



## NEWSLETTER

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## Hard Times or Just New Times?

It's been a tough month for the Australian book industry, with the (by now much-discussed) news that the REDGroup has gone into voluntary administration. Speculation about what or who is to blame is rampant. Is [online taking over](#)? Was it [bad management](#)? Are parallel importing regulations to blame? Is this the end or an unexpected bonus for [independent booksellers](#)? For the Australian publishing industry? The debate continues in online news articles and blogs near you! (OK, point made: we can't escape the fact that there are a lot of people who turn to the internet for a *lot* of things. But the decline of print newspapers seems much more clearly a result of online domination than is the failure of Borders and Angus & Robertson.)

If all this frenzied discussion about rapid change makes you nostalgic for the good old days, here's an antidote: a fascinating [video](#) (there is also [this one](#)) of bookmaking circa the 1920s. As well as feeling quite amazed at watching all those lines of type being set, arranged and whacked into place, I can't help finding it a bit comforting. Change is scary, not least because it often seems to mean massive job cuts, but we do adjust, find new ways of doing things *and* new things to do, and the world keeps turning. Importantly, there are always books to read!

### CONTACT DETAILS

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### Trivia Question

The answer to last month's question – What does 'CMYK' stand for? – was 'Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and [Key] black'. Vicki Marshall was randomly selected from the pool of correct respondents and will receive a free dinner meeting admission. Congratulations, Vicki!

### This month's question

**Which poet was the first Australian writer to be given a state funeral?**

Email your answer to [meetings@socedvic.org](mailto:meetings@socedvic.org) (with the subject line 'Trivia') by 5pm on Friday 25 March. Correct answers will go into a random draw for one free dinner meeting admission. Prize is non-transferable and must be used within 12 months.

### Dates for Your Diary

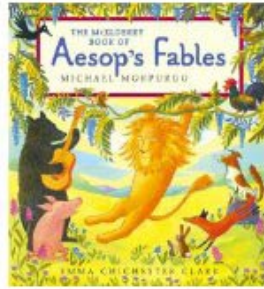
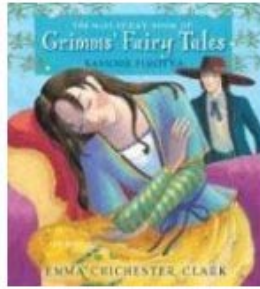
#### March

##### Dinner Meeting

Stephen Banham (Letterbox Studio), type designer and writer  
Wednesday 16 March, 6.30pm for 7pm, CQ  
Functions, 113 Queen Street, City

##### Training

Grammar for Editors – the Basics, with Glenys Osborne  
Friday 25 March, CAE, Melbourne  
Do you know *what* to do when you are copyediting, but not *why* you do it? Do you know what the problem is when you see it, but not what it's called? Do you want to be more articulate – to yourself and others – about your editorial decisions? 'Grammar for Editors – The Basics' is a one-day session that covers the basics of English grammar in terms of what



Speaking of good books (and childhood nostalgia), we'd like to pay tribute to legendary children's editor and publisher Margaret K McElderry, who died last week, aged 98. Margaret founded children's imprint Margaret K McElderry Books (pictured above) and published the likes of Andre Norton (one of my childhood favourites) and Australian author Patricia Wrightson.

Kirsten Rawlings

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## Next Dinner Meeting: Stephan Banham on Typography

Wednesday 16 March, 6.30pm for 7pm start  
CQ Functions, 113 Queen St (cnr Little Collins St), City (car parking available on site, kerbside, or near Queen Victoria Market)

We all see and work with different fonts every day, but how much do we really know about them? Designer Stephen Banham will be looking at the big picture of typography, of letterforms as a cultural and social expression of our times. Going beyond the printed page, what do letters say about us and the world we live in?

**Stephen Banham** is founder of the typographic studio Letterbox, based in Melbourne. Banham's designs have appeared in countless international works, he has spoken at international design events from Barcelona to Beirut and has written and produced 15 publications on typography. A lecturer in typography since 1991, he holds a Masters in Design Research and is currently writing a book on the social and cultural significance of typography, due out this September.

