



BOOK WORM

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS (WA) INC.

March 2007

From the chair

Greetings all.

An official book launch is a pretty special time for all involved. The book is finished – conceived, written, rewritten and edited – and finally going out into the world. Last week, I was lucky enough to attend the Perth launch of the kids' adventure novel, *Barefoot Kids*, by Broome-based author Steve Hawke.

The venue, Notre Dame University in Fremantle, was shady and perfect. Laudatory speeches were given by writer/lecturer Ken Kelso and author Tim Winton before Steve Hawke told us a little more about the story of a bunch of indigenous kids who "will need to draw on everything they've got to make it through". When their special place, Eagle Beach, comes under fire from developers, the kids start a campaign to save the beach.

Steve said he really hoped it would be a hit, and especially with indigenous readers from about 10 years of age and up. He also paid tribute to his friends Alan Pigram and his brother, Stephen, from Broome. His long list of thanks (including to Consultant Editor and SOEWA committee member Janet Blagg) was a reminder of all the effort that goes into making our various professions so rewarding.

This is my last greeting to members as I stand down as President after a wonderful and fulfilling year. Just one special highlight is to announce that vice-president James Hansen has been invited to join our esteemed friend and colleague Betty Durston as honorary members of the Society. May I wish you all well in the busy year ahead. Regards,

Kerry Coyle

Editorial

Hello everyone. You will see in this edition that there are no IPED notes, as the report from the December meeting of assessors (published last month) took the place of the regular notes.

I also understand that there is a new logo for SOEWA, designed by Tom Jenkins, but have not received a copy of this and therefore have been unable to use it for this edition.

Following the warm reception of the meeting format in which members gave readings from their work (November meeting last year) this year's short AGM will be followed by more readings, though not all from SOEWA members this time. See you there!

Tanya Marwood

Forthcoming meetings

March: Writers do it with style, too!

Please make a diary note now for a very special March meeting. Following a **short AGM at 7.00**, we will present readings by four exceptional Western Australian writers:

- **Deborah Robertson**, whose novel *Careless* has just been short-listed for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize.
- **Julia Lawrinson**, an award-winning writer of young adult fiction, whose latest novel, *Bye, Beautiful*, was short-listed for the 2006 Queensland Premier's Literary Awards.
- **Simon Haynes**, author of the bestselling 'Hal Spacejock' series, with book two, *Hal Spacejock Second Course*, nominated in the West Australian Young Readers' Book Awards.
- **Michèle Drouart**, whose memoir *Into the Wadi* won the 2000 WA Premier's Book Award.

As always, delicious refreshments and wine will be served.

All members and guests welcome – no charge.

When: Tuesday 13 March 2007, 7.00 pm

Where: CWA House, 1174 Hay Street, West Perth, Boardroom (3rd Floor), enter from rear of building (Free off-street parking is available behind the building.)

Cost: nil

RSVP to Amanda Curtin, phone/fax 9377 2091; e-mail acurtin@highway1.com.au

Report on February meeting

Accreditation directions

The first SOEWA meeting of 2007 was an important one. It was, nevertheless, attended by only 20 members.

Janet Blagg, one of two WA people who will be an assessor for accreditation (the other is Anne Surma) talked about a crucial meeting of assessors, held in Melbourne in December. Five of the assessors attending were from Victoria, two each from South Australia and Canberra, one each from WA, NSW, Queensland and Tasmania. Robin Bennett, chair of the IPEd Accreditation Board, was present as an observer.

The proposals they made (endorsed by IPEd and the Accreditation Group) have considerable consequences for all of us.

Instead of accreditation being achieved by submitting a portfolio of work, it is now proposed that we all sit a test, possibly lasting three hours, to achieve a “first step” in basic accreditation. The test would be based on Australian Standards for Editing Practice and a draft test may be available by the national conference in May (a small group of four assessors is working on it now). We may be asked to vote for or against a test in June this year. It should be possible to have the prototype tested in time to accredit the first batch of editors by November 2007.

Janet said the assessors group envisaged that specialised accreditation by portfolio would follow at a later date, perhaps in 2008, for those who wished to augment their base level accreditation. Portfolio assessment would not then need to cover general, basic editing competence and the portfolio assessment could be specialised and much shorter.

