

*Next meeting
Wednesday 27 August
6pm*

Starting a mentoring scheme in CSE

In CSE we have often talked about starting a mentoring scheme, under which members new to the society or new to editing could learn from the experiences of more experienced members. The next meeting will be an informal session where we will gather ideas about how such a scheme could operate, and what would be the benefits to mentees, mentors, to CSE, and to the editing profession in general.

You should come to the meeting if you:

- would like to contribute to the development of an important arm of the society's training and development program
- are new to editing and would like to draw on the experiences of more experienced editors
- are new to the CSE and would like to make the most of your membership to expand your networks and develop your career
- are an experienced editor and would like to assist newer editors get started on their career.

Meet in the Friends Lounge at the National Library at 6pm for networking. Meeting starts at 6:30pm.

Workshop on the accreditation exam

Where: 4th floor, Training Rooms 3 and 4, National Library of Australia.

When: 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm, Saturday 23 August.

Cost: \$25 members, \$35 non-members

Book now by emailing
<larissa.joseph@gmail.com>

Canberra Society of Editors Newsletter

Vol 17 • Number 7 • August 2008

Annual General Meeting report

It's been a bit of an up-and-down year for the Society and I think we are going through a period of change.

The year in review

The committee provided a variety of excellent speakers and events through the year at general meetings.

In August literary sisters Marion Halligan gave us a wonderful and enlightening insight into the author–editor relationship. Marion spoke about her recently released novel, *The Apricot Colonel*, and the experience of working with an editor who happens to be her sister.

In September Janet Salisbury gave a fascinating talk on *The Language of Evidence*—the use and abuse of language in scientific reporting. Janet had presented this talk to the national conference earlier in the year.

Our October meeting saw a slight shift of venue—to the Brindabella Room on the fourth floor of the National Library—where we took part in a discussion of the 'shifting sands' of copyright led by Lindy Shultz. Lindy's talk focussed on her experiences in obtaining copyright clearances for a songbook for community choirs, and the sometimes puzzling complexities that emerged in the process.

In November we had our annual end-of-year dinner



at d'browes restaurant in Narrabundah and were highly entertained by guest speaker ABC weatherman Mark Carmody.

In February Renee Bennett, co-owner of Design ONE Solutions demonstrated a lot of passion for improving communication between editors and designers.

Our March meeting took the form of a Quiggle, a sort of cross between a quiz and a niggle—an evening combining editorial niggles and a lot of competitive fun.

In April Dr Anita Heiss shared her experiences and views on editing and collaborating on Aboriginal work. While the topic is serious and totally relevant to our profession Anita presented the topic in an extremely entertaining.

At our May meeting historian and author Ian Howie-Willis recounted how he became an editor from being a writer of history and described his experiences on both sides of the author-editor relationship

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IPEd notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors

www.iped-editors.org

August 2008

The organisation and running of the first accreditation examination on 18 October 2008 is currently the primary focus of all IPEd groups. The Accreditation Board is meeting fortnightly by teleconference to complete the large amount of work that remains to be done over the next month or so to ensure that the exam, which will be held simultaneously in every state capital city and Canberra, runs smoothly for all.

All you need to know about the examination can be found at <www.iped-editors.org>. Also there, you will find details of how to register, something that must be done by Thursday 18 September. The list of registrants is growing daily, populated by editors who realise the value that the postnominal 'AE' (Accredited Editor) will have in their working life.

To further help candidates for the examination each of the state and territory societies will be holding an examination preparation workshop for its members. Check the IPEd website or your society's website for details of these events. Attendance is recommended for all who have registered, or intend to do so.

The Annual General Meeting of the Institute of Professional

Editors Limited (IPEd) will be held by teleconference on Sunday 24 August. The agenda can be found on the IPEd website. When the budget for 2008–09—an item on the agenda—has been adopted by the Council it will be put up on the website, as will be the audited accounts for 2007–08. The AGM will be followed by a meeting of the Council.

The 'Upcoming events' field on the IPEd website is open to all societies and other bodies interests in editing, publishing and associated endeavours. To get an event listed there contact <webadmin@iped-editors.org>.

Many editors might be surprised to discover that they can join a union, the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA), which is for people working in book publishing, website production, public relations and advertising, as well as journalists, photographers, musicians, actors and others in TV, radio, theatre and film. Membership rates vary depending on income. The Alliance is currently offering a membership discount to members of all Australian societies of editors. Details can be accessed via an item on the IPEd website home page.