Please note: admission costs for dinner meetings have increased slightly due to the rise of meal prices at the venue. The society will subsidise some of the cost to ensure that our dinner meetings remain affordable to all. We apologise for any inconvenience and thank you for your understanding.

**New payment option!** We are now taking online payment for dinner meetings in advance via credit card, which should greatly improve the check-in process. To pay online, go to [www.paymate.com](http://www.paymate.com) and select the 'Pay Now' button. Enter [payments@socedvic.org](mailto:payments@socedvic.org) for the email address and 'Feb dinner mtg' for the order number and then follow the instructions to complete payment (see prices below). Please bring a printout of your receipt and any other necessary documents (eg student ID) with you to the meeting. Please don't forget to also email [bookings@socedvic.org](mailto:bookings@socedvic.org) to book your place!

### BOOKING DETAILS FOR DINNER MEETINGS

- Book with Lu Sexton at [bookings@socedvic.org](mailto:bookings@socedvic.org) by 5pm on Monday 14 March. Please let her know if you'd like to pay online in advance and she'll forward instructions.
- Please state if you are a Soc Eds member, or a member of VWC, ASTC, ANZSI, APA, or a student. (If this will be the first dinner

editors need to watch for when copyediting.

Literary Editing, with Pamela Hewitt  
*Saturday 26 March, CAE, Melbourne*

This workshop is an introduction to literary editing for writers and editors alike. It delves into the problems editors commonly encounter and suggests options to improve the draft. Many of the fundamentals of substantive editing and copyediting apply to editing fiction. Literary editing also looks closely at the way the text speaks to the reader. Tone and voice matter a great deal, as do variations on point of view.

### April

Freelance Lunch

*Wednesday 13 April, 12.30pm, Pinocchio's Pizza, 152 Toorak Road, South Yarra*

Join your freelance colleagues for lunch to talk about freelance issues – and have a welcome break!

Pinocchio's is diagonally opposite South Yarra Station, and accessible by train and tram (number 8 – Moreland/Toorak). There are many other choices besides pizza!

Please RSVP to Fran Madigan at [freelance@socedvic.org.au](mailto:freelance@socedvic.org.au) by Thursday 7 April.

### Training

Manuscript Appraisal for Editors and Writers, with Pamela Hewitt

*Saturday 16 April, in Warragul, Gippsland*

This workshop is aimed at editors who want to extend their skills to include manuscript assessment, and writers who want to know what to expect from and how to make the most of an assessment.

### Dinner Meeting

IPEd accreditation exam preparation

*Wednesday 20 April, 6.30pm for 7pm, CQ Functions, 113 Queen Street, City*

### May

#### Dinner Meeting

Bernard Caleo, comic book artist/editor

*Wednesday 18 May, 6.30pm for 7pm, CQ Functions, 113 Queen Street, City*

### IPEd Accreditation Exam

*Saturday 21 May (time and place TBA)*

### Training

Advanced Grammar for Editors, with Glenys Osborne

*Saturday 28 May, CAE, Melbourne*

### July

#### Training

Introduction to Proofreading (Onscreen and Hard Copy), with Pamela Hewitt

*Saturday 16 July, in Ballarat*

### October

#### Freelance Lunch

*Wednesday 12 October, venue will be advised closer to the date*

meeting you've ever attended, it would be great if you could let us know this too.)

- Please state if you would like to book a vegetarian meal. (Vegetarian meals are available only with advance booking.)
- **Note new costs: \$28 members, \$22 students, \$33 non-members.** Payment methods: cash or cheque on the night; online via credit card by Tuesday 15 March. (Credit cards are not accepted at the door.)
- If you need to cancel, please contact Lu as soon as possible.
- If you cancel after 7pm on Tuesday 15 March you'll be asked to pay for your meal (which is ordered in advance).
- Bookings are required. People who arrive on the night without a booking will be unable to attend.

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## February Dinner Meeting Report: Jenny Lee and the University of Melbourne Book Industry Study

It was timely that Jenny Lee, researcher and university lecturer, presented the results of the second Book Industry Survey on the eve of the announcement that Borders Australia and Angus & Robertson were going into voluntary administration. It reinforced the main sentiment of Jenny's presentation: times are tough – and if you don't keep up with digitisation and listen to consumers, you'll get left behind.