The reason for this change is that examination of the practicalities of accreditation by portfolio revealed that it might take assessors as much as 20 hours to assess a problematic or borderline portfolio, leading to a fee as high as \$2000.

There will be a fee for the test, but how much is not yet known. It seems the test could be open to non-members of Societies of Editors, perhaps for an enlarged fee. What score will pass or fail is not yet determined either.

The test would probably be held on the same day around the country and cover copyediting, knowledge of relevant law, such as copyright and defamation, and project management. Other possible topics could include solving problems (what to do with an picture that's too low in quality?), headings and other hierarchies, grammar tests (eg “what's wrong with this sentence?”), bibliography, index, references and footnotes.

Questioners at our meeting expressed some dislike of being in an “exam room”; some disliked being limited in time; some thought more emphasis should be placed on copy-editing essentials; people who do all their editing on-screen were wary of having to edit on paper.

Janet's notes from the December meeting have been placed on our website, in the IPED page (link through Affiliations).

Tom Jenkins

Why we need editors

My stepmother recently sent me an mp3: an excerpt from a speech. The speaker was giving an illustration (of what, who knows?) in which he highlighted the differences between octopods and squid. This is my transcription, just like it sounded:

Now don't confuse the squid with an octopus: it's ten times larger than an octopus. An octopus is round where a squid is bullet-shaped, and it has ten testicles, not eight, and those last two can be much longer than the rest. And on those tentax... testicles, you'll finds, uh, saucer disks, that have teeth in 'em, all rows. Now, when they grabs on to something, no matter how slimy it is, it's not gettin' away.

Either this speech needed to be proofread, or before long there will be a new aphrodisiac on the market, and decapods will be in danger of extinction. What the effect will be on the intake of marine biology students, I daren't think.

However, it would explain why we never hear cephalopods sing any higher than bass-baritone.

Darren Speers

The Occasional Series on Australian Editors

Update: February 2007

The Occasional Series working group has enjoyed a well-deserved summer break and we are currently planning our program of activities for 2007.

Last year we worked with eight state and territory honorary life members towards publishing interviews conducted with them in conversation style at the 2005 national conference, *Editing in Context*, in Melbourne.

Editors in Conversation will be published by Australian Scholarly Publishing and the book will be launched at the Institute of Professional Editors National Conference in Hobart in May. Honorary life members featured are:

- Beryl Hill in conversation with Wendy Sutherland
- Loma Snooks in conversation with Renée Otmar
- Robyn Colman in conversation with Lee White
- Sheila Allison in conversation with Pamela Ball.

The 2005 conference panel (Some of the Finest: Honorary Life Members) is also included in the publication.

An order form for book sales will be uploaded to the Society of Editors (Victoria) website. Copies will be available for direct sale from the Canberra Society of Editors and the Society of Editors (Tasmania).

Editors in Conversation would not have been possible without the generous support of sponsors including The Centre for the Book (Monash University), the Society of Editors (Victoria), the Canberra Society of Editors and the Society of Editors (Tasmania).

We hope that *Editors in Conversation* will be part of an ongoing series of publications for the Occasional Series oral, print and digital archive project.

Another event is also planned for the Hobart conference. 'Shorts' will be a lively twenty-minute conversation featuring honorary life members from Queensland and New South Wales, Barbara Ker Wilson and Janette Whelan, to be facilitated by Robin Bennett, Society of Editors (Queensland).

Check the conference website for program details and updates.

In 2007 our interview program with honorary life members will continue. And we will seek publication of Occasional Series oral, print and digital material, with a view to profiling Australian editors and more widely promoting the editing profession.

We are currently updating the OSAE page on the Society of Editors (Victoria) website, and we will publish news of interest to state and territory members via Society newsletters. If members have any ideas or suggestions for our 2007 program, we'd like to hear from you.

Diane Brown (convenor)

Ph: (03) 9718 1358, E-mail: diane@netspace.net.au

OSAE 2007 working group: Kerry Biram, Diane Brown, Jenny Craig, Deborah Candy.

New members

Welcome to:

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Eleanor van der Merwe of 29 Henty Loop, Woodvale, WA 6006

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Deadline for April 2007 Book Worm issue:

Tuesday 20 March, 2007

All submissions gratefully accepted.

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