

# West Coast EDITOR

A MONTHLY FORUM FOR EAC  
MEMBERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA  
TO EXCHANGE IDEAS,  
DEVELOP SKILLS AND  
SHARE NEWS ABOUT EDITING

OCTOBER 2001

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EDITORS'  
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES  
RÉVISEURS

BC BRANCH

## Winnifred Assmann now EAC-BC chair

CATHY BRANNEN

EAC-BC executive members were not getting nervous without an acting chair, but upon Winnifred Assmann's announcing her acceptance of the vacant position, there was an immediate infusion of positive energy and it carried throughout the first executive meeting of the fiscal year.

Winnifred has been an EAC member since 1994, when she first worked with, then chaired, the directory committee. She was public relations chair for one year (1995 – 96) and held the secretary/social/outreach position two years ago. In May 2001, she accepted the newly created position of national representative (formerly part of the chair's duties).

The vacant chair position had been in the back of her mind. "I can blame Andy for my decision," she said. While speaking with Andy Carroll, now Toronto co-chair, at the August national executive meeting, he reminded Winnifred that he was on the BC executive the last time the chair position was vacant.

"That was the year it all just languished," he said.

"His remark set something off in my head, and after much thought, I decided to accept the BC chair position," said Winnifred from her office at the Legal Services Society. The Society provides legal aid and legal information services to British Columbians. Winnifred works as one of two editors in the Publishing Program, producing public legal education materials.

Editing is the "left turn" Winnifred took from academia.

"I was in the middle of defending my Ph.D. thesis when I realized this [academia] was not what I was suited for," she said. With a newly acquired doctorate in English, Winnifred turned to editing.

As branch chair, Winnifred has two main goals: she would like to develop a branch policy and procedure manual, and develop inter-branch and branch/national communications.

Following a dynamic past chair can be intimidating. But Ann-Marie Metten's inclusive leadership style and Winnifred's experience and understanding of EAC, at both the branch and national levels, will ensure a smooth transition and a productive year. ✧

## Tribute to Ann-Marie Metten, past chair, EAC-BC

CHERYL C. ANDREWS

She came looking for other people who did what she did—editing. And she must have found the collegiality and professional network she needed in EAC because that was 17 years ago and she's still here.

Ann-Marie Metten has just completed her term as branch chair, this organization's top position, during which she promoted editors here at home and represented BC editors at the national level. She will now move into her new role as past chair on the BC executive.

When Ann-Marie first attended EAC (then called FEAC) meetings in 1986, it

was a new association with fewer than 30 members. That first year, she was asked to join the BC executive as treasurer, and she went on to serve with the professional development and public relations committees, before organizing the BC branch's fifth anniversary gala in 1990.

When she rejoined the executive in 1999, Ann-Marie took on the role of membership chair, and her enthusiasm, organizational skills and quick smile got her the job of branch chair in 2000. She led us well, increasing the visibility of editors in the publishing community and promoting opportunities for editors to

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## Editors: Getting started and changing direction

CHERYL C. ANDREWS

Four distinguished BC editors shared their experience and wisdom about the editing profession at the EAC meeting on September 19 in Vancouver.

Speaking to a large crowd of 60, the panel of editors gave advice to novice editors on getting started, as well as to experienced editors considering a change in direction.

Charles Campbell began by entertaining the group with his humorous take on editing, especially as it related to his years as a periodical editor with the *Georgia Straight* and *The Vancouver Sun* newspapers.

He joked that periodical editors are an idiosyncratic, eccentric group more concerned with whether the story is libelous than if its content is spelled right.

“You don’t get sued for spelling mistakes,” he said. He added, “There is room for good editors in the periodical world. You need to have good computer and editing skills. And if you pretend to have journalistic skills as well, you’re in like flint.”

He warned, however, in light of the 130 layoffs at the *National Post* last week,

this may not be a good time to bring in your resume.

Nancy Flight, editorial director at Greystone Books, gave her perspective as an experienced book editor. She explained her view of editing through a concept she called the “Five E’s”—education, exposure, experience, excellence and equipment.

“In my day,” Nancy joked, “we used to learn on the job. Now you can take courses.” She outlined a few relevant programs offered through local educational institutions.

“While you are not necessarily a fully qualified editor when you graduate, you will have the skills and knowledge to begin to be an editor, and this is extremely valuable,” she said.

“Expose yourself to the many publishing and writing events,” Nancy advised. “Most employers would rather hire someone they know, and that is how you get known. Volunteer to work on a newsletter or directory. This gives you experience, and can lead to work.”

Nancy’s list of equipment included reference manuals, a computer, fax

machine and business cards. A brochure can help get your name out there.

“And being professional is part of your equipment,” she said. Having a portfolio of work samples is another useful marketing tool.

Nancy’s advice for editors changing direction? Before going freelance, test the waters, lay your groundwork and have some money set aside until things get moving for you.