Ed Highley
Secretary

Reader's tip of the month

When you are using the mouse to change table column widths in Word, it is sometimes quite tricky to get the width precisely as you want it. If you hold down the <Alt> key while you are dragging the column borders, you can control them exactly.

Brian O'Donnell

If you would like to share your favourite editing or software tip with our readers, send a short email to the newsletter editor, Rebecca Booth, at <rjb@pcug.org.au>

(Annual General Meeting report, continued from page 1)

The June meeting was the most engaging meeting I have ever attended in the CSE, and I wish all meetings could be that passionate. Joe Massingham presented his findings from the focus groups he conducted; some of the findings were quite controversial and emotions ran quite high at some points in the meeting. More about this later.

Thanks to Janet Salisbury for putting together such an interesting programme, and to others who helped—particularly Hilary Cadman who ran the Quiggle and provided notes of some of the meetings for the newsletter, and to Gil Garcon who also reported on several of the meetings.

Very special thanks to Dallas Stow and Damaris Wilson for the outstanding provender we have enjoyed at meetings.

Training

This is the area we have been least successful in during the year.

The most difficult decision we had to make was to postpone EdEx to a date yet to be determined. We remain committed to EdEx but we felt that at that stage with a committee who were all very stretched in their professional and personal lives, the planning just wasn't as advanced as we would have liked, and we felt that we wouldn't have been able to put on a show of the quality we have come to expect. We will be looking for a coordinator—not necessarily a committee member—who can work on this. One of the first tasks will be to select a date—possibly early next year, depending on whether we want to do it in the same year as the national conference.

This however freed us up to organise Simon Hillier to come down from Sydney to present a web writing workshop for us on Saturday 12 July. This was very successful and I hope we might be able to repeat this sometime

And we are negotiating a special presentation later in the year on grammar essentials.

Also, coming up on 23 August will be an exam preparation workshop specifically for people thinking of sitting the exam in October.

Communications

Peter Judge continues to be a rock as webmaster, membership register maintainer and the Freelance Register, and, until May this year, newsletter editor. Since Peter decided at that stage he could no longer continue doing the newsletter, we have had an interim editorial team of Gil Garcon and me, but

we are looking forward to handing over to a proper editorial team of Rebecca Booth and Virginia Cooke.

I'd like to especially thank Peter for having kept the newsletter appearing smoothly and for his regular highly entertaining and popular Thinking About Words series.

Thanks too to Elizabeth Murphy who continued her excellent writings on grammar under the banner of Fiddly Bits and in 2008 I series.

Thank you to everybody else who contributed material during the year.

The subject of communication featured highly in the Massingham report, and I anticipate the new committee will be looking at them all.

One small thing we have been able to do straight away is to include committee doings in the latest newsletter, and feedback on this has been positive. Another suggestion has been that we revive the practice of reporting on committee matters at general meetings.

Membership

We have 208 financial members at the moment. This is slight decrease over this time last year when we had 217.

Institute of Professional Editors and accreditation

There will be a more detailed report on IPEd later in the meeting, but I'd just like to acknowledge the contribution CSE continues to offer to IPEd. Mike Purdy was instrumental in creating the new website. Virginia Wilton, as well as doing a sterling job as our representative to IPEd, was appointed interim chair of the IPEd Council, and Ed Highley has continued to do a fine job as secretary of the Council. Our Treasurer Margaret Millard managed the IPEd finances until the funds were handed over earlier this year. Canberra had the honour of hosting the inaugural meeting of the IPEd Council in April. And CSE has been extremely active in discussions on accreditation and members have been more than willing to have their say on what they perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of the process.

We held an accreditation examination workshop in October 2007, presented by Shelley Kenigsberg, Chair of the IPEd Accreditation Board with assistance from Larissa Joseph and Chris Pirie, Canberra representatives on the Accreditation Board. We had 21 participants. As mentioned under

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Grammar's in style...more of the players



Last month, we met some of the players in English grammar—four of the ‘parts of speech’: nouns, pronouns, adjectives and adverbs. Remember that words are labelled according to the function they perform in a sentence—very few words

perform only one function, so many words have multiple labels. Now let's meet another bunch of the troupe: verbs, prepositions, conjunctions and articles.

