

## University fails to stifle Whiting

*Everywhere I go, I'm asked if I think the universities stifle writers. My opinion is that they don't stifle enough of them. There's many a best seller that could have been prevented by a good teacher.*

*Flannery O'Connor (1925–1964)*

Dear Frances

I'm delighted that you agreed to be the guest speaker at the recent meeting of the Society of Editors, and thrilled, as a primary school teacher with an interest in writing and editing, to be the reporter for the night. What a treat we earned if we were brave enough to venture to the AGM!

A graduate of local public schools Ironside State and Indooroopilly High, you won me over the minute you uttered those three words 'cherish your teachers'. Your first career as a teacher in Australia and overseas has given you an understanding of an increasingly challenging job. But hang on, I'm writing for the Society of Editors, not a teachers' mag ... oh well, I'm sure that your years in the classroom prepared you in just a few small ways for your career change, and there's a lot that teachers, writers and editors have in common.

What's that expression — once a teacher, always a teacher? Well, you do keep going back to school, don't you? To share the joys of reading and writing with kids. To speak from experience to reassure students that they don't have to make lifetime career choices in their teens. To tell stories of favourite readers and favourite students.

Teachers aren't supposed to have favourites, but they will always have indelible memories of special individuals. Little Jimmy, the student who brought you pre-loved gifts and advised, 'I wouldn't flash it around for a couple of weeks', obviously appreciated your staying power

*'Dear Frances' ... continues on page 2*

## Company Secretary: IPEd

The Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd) Limited was incorporated in January 2008. IPEd's mission is to advance the profession of editing. It is owned by member associations of editors in the six states and the ACT. For more information about IPEd, go to <[www.iped-editors.org.au](http://www.iped-editors.org.au)>.

IPEd invites applications for the position of Company Secretary. The Secretary services the IPEd Council in its work, with outsourced accounting and legal support.

The successful applicant will be employed as a freelance contractor, working from their own premises. The estimated requirement is for an average of 15 to 20 hours per month, at \$60 per hour including GST. Applicants will need to have an ABN or ACN.

Applications close on 30 November 2008.

Selection criteria and a duty statement for the position can be obtained by emailing the Chair of the Council, Virginia Wilton. Her email address is <[virginia@whh.com.au](mailto:virginia@whh.com.au)>. Please use the following message line:

IPEd Company Secretary position\_yoursurname\_yourfirstinitial.

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at the Isle of Dogs school in London's East End. In a school where students rarely had the same teacher for longer than two weeks (a term if they were very lucky), you toughed it out under the leadership of a caring, dedicated headmistress, gaining the trust of parents and the love of your students, expressed with a few unusually acquired gifts.

Several readers, too, have made a lasting impression on you: the 81-year-old gentleman who called you 'Toots' and left you a picture of himself, pointing out what a 'looker' he was; the woman from an isolated country area whose baby was born at the same time as your son, Max; the Siberian woman who sent you 'all the good things from my bosom'.

It's interesting how returning from overseas can be a catalyst for a career change. Heeding advice to follow your childhood passion, you swapped roles from teacher to student, studying journalism at university. Fortunately for the readers of your column, your *Qweekend* (*Courier-Mail*) features and your books, *Oh to be a marching girl* and *That's a home run, Tiger!*, the university didn't manage to stifle you. After spending time at a Sunshine Coast newspaper, you found a home at *The Sunday Mail*, where your readers have so far enjoyed your column for eleven years.

You like to portray the absurdities and quirkiness in life, giving your readers a familiarity with what you are describing, something to share. You combine research from newspapers, the Net and magazines with a keen observation of human nature.

Thank you for sharing your columns about the joys of ageing and parenthood with us, and describing the extremes of your own success — from the exciting Brisbane launch of your first book by the premier, with an audience of 800 people, to the embarrassing 'audience of none' at the Gold Coast the following day. (Well, an audience of one, if you count the guy who bought the book out of pity for you.)