Though Jenny insisted she didn't want to rattle on, those attending were keen to know: what is the state of the industry and where is it heading? The latest survey was designed to capture data on the Australian publishing industry, and aimed to identify publishers' responses and approaches to technological trends and advancements – an issue that has never been more relevant.



Jenny Lee

### The Nitty-gritty Stats

If there was one thing the stats showed it was that publishers are complete optimists, but while medium and small publishers (which continue to multiply in numbers) are unwaveringly optimistic about returns and sales, there is more realism among larger firms. And they had good reason to keep their feet on the ground, as the publishers' expectations proved to be much rosier than the results. Smaller

## Stay up to Date with Our Events Calendar

Our new online events calendar contains information for our events for the upcoming year: dinner meetings, freelance lunches, newsletter deadlines, co-sponsored VWC sessions, editing conferences and more. It's available on our [website](#) (Events > Calendar), and will be updated regularly. Simply click on an event to see more information.

## Typo of the Month

This month's typo was spotted by newsletter co-editor Melanie Sheridan, in *The Age* online on 7 February 2011.



Click on the image to see a PDF of the original at full size. (As of publication, you can still see the typo in *The Age's* [photo gallery](#), image 5 of 43.)

And while we're focussing on *The Age* online, Honorary Life Member Colin Jevons spotted the following on the site on 3 March 2011.

## Victoria

Your Weekly | Ballarat |

### House-hunting MP 'pried on neighbo



Government minister with links to The B accused of accessing police data base home. [...](#)

- Fire breaks out at Melbourne Myer store [...](#)
- Dead man demanded kinky sex
- Bus driver injured as rock hurled through windscreen
- Cop accused of sex with teen girl gets union backing

While not exactly typos, as Colin notes, "we have a dead man demanding kinky sex – one would have thought that any sex with a dead man would be kinky but I'm not sure how he demanded it. We also have a cop accused of sex with a teenager getting union backing; I think the point is made without the word 'backing'."

If you've seen any howlers, send them to us at [newsletter@socedvic.org](mailto:newsletter@socedvic.org).

## Word Wide Web

publishers aren't faring well; it's the medium and large firms that are holding their ground.

### Challenges Facing the Industry

With the current Australian exchange rate, the success of the Book Depository (which offers free shipping) and the continued growth of Amazon.com, publishers and retailers are feeling the heat. Pricing continues to be a major concern, as consumers turn to online options for cheaper and more convenient purchasing and the popularity of ebooks increases. Jenny stressed that in such an environment publishers will need to look after their best allies – their authors, who have the public profile to establish interactive relationships with consumers.

Trade publishers said the excessive power of internet players is the biggest challenge they're facing in Australia. This was followed by competition from other media, over-publishing, conglomeration/concentration of ownership, territorial copyright, competition from user-generated content (up from last year), environmental sustainability (which has fallen off the back of the truck) and piracy/illicit copying.

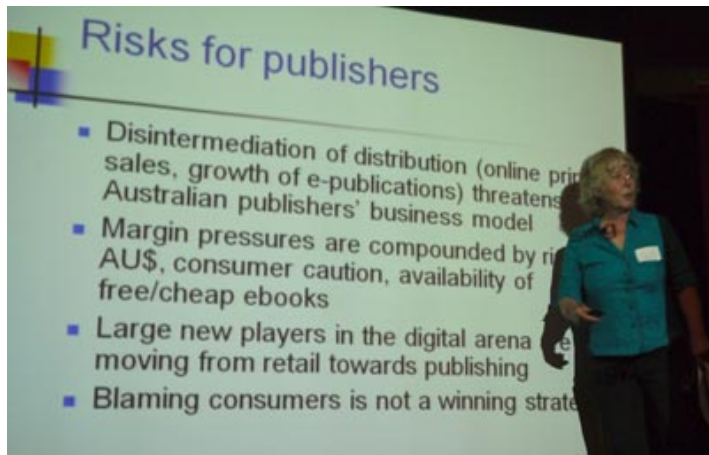
The challenges facing educational publishers weren't surprising either. They rated the content of the national curriculum as the most important challenge, followed by the increased competition from overseas suppliers, the increased cost to produce print materials and the national curriculum implementation. What was surprising was how low they ranked illicit copying.