Verbs

The Latin word *verbum* means *the word*. When our ancestors were handing out labels to some of the important kinds of words in English, they labelled as *verb* the word (or group of words) that they thought was the most important word in a sentence. The verb in a sentence tells us what the subject either does or is. In the sentence *Birds fly*, I have underlined the subject once and the verb twice. It's often easier to spot the verb in a sentence and get it to help locate the subject. In this sentence, we can ask ‘Who or what flies?’ The answer is ‘birds’, so birds must be the subject of the sentence, the thing we are talking about. The verb can be one word or a phrase: *Birds fly* or *Birds have been flying home in the spring since the beginning of time*.

Verbs can be transitive or intransitive. They are transitive when action passes across from the subject to an object (*trans* is Latin for across): *Pilots fly aeroplanes*. They are intransitive when there is no such action passing across: *Birds fly*.

Verbs can be active or passive. In the sentence: *Pilots fly aeroplanes*, the doer (agent) *pilots* is in subject position and the receiver (patient) *aeroplanes* is in object position—this is an active construction. If we turn it round so that the receiver of the action is in subject position, and the doer in object position—*Aeroplanes are flown by pilots*—we have a passive construction.

Verbs also have tense—that is, they express time. In English we have three main tenses: present, past and future:

Pilots fly aeroplanes. (present)

Yesterday I flew to Melbourne. (past)

Tomorrow our senior pilot will fly the new jet to London. (future)

There are many more complex tenses in English grammar, but they are all based on these three simple tenses. They make use of auxiliary verbs, such as

have and *be*, and present and past participles (parts of verbs) such as *flying* and *flown*.

So far, I've talked about *doing* verbs. There are also *being* verbs. Find the verb and ask the question to lead you to the subject: *Tim is my brother*. Who or what *is*? Tim is. We are talking about Tim—this is the subject of the sentence.

Prepositions

Again, we look back to Latin to help understand these little words. *Pre* is Latin for *before*. So a preposition is positioned before a noun or pronoun or their equivalent. It shows the relationship between two things: *The toys are in the box* (shows where the toys are in relation to the box, and *in the box* is called a prepositional phrase).

There are some words that are always followed by a certain preposition, for example: *adjacent to*, *independent of*, *culminate in*. So we might write: *This building is adjacent to the bank*. In that sentence, *to the bank* is a prepositional phrase, and *adjacent to* is the accepted way of writing ‘adjacent + preposition’. This currently acceptable way of writing is known as *prepositional idiom*.

Idiom is like fashion—what was unacceptable yesterday is acceptable today and something else will no doubt be acceptable tomorrow. *Different from* used to be the only acceptable way of writing ‘different + preposition’. Now it is acceptable to write *different to*, but *different than* has not yet made it into acceptability for formal writing. It will in time.

Conjunctions

Just like the buses, things that come together meet at a junction, and when two or more words, phrases, clauses come together they meet with (Latin *con*) each other at that joining place (or junction)—hence *conjunction*.

Like items or items of similar significance are joined by coordinating conjunctions: *John is tall and slim*; *The boys are playing cricket but the girls are playing hockey*.

Items of different weight are joined by subordinating conjunctions: *We abandoned the cricket match because it rained*.

Articles

These are sometimes called determiners. There are two kinds—definite (*the*) and indefinite (*a* or *an*). We use the definite article when we are writing about a specific thing: *Please give me the book on the small table*. We use the indefinite article when

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(Grammar's in style...more of the players, continued from page 4)

we are writing about something indefinite or non-specific: *I would like a cool drink or an orange and a biscuit.* Note that *a* is used when a consonant follows and *an* when a vowel sound follows.

Sometimes no article is necessary at all—when we are writing about a generality: *Books are more interesting than pamphlets.*

So much for the building blocks of sentences—the words, the parts of speech, that change their labels as soon as we know what role/function they are playing at the time. There is a lot more that could be written about them all. Most of them are covered in my book *Effective writing: plain English at work*.

Are you a better editor for knowing this bit of English grammar? Only you can tell. I know it helps me, as an editor, to explain the alterations I need to make to clients' manuscripts. As I said last month, I believe that knowing the metalanguage of editing helps with the 'teaching' aspect of editing.

Reference: Murphy E M (1989, reprinted 1994, 2008) *Effective writing: plain English at work*, Pitman, Melbourne

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Training, another workshop is being held on 23 August to help members prepare for the exam.

Other highlights

We commissioned Joe Massingham of WRITEPeople to conduct focus groups on our behalf with a range of people who have, or could have, an interest in editing and in our society. The aim was to come up with material and ideas which might guide the society in its future activities.

Joe presented his findings to our June meeting and the report was made available on our website soon afterwards. The findings were quite revealing and not all were to the liking of all members. However we need to take them seriously. Some things we can take on board straight away, but others will need more research and discussion with members. Please read the report if you haven't already done so.