So feedback isn't always positive, and reactions can vary widely. But, like the headmistress you mentioned who teased a year of 'tough' teaching out of you, your colleagues in your early years of journalism reminded you that it's impossible to please everyone, and that ruffled feathers can mean you're doing your job well.

In a life far removed from the primary classroom, you've mixed with royalty, sped along with pop stars, canoed with the Crocodile Man, met Clinton and Archer. But two memories stand out for you: reflection within the walls of the original Shingle Inn after it closed in August 2002, as you sat quietly, sensing the spirits of those who had been there; and the remarkable human spirit of Sophie Delezio and Carolyn Martin as they faced and overcame the traumas of Sophie's accidents. The editor who pointed you in the direction of feature writing got it right. Let others write the 'short, sharp and succinct' news reports — for you it's the more poetic, the less rushed, the better.

Anyway Frances, next Sunday morning I'll be sitting at my dining room table with the paper sprawled out in front of me — as sprawled out as you can get when you're surrounded by a procrastination pile of Year 4 projects and a yet-to-be-installed kitchen carcass — reading your column over breakfast. Any help you can offer with the projects would be gratefully accepted. Once a teacher ...

*Cathy Comiskey*

Associate member  
Society of Editors (Qld)

P.S. Alan thanks you for pulling out his ticket to win the reading selection donated by Riverbend Books for Indigenous Literacy Day.

P.P.S. Good luck with your first novel!

## 1 October general meeting

The guest speaker at our October meeting will be Colette Vella, the 2007 recipient of the *Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship* (which is named after the distinguished Australian literary editor, and honours her contribution to Australian letters). The Fellowship offers the recipient an 8–12 week attachment to the editorial department of a US publishing house or houses. Colette is the tenth recipient of this prestigious award.



Colette Vella has worked as a book editor for 14 years, beginning as a trainee editor at HarperEducational Publishers and moving on to become editor and then senior editor at Allen & Unwin. There she worked across their various lists and had the privilege of being involved with many talented authors and in several award-winning books, including two Miles Franklin Award winners. In 2004–2005 she spent a year in London learning about UK publishing. She then moved over to Murdoch Books as their editorial manager and, on her return from her three-month stint undertaking the Beatrice Davis Fellowship in the US this year, she took up a new role at Murdoch as commissioning editor of fiction and narrative non-fiction for their Pier 9 imprint.

Colette will be introduced by Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright who operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and publishes regularly on children's literature, Australian fiction, and publishing history. She was inaugural director of and is a Life Member of the Queensland Writers Centre, and was co-founder of Jam Roll Press. Robyn was also program manager for the fifth biennial *Residential Editorial Program* (REP) 2008 held at Varuna, the Writers' House in Katoomba, from 26–31 May this year, and will speak briefly of this program as well.

The REP is designed to complement the Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship in recognising literary editors' further need not only for overseas experiences but also for mentorships in providing advanced professional development.

*The Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship is sponsored by Literature Board of the Australia Council, the Australian Publishers Association, and the following Australian publishers and industry bodies: Allen & Unwin, Hachette Livre Australia, HarperCollins Publishers Australia, Penguin Group Australia, Random House Australia, and the Society of Editors (Queensland).*

Please join us on the night!

Venue: The German Club, Vulture Street, East Brisbane

Time: 6.30 for a 7 pm start

Cost: \$5

## Changes to *Australian Style*

The *Australian Style* newsletter in hard copy format will no longer be funded by the Australian Government, although Macquarie University are considering ways to publish it online in the future. If you would like to keep informed about any changes or subscribe to future editions then you will need to contact the Editor at <adam.smith@ling.mq.edu.au>

Similarly, as the Australian Government publishes the *Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers* the department are now investigating the next edition of the *Style Manual* including whether it might be enhanced by an online offering. Focus groups are planned to inform these considerations and if you would be interested in participating in one of the focus groups, please express your interest by contacting the website via <<http://govstyle@finance.gov.au>>