### The Impact of the GFC

As we all imagined, the global financial crisis has thrown a mighty punch at the industry. The GFC in Australia adversely affected 69% of respondents' businesses. But who are publishers blaming? A whopping 88% put the tough times down to consumers' reluctance to spend – it would be interesting to know how much longer consumers will shoulder the blame. Also cited were slower debt payment, the pressure to increase discounts and the disruption of exports.

What is reassuring is that since the last survey, publishers have acknowledged future publishing technologies as their number-one challenge. This was followed by the sharp rise in focus on ebooks (45% of publishers ranking ebooks number one, compared to 18% in 2009), a continuing emphasis on B&W printing and a reduction in emphasis on colour printing.

Educational publishing has taken perhaps the hardest hit, with a decline in such products as looseleaf and dictionaries thinning revenue streams. Consumers, it seems, are just not willing to pay for these products anymore.



### Challenges Facing Publishers

The disintermediation of distribution (online print sales, growth of e-publications) poses the greatest threat to Australian publishers' business models, followed closely by margin pressure compounded by the

Below you'll find links to editing stories and news we've seen during the past month (or so). If you have anything – long or short, funny or serious – you think may be of interest to your fellow editors, let us know: [newsletter@socedvic.org](mailto:newsletter@socedvic.org).

### The changing role of the editor:

<http://moourl.com/lostart>

**Editing around the world:** <http://moourl.com/worldofediting>

### The crimes of the genre writer:

<http://moourl.com/genrecrimes>

**What it's really like to be a copyeditor (language warning):** <http://moourl.com/copyeditor>

### An ode to proofreading women:

<http://moourl.com/proofreadingwoman>

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## Etymology

*deriving from the Greek for 'true' (eteos/etymos) and 'word' (logos)*

Curious about the origin of a word or term? Send it to us and we shall go forth and investigate.

### Editors are not only OK, they invented OK

There really are not enough stories of editorial power and influence floating around, so we like to highlight one when we can. A new book, Allan Metcalf's *The Improbable Story of America's Greatest Word*, which explores the genesis of the word OK, and lays the credit at the feet of 19th-century newspaper editors.

OK began as a minor joke in an 1839 edition of the *Boston Morning Post*, as a deliberately misspelled contraction of 'all correct', but a love of abbreviations at the time saw it take off in telegrams and in popular culture. Today you can hear it all over the world, and see it spelled as 'okay' (which doesn't make a lot of sense now I know what it 'means'). For a more detailed etymology, click [here](#).

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## Membership Matters

At its February 2011 meeting, the committee welcomed Ben Hourigan and Sarah Willsher as full members. We also saw the return of Natalie Book as an associate member and were pleased to have several new associate members: Bronwyn Naismith, Jacqueline Shields, Louise Paolacci, Kelly Somers, Sylvia McQueen, Romy Linders, Pauline Martin, Maryanne Park, Carolyn Fishlock and Roselina Press.

A warm welcome to all! It was lovely to see many new faces at the recent dinner meeting.

rising Australian dollar, consumer caution and the availability of cheap/free books.

But there are positive prospects. For Australian publishers, digital delivery could enable new diversity and e-publications could open new markets, but those markets will be strongly contested by the UK and the USA, and rights will be an issue.

In staffing news, over the coming 12 months publishers expect staff expansion in marketing, sales, production control and desktop publishing.

### Challenges Facing Editors

It comes as no surprise that 90% of large firms have implemented changes to book production workflow as a result of digitisation over the past three years. However, only 46% of small publishers and 56% of medium publishers acknowledged workflow changes. There may be more pencil-and-paper editors out there than we think.

Workflow changes directly impact editors, as publishers introduce XML tagging, on-screen editing, conversion to proprietary ebook formats, digitisation of existing and new titles, and digital rights management to the production process. And it won't stop there. The publishing environment will only become increasingly complex and technologically demanding, particularly as publishers become savvier about how to reuse and recycle content, finding multiple outputs for it and ensuring that the content is durable. Editors can no longer rely solely on primary editing skills to put food on the table – they must be able to multi-skill to adapt to this environment.