Farewells

We were saddened during the year by the death of long-time CSE member Dr John Champness who died peacefully in Geelong on Wednesday 22 August, after a long battle with illness. He was 86. Whenever John was in Canberra, he made a point of attending CSE meetings and meetings of the Australian Society for Technical writers.

We were also saddened by the death of Robert Hyslop, who passed peacefully at the Canberra Hospital on 5 July last year. Robert was a founder member of the Canberra Society of Editors and also a member of the Australian Society of Indexers

and was involved in the committees for both organisations.

Committee thanks

It remains for me to thank all other members of the outgoing committee.

Ann Parkinson, for wonderful support in many areas, filling in for me while I was away, and for organising our end-of-year dinner and this AGM. Ann is looking forward to a rest after a two-year stint as VP.

Margaret Millard, a relatively new member who joined the committee last year and jumped straight into the role of Treasurer, and what a find she has been. Not only a highly efficient treasurer but willing to step in and help in so many other things.

Alan Roberts, also looking forward to a rest after doing a sterling job as secretary for the last two years.

Peter Judge who has kept our membership list and our website up to date and until May edited and produced the newsletter.

Janet Salisbury who looked after our meeting arrangements and organised our speakers.

Kerie Newell who despite dealing with significant health issues did the initial planning for EdEx and organised for Simon to come down to do the web writing workshop

Gil Garcon, membership secretary and assistance with the newsletter since May, both as editor and contributor.

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Thinking about words: for a changing climate



Samuel Johnson, of *Dictionary* fame, was noted for his acerbic wit and his love of London. So when an acquaintance, newly returned to Jamaica from London, had the misfortune to die there, Johnson quipped, ‘He will not, whither he is now gone, find much difference, I believe, in either the climate

or the company’. We however, hoping for better things and agreeable company in the next world, may progressively find much difference in the climate in our present world. The evidence for global warming is all around us, and is likely to accelerate, with extremes of weather having disastrous effects on human societies and on plant and animal ecosystems.

The word *climate* itself has a history of change. It all began with the Greeks, whose word for it, *klima*, originally meant a slope, like the slope of a mountain. But it didn’t stop there: Pythagorean cosmology accepted the notion of a spherical earth, around which the planets could move in regular circles, so *klima* went on to mean the imagined slope of the earth and heaven from the equator to the poles. Later again it meant a region of the earth at the same height on that ‘slope’—we would say, between certain latitudes. Gradually it all became more specific, and by the 14th century we find the slope divided up into precisely seven climates, presided over by the seven known planets. As the experts moved in, it became more complicated and less convincing—by the 18th century an American geographer, Morse, was speaking of 24 climates from the equator to each of the polar circles, each corresponding to an increase of half an hour in the length of the longest day, and 30 climates from the equator to the poles. Meanwhile, another word, *climature* (akin to *temperature*) had crept in to mean pretty well what we mean by climate today: the weather we might expect at a certain latitude.

Horses for courses, and ecosystems for their appropriate climates. Are you an *ecofreak*? Or an *econut*? Or just a *Greenie*? It seems dreadful that because you care about the environment, and try to avoid upsetting it unnecessarily, you should be landed with these rather derogatory labels. And just where do all these *eco*-words come from?

Economy got there first, by a comfortable margin—about 2000 years, actually. The *eco*- part of it derives from the Greek *oikos*, meaning ‘home’, and the *-nomy* from a Greek verb meaning to control. The

Romans took the Greek *oikonomia* and turned it into *oeconomia*, which is why in older texts you are still likely to see the occasional *oeco*- instead of *eco*-. Up to the 16th century *economy* had the sense very much of ‘domestic economy’ or household management, and that sense extended to the management of the nation’s economy as well. From there the meaning added the idea of careful management, and so to ways of saving—your economies help your bank account to grow. (Or so I hope, for your sake. It doesn’t seem to work like that for me...)

Ecology is the study of plants and animals in relation to their environment. It was first identified as a field of scientific study in its own right by the German zoologist Ernst Haeckel, who in 1869 gave it the name *Ökologie* (pronounced *erkologhee*, by which name it is still known in Germany; the name clearly had some affinity with *Ökonomie*, a word for economy introduced into German in the 16th century). Those two dots over the ‘O’ are an *umlaut*, turning an *oh* sound into an *er* sound; *ö*, *ä* and *ü* are sometimes replaced in print by *oe*, *ae* and *ue*, so that *Oekologie* may cause further confusion for non-linguists puzzling through an unfamiliar text. We also occasionally use those two dots over a vowel in English words like *Chloë*, *naïve*, etc., but with a different function. The *umlaut* modifies the sound of a vowel; our dots are called a *dieresis* (from the Greek for ‘separation’), causing us to say the vowel separately from its neighbour.