*[Originally supplied by Patrick Callioni, Australian Government Information Management Office; reproduced here from Catchword (no. 115, Spring 2008), with thanks to Tina Thornton. Ed]*

### *Life members* \*

Barbara Ker Wilson (2002)

Jan Whelan (2000)

Mary-Jane Bosch (2000)

John Collins (1993)

Laurie Muller

\* year of award in parentheses

## Olympic commentary

Here are the top eight comments made by NBC sports commentators during the Beijing Olympics that they would like to take back:

1. *Weightlifting commentator:*

'This is Gregorieva from Bulgaria. I saw her snatch this morning during her warm up and it was amazing.'

2. *Dressage commentator:*

'This is really a lovely horse and I speak from personal experience since I once mounted her mother.'

3. *Paul Hamm, Gymnast:*

'I owe a lot to my parents, especially my mother and father.'

4. *Boxing analyst:* 'Sure there have been injuries, and even some deaths in boxing, but none of them really that serious.'

5. *Softball announcer:* 'If history repeats itself, I should think we can expect the same thing again.'

6. *Basketball analyst:* 'He dribbles a lot and the opposition doesn't like it. In fact you can see it all over their faces.'

7. *At the rowing medal ceremony:* 'Ah, isn't that nice, the wife of the IOC president is hugging the cox of the British crew.'

8. *Soccer commentator:* 'Julian Dicks is everywhere. It's like they've got eleven Dicks on the field.'

## Editing in the web world

David Hill gave a very interesting talk on editing online materials on 6 August 2008. David is the Content Editor at Wotif.com as well as the Associate Editor for the *Australian Journal of Communication*. Additionally, David is the Website Officer for the Society.

According to David, editors work with online content in the following three ways:

1. *Editing hard copies of screen printouts.* The editor gives the edited printout to the IT person who will update the web pages. The updated web page has to be approved for release by the editor.

2. *Corresponding by email.* In this method, changes to a web page are communicated to IT people via email. Back and forth email communications are used to clarify changes.

3. *Using content management systems (CMS) to manage websites.* Three popular CMS in use are Joomla, WordPress and Drupal. These programs automate the process of making and tracking changes. These programs are free and the links to their websites are at <http://www.editorsqld.com/links/links.htm>.

Microsoft Word is *not* a suitable program for managing websites because Word does not produce consistent results across different computer platforms.

David gave the audience a list of items that all editors should know.

1. Learn Adobe Acrobat. Adobe is the dominant player for online publishing tools. Check out Adobe Shared Review. A trial version of the software can be downloaded from Adobe.

2. Learn trends in online publishing.

3. Learn basic html. There are websites that provide tutorials for learning html (e.g. <http://www.w3.org>).

4. Know what's possible online through CSS, XML, etc. You don't need to master these but you should be aware of the many possibilities they provide. Check out <http://www.csszengarden.com/> to see what CSS (cascading style sheets) can do.

5. Be aware of free tools for managing websites, editing HTML, and creating PDFs.

[Thanks to Robert Goh for this succinct report. Ed]

## Web wanderings

Need to get a dose of factual strangeness? This is the site for you: [www.strangefacts.com](http://www.strangefacts.com).

The truth is free ... apparently: [www.freedocumentaries.org](http://www.freedocumentaries.org).

Get a look at the new stuff that's out there for those people who have everything: [www.worldwidefred.com/home.htm](http://www.worldwidefred.com/home.htm)

## CAL mentoring project: September 2008 report

The past month has been very busy for everyone involved in this project. Our initial editing teams were set up as follows:

*Team 1:* Michael Kuter, Melissa McNamara, Marlies Bower-Kramer

*Team 2:* Pam Collins, Stephanie Kennard and Joye Alit

*Team 3:* Craig Munro, Justine Gannon and Clare Murphy

*Team 4:* Jennifer Beale, Wendy Abernethy and Leigh Findlay.

