indicate to the assessors those Standards that are relevant to the applicant's work. Thus a clear description of the applicant's editorial role is essential.

This workshop demonstrated the process of accreditation in an accessible manner, and reinforced the goal of IPed to make it achievable by all working editors. Our skills in preparing the portfolio will be an essential part in the application. Amanda invited us to contact her with questions and comments (phone/fax 9377 2091, email acurtin@highway1.com.au).

Thank you, Amanda, for a very clear presentation.

Cheryl Pech

CredAbility 1

This is the first of the Accreditation Board's regular columns in our quest to reach the grail of accreditation for editors. Any quest is a challenge, and any challenge becomes easier if we all know as much as possible about what it entails. The aim of this column is to involve you by telling you what the Accreditation Board is seeking to do and how it is trying to do it, and by asking for your input. Our initial topic covers what has become a FAQ: how were the first assessors chosen?

Establishing our first pool of assessors

As set out in page 4 of the Accreditation Working Group's Final Report (2004), the Accreditation Board was charged 'in consultation with each state and territory to set up an interim pool of assessors comprising distinguished editors acceptable to their peers'. Once accreditation is granted, any accredited editor will be eligible to be appointed as an assessor. 'The aim is to ensure that the profession as a whole

regulates itself, and that accreditation is not controlled by a small and possibly unrepresentative group.'

Each member of the Board went back to their respective committees and asked them to nominate individuals who met the criteria of 'a distinguished editor'. It was clear that we needed career editors who were endorsed by their societies, who were accomplished and respected by their peers, and who were ethical, professional and active supporters of editing standards.

The obvious choices were the honorary life members of each society. However, as some societies had few such people to draw on than others, in these cases the various committees nominated appropriate people from among their peers. Those people, now deemed to be distinguished editors, were then invited to be among the first assessors, and the list of acceptances was provided to the Board.

As you can see from the list below, we have a formidable group of people who have agreed to take on the task of being the first assessors. (Details about the assessors and their areas of expertise will soon be available on our various state and territory websites as well as the IPed website, www.iped-editors.org.) This inaugural pool of editors has effectively been accredited by virtue of having been identified by their societies as 'distinguished' and nominated as assessors.

Please use CredAbility as a forum to raise your comments and queries. Contact Amanda Curtin (phone/fax 9377 2091; e-mail acurtin@highway1.com.au) with your feedback. The Board wants to know what your concerns are, to address them, and to discuss them via CredAbility.

First cohort of assessors for accreditation

ACT

Elizabeth Murphy (generalist)

Chris Pirie (generalist)

Loma Snooks (generalist)

NSW

Heather Jamieson (literary fiction, generalist)

Sybil Kesteven (educational, vocational)

Pam Peters (generalist)

Meryl Potter (generalist, education, corporate)

Julie Stanton (generalist)

Tas

Janice Bird (generalist)

SA

Karen Disney (generalist, online editing)
Celia Jellett (generalist, children's literature)
Susan Rintoul (generalist, education)
Kathie Stove (generalist, sciences)

QLD

Susan Addison (legal, humanities)
Paul Bennett (education, business)
Rosanne Fitzgibbon (fiction, history, education)
Judy Heinemann (education, government)
Jill Morris (children's and adult fiction)
Barbara Ker Wilson, AM (generalist)
Ruth Ridgway (sciences, generalist)
Jan Whelan (generalist)

Vic

Elizabeth Flann (generalist)
Beryl Hill (generalist, writer)
Susan Keogh (education, non fiction)
Janet Mackenzie (generalist, writer)
Renée Otmar (generalist)

WA

Anne Surma (generalist)
Janet Blagg (fiction, non-fiction)

Amanda Curtin

IPed notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors

April 2006

Some members may have wondered about the expense of forming and operating a national body, or be unclear about the process by which it is going ahead. There's still a lot to be done before any decisions are made.

The IPed Interim Council is extremely sensitive to costing issues, as well as the need to protect the societies' revenue deriving from membership and activities. As foreshadowed at the national conference last October, we have re-formed the National Organisation Working Group (NOWG), an *ad hoc* group of interested volunteers, to examine the method of forming a national organisation. Care is being taken to ensure NOWG involves contributors from all states and territories so that all viewpoints and society structures can be taken into account.

NOWG's task is to research and make a recommendation on the most effective and lowest-cost option for the establishment of a national entity. It will first make recommendations on its own terms of reference, consultative methodologies, ratification guidelines and so on, to make sure all interested parties are heard. Only after that will it set to work on exploring possible structures, taking into account the existing realities as well as what might be accomplished into the future. In due course a detailed, costed proposal will be put before the members, who will decide whether to create the national body.

IPed is also alert to industrial issues. On its behalf the Victorian society's committee is holding preliminary talks with the trade union that covers editors—the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance—about the implications of accreditation for union membership, the book editors award, and the new industrial relations legislation.

We are making progress with the new, improved national website: have a look at www.iped-editors.org

Janet Mackenzie
Liaison Officer

New members

Welcome to:

Michele Franken of 159 Giles St, Padbury, WA 6025

E-mail: mfranken@westnet.com.au

Deadline for June 2006 Book Worm issue:

Tuesday 23 May

All submissions gratefully accepted.

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