# **International Council on English Braille**

# **Report from the Public Relations Committee 2024**

The Public Relations Committee was established following the 2016 ICEB General Assembly. It is responsible for telling the world about the policies, decisions and activities of ICEB. Following an amendment to the ICEB Constitution in 2020, the committee is now a Permanent Committee which reflects the important and ongoing nature of its work.

## **The Public Relations Committee 2024**

Jen Goulden (Canada)

Natalie Martiniello (Canada)

Stewart Lawler (Ireland)

Reinette Popplestone (South Africa) sadly passed away in 2019

Sue Reilly (United States)

Mike Townsend (England) sadly passed away in November 2023 and his memorial service was in January 2024

Leona Holloway (Australia)

Mary Schnackenberg (New Zealand)

Maria Stevens Chair (New Zealand)

**ICEB Working Committees are:**

* Code Maintenance
* UEB Technical Committee
* Braille Technology
* Constitution and Bylaws
* Finance
* Music
* Public Relations
* Research

Observers are always welcome to join any of these working groups.

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ICEB established a Facebook page in February 2017. The ICEB Facebook page is located at <https://www.facebook.com/ICEBbraille/>. At last count there were 727 Facebook followers.

I wish to thank Natalie Martiniello for the support she has so generously provided to enable Facebook to continue to grow and share articles around Braille.

The ICEB Twitter account [@ICEBbraille](https://twitter.com/icebbraille) was established in May 2016 at the commencement of the ICEB General Assembly. At last count ICEB Twitter had 437 followers.

I wish to acknowledge Jen Goulden for the tweets she has shared around the importance of Braille today and into the future.

Jen is also venturing into the world of Mastodon (<https://mastodon.social/explore>) another platform to share news about the work that ICEB continues to do around Braille in our changing world of accessibility to the written word in Braille.

ICEB-announce is a one-way listserv on groups.io reserved for important announcements about ICEB activities such as updates to Unified English Braille and upcoming ICEB meetings. It is also used for distribution of the ICEB newsletter.

To learn more about the iceb-announce@groups.io group, please visit [https://groups.io/g/iceb-announce](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__groups.io_g_iceb-2Dannounce&d=DwMFaQ&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=Zq0_qa_dlXkx3FCFe6011gQiVcEKq46hMOjC1xl6pY8&m=1jZsSGdKcPCRJa1CPKuqi1gVbZu9iwKnVri8QkfwzQE&s=7Ebhrf471A9TsbNUUgSHGFx8Ld-qr-H43qobmRYl1MY&e=)

To start sending messages to members of this group, simply send email to
iceb-announce@groups.io

The first ICEB newsletter was produced in December 2018. Since then, it has been produced and distributed quarterly in March, June, September and December. The newsletter is stored on the ICEB website. Each edition includes a mix of ICEB news, UEB FAQ and test-your-knowledge, news from the broader Braille community, and upcoming events. We thank all our contributors and everyone who helps with ideas, proofreading and production.

Mary Schnackenberg continues to ensure that the content and the newsletters are sent out complete with interesting and thought-provoking articles and I truly appreciate all the work she does for ICEB.

If you haven't received a newsletter from the list, please subscribe by sending an email to iceb-announce+subscribe@groups.io.

The ICEB website at <https://iceb.org> serves as a public door to the work done by ICEB and as a repository for information and materials. We warmly thank Judy Dixon for taking care of the website updates.

Much work remains to be done, particularly in terms of outreach to non-member countries and collaboration with other organisations.

We look forward to hearing news from the World Blind Union about the World Braille Council.

More information about the work of the Public Relations Committee, including past issues of the ICEB newsletter, can be found on our Braille Promotion page, <https://iceb.org/PR.html>.

While the majority of ICEB subscribers and followers across our various social media platforms are from ICEB member countries, there is also modest outreach to other countries including Botswana, Brazil, India, Finland, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Russia, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

ICEB is pleased to announce that Nepal has recently joined the ICEB family and their representative attended the ICEB Executive April 2024 meeting.

The work of ICEB is of importance to all countries using or teaching English Braille. The Public Relations Committee has been pleased to significantly expand the media through which we can share this work over the last four years. In particular, the increased use of social media channels, the iceb-announce listserv and the quarterly ICEB newsletter represent major achievements. We hope that these outlets will continue to be used in the future and that our members and followers will help to share ICEB's rules, guidelines and resources for Braille within their local Braille communities.

## **Conclusion**

As we celebrate 200 Years of Braille and the way it has evolved from the slate and stylus through to files being embossed from computers and files being read on refreshable Braille devices, please take a moment to remember Louis Braille and the gift he has given to so many Braille readers worldwide to enable each of us to live our lives the way we wish.

**Maria Stevens**

**Public Relations Officer**

**May 2024**