### The Book in the Age of the iPad

According to Jenny and the optimistic outlook of publishers, the future of the book is bright, but it does hold many challenges, including a need for production to be adapted to use content across multiple formats. There still seems to be a continued demand for high-quality books that are valued by the consumer, but the iPad's place is firmly cemented, and will be especially good for short-term, one-read-only books that would otherwise be printed cheaply and thrown away. But the book is not dead: it will adapt to what the future wants it to be.

*Gabby Innes*

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## Accreditation Exam

The third IPEd accreditation exam will be held on Saturday 21 May 2011. Like the 2008 and 2009 exams, this will be a pen (or pencil) and paper exam. The three-hour exam is based on the [Australian Standards for Editing Practice](#).

The exam is open to anyone, subject to payment of the fee. However, it is recommended that candidates have at least three or more years' full-time editing experience or equivalent.

The exam costs \$530 (with no GST applicable) for financial members of societies of editors and \$680 for non-members or those who are not financial at the close of registrations. Exam fees are tax deductible.

Registrations for the exam close on Thursday 21 April. All registrations must be made on the [registration form](#) and be accompanied by payment.

The fee has been calculated as the minimum required to cover exam costs in 2011. It is based on a target number of applicants, and in the unlikely event that this target is not reached the Accreditation Board will postpone the exam until 2012. There is no limit placed on the number of candidates who may sit the exam: all candidates who register and pay the fee will be accommodated.

We hope you make the most of your membership and that we will see you at several society functions throughout the year.

*Karyn Noble*  
*Membership and Correspondence Secretary*

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## Calling for Contributions

Thanks as always to our regular contributors, and to John Bangsund, Colin Jevons, Gabby Innes, Christina Ratcliffe, Rachel Saffer and Lan Wang for their contributions to this month's newsletter.

If you have any feedback or suggestions, ideas for articles, books you'd like to review, or want to contribute in any other way to this newsletter please drop Melanie and Kirsten a line at [newsletter@socedvic.org](mailto:newsletter@socedvic.org). We'd love to hear from you.

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## PDF of this Newsletter

To view this newsletter as a PDF, click [here](#).

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HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

THE COMMITTEE



You can test your readiness for the exam by working through the [sample exams](#). Both sample exams are very good indicators of what you can expect in May, and trialling them will help you decide whether you are ready for the real thing. All societies of editors will be organising pre-exam activities to help prepare candidates.

To obtain further information, contact our Accreditation Board delegate (Julie-Anne Justus: [iped\\_accred@socedvic.org](mailto:iped_accred@socedvic.org)) or consult the [guidelines for candidates](#) and [FAQs](#) on the IPEd website.

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## Introducing Accredited Editors

The third IPEd accreditation exam will be held in May, and those that pass will join the [list of accredited editors](#). Over the next year we'll be profiling some of these folks in the newsletter.

### Rachel Saffer, AE

#### How long have you been editing?

I've been editing basically since I could read, as soon as I realised there were a lot of errors out there that needed fixing! In a professional capacity, I've worked in-house since 2005.

#### What is your current job?

Research Grant Officer at Monash University. I help Monash academics apply for learning and teaching grants, including writing and editing their applications.

#### When did you receive accreditation?

In 2009, the second year it was offered.

#### Why did you decide to seek accreditation?

I thought it would be a good way of building on my postgraduate qualifications and practical experience. I also felt that editors were often undervalued, and a scheme such as this could give the profession more recognition. Also I had seen all the fantastic work the society and IPEd had done to develop this scheme and I wanted to support them.

#### Any tips for aspiring AEs?

Make sure you set aside a decent amount of time prior to the exam for studying. No matter how long you've been editing or how much you think you know, you will benefit from doing practice exams and attending the society's pre-exam workshops. Even inexperienced editors probably know more than they think they do; it's about practising and reading the literature available so you have a good knowledge base, particularly for the areas you want to focus on in the short answer sections. Go on – give it a go!