Haeckel was an enthusiastic believer in Darwin’s theory of evolution, and saw environmental factors as keys to the processes of natural selection. But those who followed him tended to look at plants and animals separately, and while some botanists wanted simply to survey the members of plant communities, others had begun to think about the succession of plant species as the communities evolved, the issue of *population dynamics*.

It was a bold step forward to put all this together, to study how the plants and animals fitted together and into the total environment. An impetus for this had existed for the past century, in the writings of the political economist Thomas Malthus. *Malthusianism* has gone out of fashion now, but in its heyday in the early 19th century it was highly influential, although the ultimate in pessimism. Malthus argued that if unchecked, the world’s population will tend to grow in geometrical progression while food production increases only arithmetically—the one doubles while the other adds a little bit more in each good year, and ultimately the resources are finite. The result, said

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(Thinking about words, continued from page 6)

Malthus, will be famine, war and disease—which is pretty well what we are now seeing in many parts of the world.

This tends to happen in miniature or in large in every ecosystem, human or animal—when the rabbits flourished, the farmers went broke. The debate is on in Canberra as to whether the projected population growth to occupy the planned new suburbs will aggravate demand for water beyond any sustainable supply. Social and economic developments in countries like China and India are accelerating their demand for energy and for petrol, itself a dwindling resource, and increasing the carbon emissions that may further impact on our climate. All this is putting

more pressure on the human ecosystem worldwide. Ecological management is ultimately a global concern, but our local actions may nevertheless add up to a necessary and worthwhile contribution. Thinking about these green words has many disturbingly practical implications.

Peter Judge

Sources: *The Oxford English Dictionary* Second Edition on CD-ROM v.3.0. *Encyclopaedia Britannica 2008 Ultimate Reference Suite*. *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage*, ed Burchfield, Oxford 1996. *Deutsches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* <www.koeblergerhard.de/derwbhin.html>.

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Larissa Joseph who has ably represented us on all things to do with accreditation.

Helen Topor who continues to act as our Public Officer as well as help out and provide suggestions and support on just about everything.

Dallas Stow and Damaris Wilson for the outstanding catering we have had at general meetings.

And finally, a big thank you to Virginia Wilton, immediate past president for her quiet support and encouragement over the year.

What's next for the society?

I believe the Massingham report has given us four key areas to focus on during 2008–09.

1. Better communication with members including:
 - passing on more information about what the committee is doing
 - ensuring maximum value from the website and newsletter
 - investigating alternative means of distributing information, such as online newsletters.
2. Closely targeted research based on the findings of the Massingham report—such as short very focused questionnaires on various topics raised in the report.
3. More emphasis on skills development for member:
 - regular workshops—I would like to see us get back to at presenting at least four per year, plus referring members to relevant courses

conducted by other groups

- mentoring
 - EdEx—either in this year or the following, provided we have someone who is willing to take it on.
4. Outsourcing some of what we do. We have a draft budget for 2008–09 budget which includes provisions to invest some of our funds for members' benefit. For example: bringing in presenters (for meetings and workshops) from inter-state, reviewing and revamping our web site, managing some of the aspects of EdEx, and development of specific training courses on our behalf.

In everything we do, I believe we need to keep things simple and accept that we will make mistakes, but be willing to learn from them.

I would like to see more involvement from members. We can't just leave everything to the committee—they are just as busy (if not more so) as everyone else in the society. Nor can you afford to sit and wait to be asked. I would like to suggest a motto for the year: don't wait to be asked!

Thank you for your support over the last year. I have every confidence that the next year is going to be a terrific year and an especially good year for you all to get involved.

Ted Briggs

I'm doing the exam. Are you?

'You can't set up shop as an accountant just because you like numbers, so why should you be able to set up as an editor just because you like reading? Accreditation is important because it sets a minimum standard of what it means when someone says "I'm an accredited editor"; it shows that we take our profession seriously, which is the first step in convincing others to do the same.'

Emma Pearmain, President, Society of Editors WA, editor for 8 years

Register now at <www.sapro.com.au/iped/register.htm>

Guidelines and FAQ at <www.iped-editors.org/content/accreditation-program>

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