



BOOKWORM

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY OF EDITORS (WA) INC.

February 2008

From the Chair

Happy New Year, members!

A little late, perhaps, but this is the start of the Society's year in February. It's also the start of the year for my alarm clock, as I've been luxuriating in the school-holiday-related bliss that is sleep-ins. It's a win-win situation: the kids think they've won as they've been staying up later, but little do they know I only agree because it means they don't get up at the proverbial crack and pester me with annoying demands for unreasonable things ('Feed us!' 'Open your eyes, Mum!' 'Talk to us!').

Of course, I'm sure the rest of you are nothing like this. After a most sensible, environmentally conscious festive season, you were all straight back into things, bright-eyed, bushy-tailed and with nary a thought to the heat that has had me hiding inside (decidedly sleepy-eyed and frizzy-tailed).

I'm sure you're all revved up and raring to go for this year's Society happenings, such as the AGM, the new website launch, Accreditation, and all round peer support and networking with like-minded souls. So much so that I shall get out of the way and let *Bookworm* 'proper' begin.

I look forward to catching up with everyone at the coming meetings. After all, I've got a few more weeks before I need to wake up from this holiday slumber ...

Emma Pearmain

Forthcoming meeting

February: Punctuation Workshop

Date: Tuesday 5 February 2008

Time: 7.30 pm to 9.15 pm

Venue: CWA House, DINING ROOM (3rd Floor)

1174 Hay Street, West Perth

Parking at rear of building; enter via door from car park

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

RSVP: By midnight Friday 1 February to <emma007@amnet.net.au> with 'comma' in the subject line.

The facilitators of the night's session, being aware that the members in attendance will be anything but beginners, have tailored their material accordingly. They will adopt the society's usual collegiate approach, with the facilitator giving structure to the discussions. Members will be welcome to provide examples from their own experience, ask questions, and express dissent should they feel the need to. At the end of the evening, the facilitators expect to have learned a few things themselves!

The session has been divided into three delicious 'courses':

1. The entrée (10 mins) will be a short introduction on the purpose of punctuation dished up by James Hansen.
2. The mains (60 mins) will cover commas, semicolons and colons, and be served by Allan Watson.
3. The dessert (30 mins) of em rules, en rules and hyphens has been created by Carla Morris.

The organisers realise that it is impossible to cover all punctuation marks in such a short session, and so have chosen to concentrate on a selection. Notes will be provided with exercises to be completed and corrected during the evening. We would appreciate having an accurate estimate of the number of members attending. An RSVP (by midnight Friday) to Emma Pearmain <emma007@amnet.net.au> with the word 'comma' in the subject line would be a great help.

See you there!

James Hansen

SOCIETY OF EDITORS (WA) INC.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2008 Annual General Meeting will be held at:

**CWA House
Boardroom, 3rd Floor
1174 Hay Street, West Perth
Tuesday 4 March 2008 at 7 pm**

A short meeting, commencing at 7 pm, will be followed by a social function with refreshments, a book launch and the launch of the new SOEWA website. More details will be emailed soon. All members are encouraged to attend and guests are welcome. The society has a well-deserved reputation for running the best AGM in town, so make a note in your diary now!

ELECTIONS

Members are invited to nominate for committee positions for 2008–09 year. The committee of management consists of:

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer

General Committee Members (at least four)

Nominations must be in writing, signed by both the nominator and nominee (both of whom must be members of the society), and posted to the **Society of Editors WA, PO Box 99, Subiaco 6904**, before the AGM or you may deliver it to a committee member at the AGM.

If you would like further information, please contact a current committee member (see contact details on page 6).

Report on November 2007 meeting

'But it's fiction!': Getting it right when you're editing fiction

At the final meeting for 2007, Amanda Curtin shared a presentation she had given at the May 2007 Institute of Professional Editors' national conference.

The central theme was that accuracy and consistency are important considerations when editing works of fiction. She rejected the suggestion that worrying about such aspects is merely nitpicking – because 'it's only fiction' – and argued that errors can cause a fracture in the bond between the reader and the text.

The presentation was based not only on Amanda's own experiences, but also on the experiences of several other editors who provided examples of various errors that they had found when working on manuscripts. The examples presented ranged from chronological inconsistencies (such as the load of washing which had been hanging on the line for three months) to basic scientific and geographical errors.

The editors surveyed reported that most authors seemed happy when the editor was alert enough to pick up these sorts of errors. In some examples, however, the author seemed to feel that even questioning such things was beyond the editor's role. SOEWA members in attendance had some discussion about the role of editor as fact-checker. It seems that many of us (as readers) have had the experience of being put off by errors in novels, such as the placing of items in a time or location where they would not have existed. Amanda commented that 'editors at all stages of the process – and here I include proofreaders, too – represent the last line of defence, the author's backstop, and it's hard *not* to feel some responsibility'.

Amanda's paper has been posted to the conference website, and I'd certainly encourage those of you who couldn't make the meeting to have a look.

<http://www.tas-editors.org.au/conference/curtin.html>

Rebecca Newman

Let's go shopping!

Overheard in a fancy furniture store (which shall remain anonymous): 'How many Ps are there in shopping?'

I couldn't bear to stay around to hear the answer!

Katie Lennerts

SOEWA representation on the Board of writingWA

SOEWA is looking for a representative on the Board of writingWA. If you are interested, please contact a SOEWA committee member before the next meeting (see contact details on page 6). We don't want to lose our place on the Board and Betty Durston has written a statement of support for continuing to maintain representation:

Statement in support of the Society of Editors (WA) continuing to maintain representation on the Board of writingWA

Several years ago I was encouraged to suggest that the Society of Editors (WA) might benefit from submitting an application for one of its members to apply to join the (then) WA State Literature Board, now writingWA, as a Board member. Although Board members don't actually represent a group they, of course, bring the concerns and expertise of that group with them. I recognised this as an opportunity for the Society to promote the skills of its members and to raise awareness of the valuable contribution editors make to the publishing process and the whole writing sector.

Membership of the Board carries responsibilities with it, and requires input from its members at various levels, depending on the requirements of the Board and the particular skills members have to offer. I did not find the tasks to be onerous nor time consuming in any way; in fact some involvement is necessary if members are to be part of an organisation.

I can assure you that my time as a member of the writingWA Board was enjoyable and rewarding, and would urge the Society to again encourage one of its members to apply for a place on the Board of writingWA at the next AGM, in early April, 2008. The CEO of writingWA, Sharon Flindell, or the Chair of the Board, Delys Bird, would be happy to talk at any time about what it means to join a Board.

The timing is crucial, as applications must be received by writingWA by the closing date, which is the date of their AGM; therefore, the Society's February 2008 meeting would be the ideal time to consider this proposal. I should be happy to provide further information or speak to any members needing reassurance of the value to the Society of this membership.

Betty Durston

Hon Member Society of Editors (WA)

**Deadline for March 2008 *Bookworm* issue:
Tuesday 19 February 2008**

Contacting SOEWA

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