Manuscript selection proved to be a far more arduous task than originally envisaged, especially for the fiction mentors who had to sift through almost 1.5 million words. Manuscripts were selected mainly on the basis of their suitability for teaching specific skills to the mentees. Unsuccessful applicants were notified in the second week of September.

As a result of the dearth of non-fiction submissions (just four manuscripts), we have asked the Queensland Writers Centre to put out a second call for non-fiction manuscripts only, which closes at the end of September.

The introductory workshop was held on Wednesday, 20 August at the Hamilton Community Hall, Ascot. The workshop presenter, Liz Mellish, became ill just before the workshop; she was unable to find a replacement consultant at such short notice so I ended up presenting Liz's material. In the morning I worked with the mentees to compile a skills audit and determine their goals for the mentoring relationships. We discussed the importance of mentoring being a 'reciprocal relationship' and assessed the characteristics that make a good mentee. After morning tea, we were then joined by the mentors who worked with their new teams for the rest of the day to establish the priorities for their partnerships and to draw up mentoring agreements. Thanks go to our administrator, June Kant, for organising the workshop and the excellent catering.

Our teams are now well into editing their first manuscripts. They are scheduled to provide summary reports to the writers by early October.

*Peter Storer, Moderator*

### SocEdsQ training

**Advance notice: details to come!**

- **Workshop on scheduling and budgeting**
- **Presented by Peter Storer**
- **Saturday, 15 November 2008 — 9.00 am to 5.00 pm**
- **Brisbane Girls Grammar School**

### *Metaphors from NSW Year 12 English essays*

Her face was a perfect oval, like a circle that had its two sides gently compressed by a Thigh Master.

*She grew on him like she was a colony of E. coli and he was room-temperature prime beef.*

She had a deep, throaty, genuine laugh like the sound a dog makes just before it throws up.

*The revelation that his marriage of 30 years had disintegrated because of his wife's infidelity came as a rude shock, like a surcharge at a formerly surcharge-free ATM.*

John and Mary had never met. They were like two hummingbirds who had also never met.

*Even in his last years, Grandad had a mind like a steel trap, only one that had been left out so long, it had rusted shut.*

The young fighter had a hungry look, the kind you get from not eating for a while.

*He was as lame as a duck. Not the metaphorical duck, either, but a real duck that was actually lame. Maybe from stepping on a land mine or something.*

The ballerina rose gracefully en pointe and extended one slender leg behind her, like a dog at a fire hydrant.

*[Thanks to Josephine Brown for these pearls. Ed]*

## PEEPS!

(Episode no. 10)

Toby brought an interesting 'twist' to the table. 'We could put ourselves up on eBay — we'd have to promote like crazy to build momentum, talk up our skills left, right and centre ... wearing PEEPS! t-shirts, we could be the talk of the current affairs shows!'

Ellie and Shirley laughed at the mental picture Toby had drawn for them. They both said they were happy to consider the concept, but it would have to be a more reputable selling method and they'd never be caught dead in a t-shirt.

Next time: Saris, perhaps?

### November ...

Join us on Wednesday,  
5 November to wrap up the  
year with a bit of fun:  
*solving a murder mystery ...*  
'Death among the cubicles'  
Entry is \$5, a vast array of  
food and drinks are available  
from the club at regular  
prices.

### Slang corner

**affidavit men** *n.* [late 17C–late 18C] professional witnesses who, with pay, will swear to anything.

**zuuzuus and whamwhams** *n.* [1960s+] (US prison) confectionary sold to the prisoners. [ety. unknown]

Source: Green, J. (1998). *The Cassell Dictionary of Slang*. London: Cassell.