#### Read any good books lately?

Well, I'm having a baby in July, so most of my reading has been restricted to pregnancy-related books, such as *Up the Duff*, by Kaz Cooke, and *What to Expect When You're Expecting*, by Heidi Murkoff. I recently re-read *Atonement*, by Ian McEwan, which is wonderful, and before that I read *The God of Small Things*, by Arundhati Roy, which I enjoyed.

### Christina Crossley Ratcliffe, AE



*Christina and fellow subeditor Albert Ramalingam (left), photographed in 1989 demonstrating to (future prime minister) John Howard the new on-screen layout terminal at Leader Newspapers' HQ.*

### **How long and what have you been editing?**

As long as I can remember, starting with alphabet soup and moving on to furtive corrections on real estate hoardings. But I became a senior subeditor in the late 1980s when computers invaded newspaper offices. There was a rush to promote journalists – or anyone who could turn on a computer, and I was lucky to be both – to replace the literate and artistic typesetters whom the technological juggernaut had crushed.

As a PR graduate in the 1990s, I desktop published a quarterly four-colour newsletter for a multinational company for several years. I did the interviewing, writing of copy, headlines and captions, the layout, sizing of photographs, production of camera-ready copy and art, liaison with printers and the delivery of the bundles, but that was all. The man who decided the content and checked the proofs was the editor.

As a volunteer or casual employee I also produced radio and TV programs. Broadcasting requires specialised writing and editing as well as visual and auditory technical skills. News editors can ensure perfect intros, graphics and bulletins but will always be frustrated by errors of grammar or pronunciation in sound grabs.

### **When did you receive accreditation?**

In 2008, with the first contingent. It was a huge leap of faith for me because although I was a full member of SocEd and on the committee, I had never edited a book. Failure would have put a cannonball through my self-confidence. I avoided opening the results letter for days! To add to the happiness of that achievement, AEs get to stand on platforms for group photos and put AE after their name for the next five years. I am grateful to the editors who envisioned accreditation, made and still make it a reality.

### **Why did you decide to seek accreditation?**

You might as well ask a baby why it wants to walk. It was the next step for me. I have always striven to learn the techniques of optimal communication in any medium, but I was unclear about the extent of knowledge a book editor should possess. What services would my clients expect and be entitled to receive for their dollar? The accreditation exam was my way to set that benchmark.

Today, in the avalanche of digital communication and self-publishing – more aptly described as self-printing – an editor's expertise is little understood or acknowledged, and regarded by some as parasitic. It is not enough for tweeters and bloggers to say 'I can read and write, therefore I can edit'. Beware the technological juggernaut!

### **Any tips for aspiring AEs?**

Test yourself against the [sample exams](#) on the IPEd website. Attend the SocEd training sessions, monthly dinner talks and freelance lunches. Network and ask questions. Learn what people do. Read everything you

can about editing and editors, especially the society's own publications. Be proud of your membership. When you feel ready, apply for the accreditation exam and SWOT! (It helps to be obsessive and/or a Virgo.)

#### **What is your current job?**

I am the volunteer assistant editor of Melbourne PEN's quarterly journal, which leaves time to juggle whatever paid work comes my way from the Society of Editors' Freelance Register – for example, I have just finished some copywriting and editing for a retailer's on-line catalogue. Also, in cruciverbalist David Astle's cryptic parlance, you might say I'm 'partly put out to stud', in that while supposedly retired I am a part-time student of the Bachelor of Writing and Publishing degree at NMIT, Fairfield, where they also teach equine studies. My aim is to single-mindedly upgrade my half-century of media experience to the electronic and digital era, but anything is possible.

#### **Read any good books lately?**

I can't put down those indispensable Good Books for editors – *The Australian Editing Handbook*, by Elizabeth Flann and Beryl Hill (who still come to SocEd functions), and the *Australian Style Manual*. When I've finished those I'll start on the Macquarie *Thesaurus*.

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## **Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship**

The Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship is named after the distinguished literary editor and honours her contribution to Australian letters. It is supported by the Literature Board of the Australia Council, the Australian Publishers Association, the Australian publishing industry and the Institute of Professional Editors.