“If moving from freelance to in-house,” she said, “be prepared for lots of meetings, and for losing some of your autonomy.”

Maureen Nicholson teaches and coordinates the Print Futures: Professional Writing Program at Douglas College, and does freelance editing through her own company, Keyline Consulting Associates. Maureen, the good teacher she is, came with a handout listing 10 tips for editors, and several suggestions for related websites and professional associations.

Her handout will be available on our website <[www.editors.ca/bc/bc.htm](http://www.editors.ca/bc/bc.htm)>.

The key points Maureen emphasized were to join an additional professional organization, tell people directly that you’re interested in working for them and be informed. She also suggested that you volunteer, but know what you hope to gain. If your objectives are not being met, move on.

“Research salaries and hourly rates, and know what the market will bear,” said Maureen. “Be informed about related organizations and read the trade journals like *Quill and Quire* for book editors and *Masthead*, the magazine about magazines.”

Finally, Maureen suggested finding a colleague you trust to work with, and a mentor. “And be prepared to change your mind,” she says.

Barbara Pulling, who has been editing since the early 80’s, shared the personal story of her journey as an editor. She began with an English degree in Ontario,

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### Useful Internet Sites

Five excellent on-line resources for examining the labour market Maureen Nicholson recommended:

<[www.workfutures.bc.ca](http://www.workfutures.bc.ca)> see NOC 512, “Writing, Translating & PR Professionals”

<[www.workinfonet.bc.ca](http://www.workinfonet.bc.ca)> Career, job and labour market information in BC

<[www.ceiss.org](http://www.ceiss.org)> BC education and career planning site

<[www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca)> Jobs, training, careers, grants and assistance

<[www.statcan.org](http://www.statcan.org)> Labour market and income data

Maureen suggested several professional organizations, other than EAC, as being useful to someone with editing skills. The Canadian Public Relations Society of Vancouver offers open access to their job listings at <[www.cprsvancouver.com](http://www.cprsvancouver.com)>; the International Association of Business Communicators (BC Chapter) has 300 members and offers job listings for members at <[www.iabc.bc.ca](http://www.iabc.bc.ca)>; and the Society for Technical Communication, with 25,000 members worldwide, including technical writers, editors, graphic designers, Web and Internet designers and more, offers semi-restricted access to their job listings at <[www.stcwestcoast.ca](http://www.stcwestcoast.ca)>.

## Practical tips for effective networking

ROBERT CHESTERMAN

The October 17 branch meeting will feature a special presentation by Moe Somani on practical tips for effective networking.

The presentation should interest in-house and freelance editors of all levels of experience. It will expand on a point made at our September meeting, where our four panellists all emphasized the importance of networking.

Moe Somani is CEO of SOMANI Group, a marketing organization that develops on-line and off-line B2B communications solutions for corporations and associations. He is also president of SOHO Business Group, a national membership-driven organization that develops unique benefits, programs and events to support SOHO (Small Office Home Office) and SME (Small & Medium Size Enterprise) business owners and professionals.

### ... Editors

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and then went to library school. Moving to Vancouver, she worked for Duthie Books. At the same time, through her volunteer involvement, Barbara began editing and loved it.

Thus began Barbara's career in book editing, with stints with New Star Books, Douglas and McIntyre and Annick Press. After a number of years in-house, she felt restricted, wanting to branch out with other publishing houses and projects.

Today, Barbara enjoys a successful freelance career, and showed us that every step we make can build upon the lessons and experience of the last, until we get to the place we really want to be.

Barbara is this year's recipient of the prestigious Tom Fairley Award for Editorial Excellence for her work on the powerful book, *The Bear's Embrace* by Patricia Van Tighem. ✧

Prior to launching his company, Moe held highly successful sales, marketing and management positions with Pitney Bowes of Canada, including major accounts manager and BC director of sales.

Moe Somani launched SOHO at the age of 30 in June 1996 out of a hospital bed, after experiencing a spinal cord difficulty that left him (temporarily) paralyzed from the chest down. Today, SOHO is recognized as one of the fastest growing support networks for SMEs in Canada.

Moe is recognized as one of the top sales and marketing professionals in the industry and as an expert in the B2B marketplace for small business. He regularly facilitates networking events for SOHO members and guests. These are practical opportunities to learn and practice networking and personal marketing skills. SOHO members can post their business profiles on the SOHO Web site <[www.soho.ca](http://www.soho.ca)>. Former EAC-BC program chair Rick Rodgers has his profile there: go to *Members Referral Network*, then *Writing/Editing Services*.

Moe is very active with local community programs. He is a member of various Chambers of Commerce and a past director of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers. He volunteers many hours to entrepreneurial programs such as Junior Achievement, SUCCESS, and BCIT Venture Development Centre. He is also devoted to charities such as the Aga Khan Foundation Canada and North Shore Family Services. ✧

Meetings of the EAC-BC Branch are held at 7:30 PM on the third Wednesday of each month (except December, June, July and August) in the Royal Bank Room at the YWCA, 733 Beatty Street (between Robson and Georgia) in downtown Vancouver. Non-members are most welcome! (\$5 drop-in fee.) For more information, call (604) 681-7184.