## Minutes of the 2008 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Held on 3 September 2008 at the German Club, East Brisbane

The Management Committee paid tribute to Pat Ryan who had passed away earlier in the year. Robyn Heales spoke about Pat's integrity, good humour, community spirit and his dedication to education and music. Pat had served on the Management Committee in recent years. This tribute took the form of a moving recital of *Ithaca* by Cavafy and selected verses of *The Tempest* by Shakespeare, recited by Robyn Heales with music by Jennifer Beale.

Robin Bennett, President, then opened the meeting at 7.10 pm. Apologies were noted. Robin thanked those present for coming.

Robin stated that that it had been a year of considerable achievement for the Society, with challenges to face. A mentoring program backed by funding from Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) was now in place with mentors and support staff selected. Robin noted that Michael Kuter had inspired the program, and also thanked the Queensland Writers Centre with whom the Society had been working closely. The CAL project would be succeeded by another mentoring program in 2011. Other achievements for the Society included progress with the national body, IPEd, on the national editors' exam to be held in October. There had been interesting speakers, good workshops within the Society and thus, 2008 was a year worth celebrating. Robin stated that it was highly likely that membership fees would increase from \$45 to \$60 (full member) for the following year.

### Minutes of 2007 AGM

Robin moved that the minutes of the 2007 AGM be accepted as a true and accurate record, with one small amendment. Siobhan Barter seconded; carried.

### Business arising from the previous AGM minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes of the 2007 AGM.

### Annual financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2008

Robin explained that audited statements for the year to 30 June 2008 were not yet available as Bran Tucker was in the Northern Territory for an extended period. Audited statements would be posted on the website when available. Draft statements of Profit and Loss and Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2008 were presented. Robin moved that the members accept these draft financial statements of income and expenditure, assets and liabilities as an accurate report on the financial affairs of the Society; Kim Manning seconded; carried.

### Committee elections

Robin Bennett conducted the votes for the committee positions (excluding President). Robin reported that no nominations for any specific committee positions had been received and that all positions were open.

#### President

Kim Manning conducted the votes for the position of President. No nominations had been received for the position of President.

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Robin Bennett declared that she would be prepared to continue in this role; no other nominations received from the floor. Jennifer Beale moved that Robin be re-elected as President; Michael Kuter seconded; carried. Robin thanked the members and commented that the role had its rewards and she was happy to take it on again.

#### *Vice-president*

No nominations were received for the position of Vice-president. Kim Manning was nominated; Robyn Heales seconded; carried. Kim accepted the nomination and was re-elected as Vice-president.

#### *Secretary*

It was reported that the current Secretary would be happy to step down if someone were to come forward for the role. However, since the Society must have a Secretary by law, Siobhan would continue until a suitable candidate to replace her could be found. Jennifer Beale commented that committee members who take on the work along with family commitments are to be congratulated. Jennifer Beale nominated Siobhan Barter; seconded Kim Manning; carried. Siobhan accepted the nomination and was re-elected as Secretary.

#### *Treasurer*

No nominations had been received for the position of Treasurer. Robin reported that the Society had taken on a professional Treasurer in a contract capacity and this person was prepared to continue as appointed Treasurer; no other nominations were received from the floor. Robin asked the members present to authorise the Committee to re-appoint Donna Miller (Minikin Business Services Pty Ltd) as Treasurer; carried.

#### *Training Officer*

No nominations had been received for the position of Training Officer. It was reported that Annette Dunlop was prepared to continue in this role; moved Jennifer Beale; seconded Kim Manning. Annette accepted the nomination. The members authorised the Committee to re-appoint her as Training Officer.

#### *Speaker Secretary*

No Speaker Secretary was elected. Members present agreed that the Management Committee should seek to fill this position by appointment. Robin thanked Wendy for her professional efforts and her enthusiasm in this role; the Committee were sorry to lose her.

#### *Website Officer*

David Hill stated that he would be prepared to continue as Website Officer; no other nominations had been received. Jennifer Beale nominated David Hill as Website Officer; David accepted the nomination. The members authorised the Committee to re-appoint him as Website Officer.