This unique 12-week fellowship combines an award with a research project to benefit the Australian publishing industry. It aims to be the highest national recognition and reward for the contribution editors make to Australian writing and publishing. It provides a rich source of information-sharing and professional development opportunities both during and after the Fellow's overseas research trip.

Closing date for applications is Friday 25 March. Please go to [www.publishers.asn.au](http://www.publishers.asn.au) and download the 'CALL for APPLICATIONS' and the 'GUIDELINES with APPLICATION FORM'.

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## **Letter to the Editors**

Ah there, newsletter editors!

Today I went to the Op Shop, sorry, College of Optometrists, for my first eye test in seven or eight years, and discovered to my unsurprise that I have a cataract in the right eye, no doubt partly caused by 20 years of smoking while wearing glasses. I couldn't help noticing at the time that the glasses funnelled the smoke mainly into my right eye. I stopped smoking (and drinking and driving, especially all at once) six years ago, almost to the day.

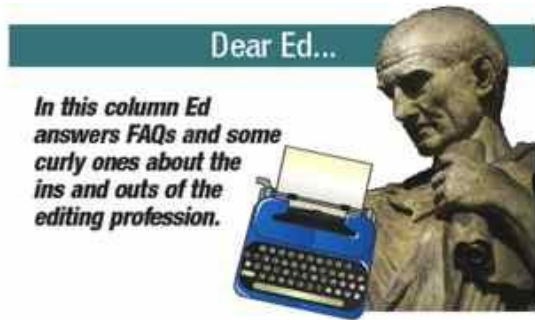
Being in Carlton, I couldn't help calling into Readings and buying a bargain DVD or three. One of them, *The Road*, concerns two blokes, father and son, "travelling across a barren landscape ... avoiding both lone bandits and hoards of cannibals". Dear me.

Cheers!

John Bangsund

## Dear Ed ...

Dear Ed  
Are there any  
books you've  
read lately  
that have  
made you  
pause and  
reflect?  
Emily



Hi Emily,

All the time!

Isn't that what books are for? I'm reading an Erich Fromm book at the moment and one paragraph I read last night was so good that I felt like I should stop reading and consider the words and how they impacted on my life. [Slight interlude: That sentence comes across as glib, but it's not meant to be. I actually did pause and reread the same paragraph three times and think "Wow!" The only trouble is that in the clear light of day I can't remember what it was about. Perhaps I can read another paragraph tonight. End interlude. Resume normal transmission.]

Every now and then I have a Dear Ed-type moment when I'm not sure which part of this column I'm meant to be writing: the questions or the answers. I found myself thinking, "Oh, I should ask Ed and find out what he thinks". Then I realised that would involve writing a letter to myself in the hope that I'd find the subject matter interesting enough to answer, so I gave that idea the flick. My Dear Ed-type moment happened last Tuesday, when I was checking out the books in my local op shop, in search of discarded gems. I didn't find any gems but I did find a copy of Nick Hornby's *31 Songs*, which definitely moved him up in Ed's the-boy-sure-can-write stakes. Plus he's a deft hand with the casual aside that weaves its way around the topic until it squashes aforesaid topic into the footpath and steps over it, grinning.

On the way out of the shop, I noticed that four books had been bound together and used as a doorstop. The very top book was Eliot Pearlman's *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. I swear, I am not making this up. Intrigued, I replaced the doorstop with my foot and picked up the books to see if they became even more cryptic. They were, in descending order: a novel called *In the Fall*, a Dick Francis novel and a biography of Derryn Hinch. I have nothing to say about *In the Fall*, Dick Francis or Derryn Hinch. Possibly these are all fine books in their own right. But I did think that if ever you were going to stub your toe on a tome used as a doorstop, could there ever be a finer title than *Seven Types of Ambiguity*? It's far better than a sign saying "Mind the step".

Reflectively yours,  
Ed

News, comments, letters and other material for publication, review or mention in the *Newsletter* should be addressed to the [Newsletter Editor](#).

Disclaimer: The views expressed by individuals in this *Newsletter* are their own and do not necessarily represent the views of the Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc.