## Fall 2001 workshop line-up

### Editing for the Web

*How to work with words in an electronic age*

Saturday, October 27, 10 AM to 1 PM

Members \$59 / Non-Members \$79 (GST incl.)

Your strengths as an editor of traditional media can work for you when editing new media—Web sites need the same attention to audience and language as books, magazines and public relations materials. This half-day workshop combines the experience of a Web writer and editor with the creative abilities of an information design consultant to explore different formats and styles for Web content.

*Presenters: Anne Pepper, Simon Britchford*

### Editing for Readers

*How to make your publication relevant*

Saturday, November 3, 10 AM to 1 PM

Members \$45 / Non-Members \$59 (GST incl.)

Newsletters, trade magazines and other select publications can serve audiences that are quite specific or incredibly diverse. By examining tried-and-true techniques for increasing readership, this workshop will give participants plenty of ideas to take away.

*Presenters: Vera Wynn Williams, Les Wiseman*

### Editing for Style

*The elegant grammar of sentences*

Saturday, November 17, 10 AM to 4 PM

Members \$75 / Non-Members \$99 (GST incl.)

Understanding the elegance of grammar gives editors greater control over sentence structure and tone, and opens up a wider range of stylistic choices. This one-day editing workshop will review traditional sentence grammar, touch on punctuation and explore and experiment with ways to edit sentences for conciseness, cohesion, emphasis and—yes—elegance. If you work with words, at whatever level, this workshop will broaden your awareness of sentence construction and boost your confidence as a writer or editor.

*Presenter: Amanda Goldrick-Jones*

All EAC workshops in Vancouver are held at Simon Fraser University (SFU) at Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings Street. For more information, please email us at <[bc@editors.ca](mailto:bc@editors.ca)> or see our fall brochure. ✧

## Brenda Austin: Our new hotline coordinator

Brenda Austin has taken over from Darcy Cullen as EAC-BC communications/hotline chair.

Brenda has been in the field of communications for a number of years, sometimes in-house as a writer and editor or a communications specialist, and sometimes in her own business. She edits magazine articles, manuals, guides, professional healthcare books and newsletters.

As a communications specialist, she writes and edits a range of corporate communications and handles media relations. She has worked with First Nations clients, small businesses and publishers.

Brenda served on the executive a number of years ago as hotline coordinator, and thus will bring an interesting and useful historical perspective to our meetings. ✧

## ...Tribute to Ann-Marie

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network and learn together.

In her capacity as past chair, Ann-Marie will provide the continuity necessary on a volunteer board, and will continue to guide the organization from her position as an experienced member who has worked both in-house and freelance.

Ann-Marie appreciates the many benefits she has enjoyed during her years with EAC, primarily the opportunity to meet with other editors, so important when most editors work in isolation. She has also grown from her participation in the professional development programs EAC offers, and has learned much from the senior editors who helped her in the early days, especially Nora Kembar, Lois Richardson, Jean Wilson, and Nancy Flight.

We at the BC Branch of the Editors' Association of Canada wish to express our deep appreciation to Ann-Marie for her years of service. We are grateful for her ongoing involvement with this organization. ✧

## News from national

WINNIFRED ASSMANN

From the August meeting, Edmonton

- Have a look at the *Membership Handbook* you received last year; it's filled with useful information about EAC and can answer your questions on many issues, including what the difference is between voting and associate membership, what the executive does, who can apply for the Tom Fairley award or how to deal with a non-paying client.
- The insurer is still working on the French report of the insurance plan, and we should have some information to you soon. Stay tuned.
- 170 people attended the June 2001 EAC conference in Toronto, not quite as many as in Vancouver in 2000. We're hoping for a better turnout next May 24–26 in Montreal.
- When the directory arrives, members may notice that the order in which the branches appear (BC first—QAC last) is the same as it was last year (it's supposed to change back and forth each year). The directory committee encountered numerous difficulties during the production process, which slowed everything down, and they did not discover that the geographic direction had not been reversed until it was too late to change it.
- There has been some discussion of voting membership—how to get it and what it's worth—on the email forum lately. This is the process: Members fill out a statement when they first apply for membership, showing that they have at least 500 hours of editing experience within the last year. Every couple of years, the national office checks the membership list and asks voting members to complete another voting statement (but a different one) showing that they have 500 hours of editing within the past three years. See your *Membership Handbook* for more details. ✧

## WEST COAST EDITOR

*West Coast Editor* is the newsletter of the British Columbia branch of the Editors' Association of Canada. Views expressed in these pages do not necessarily reflect those of EAC/ACR as a whole.

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