#### *Newsletter Editor*

Kim Manning stated that she would be prepared to continue as Newsletter Editor; no other nominations were received from the floor. Robyn Heales nominated Kim Manning as Newsletter Editor; Kim accepted the nomination. The members authorised the Committee to re-appoint her as Newsletter Editor.

#### *Ordinary Committee Member*

Jennifer Beale declared that she was prepared to continue as an ordinary Committee Member; no other nominations were received from the floor. Siobhan Barter nominated Jennifer Beale for this role; seconded David Hill; carried. Jennifer accepted the nomination and was re-elected as an ordinary Committee Member.

#### *Appointment of IPEd delegate and Accreditation Board delegate*

No nominations were received for these positions. Robin stated that she would be prepared to continue in both positions and asked for the members' authorisation to do so. They gave it.

#### **Appointment of Auditor**

Robin Bennett moved that Brian Tucker Associates be re-appointed as the Society's auditor for the financial year to 30 June 2009; Jennifer Beale seconded; carried.

#### **Other business**

##### *Presentation to Siobhan Barter*

On behalf of the Management Committee and also the Society as a whole, Robin Bennett presented a certificate and bottle of wine to Siobhan Barter to pronounce her admission into the 'Order of the Grape', in acknowledgement of her efforts with the *Freelance Register 2008* above and beyond her efforts as Secretary.

##### *President's welcome*

Robin Bennett welcomed the returning members of the Management Committee. Robin gave each committee member a token of appreciation and general members gave the incoming committee a round of applause.

There being no further business the AGM closed at 7.25 pm.

## What do your Management Committee get up to in their (rare) spare time?

As a way of just quietly chilling out and enjoying each others' company in a gathering completely unpolluted by SocEdsQ 'business', Robin, Jennifer, David, Wendy, Les (our 'friendly emailer' and Kim (sadly, Siobhan and Annette were not able to make it) spent a pleasant late afternoon recently at St Jerome's restaurant in Kelvin Grove.



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### Your news and views

We welcome any contributions to our monthly newsletter. Copy deadline is one week after the general meeting. Please send articles, letters, book reviews, details of interesting web sites, anecdotes, snippets and quotes to the editor at [offpress@editorsqld.com](mailto:offpress@editorsqld.com).



### Treasurer's report (Ed's note)

Due to a glitch with the formatting of the financial information, the figures for August cannot be published. If anyone has a burning desire to know what the income, expenditure and net profit or loss for the month were, please contact Kim (in the Treasurer's absence {Donna is overseas for a few weeks}).

## Membership information

The Society of Editors (Queensland) Inc. came into being in 1990 with the object of promoting the exchange of ideas and the dissemination of information on matters of professional interest in the publishing industry, and to help in establishing and maintaining high standards of editing and publishing. Since that time, the Society has grown from a gleam in the collective eye of a few editors to a professional association of some standing. It has been involved in the development of the Diploma of Editing (Publishing) at TAFE, and the former Graduate Diploma of Publishing and Editing at Griffith University.

The Society holds training workshops and seminars for its members, and is responsible for producing the *Register of Freelance Publishing Services* (updated every few years, and containing entries for editors, designers, illustrators, layout experts and so on).

There are three levels of membership:

- Full membership: open only to people professionally engaged in editing and publishing; the membership application must contain details of the applicant's experience and the names of publishing companies and organisations worked for. Annual fee: \$45
- Associate membership: open to anyone interested in the activities of the Society; there are no voting rights, and associate members are not eligible for election to Management Committee positions. Annual fee: \$35
- Student membership: open only to full-time students who cite their student ID number; there are no voting rights, and student members are not eligible for election to Management Committee positions. Annual fee: \$20

People who live more than 50 km from the Brisbane GPO pay half-fees. Application for membership is assessed by the Management Committee.

Visit the website or contact the Membership Secretary for an application form.