

**Next meeting
Saturday 2 August**

Annual General Meeting

**11.00 for 11.30 am
Members Dining Room 3
Old Parliament House**

Come along to support your professional society at this time of rapid change.

Tea and coffee will be available from 11.00 am, and the meeting will start at 11.30 am. A light lunch will be provided free to members attending the AGM, and the Members Bar (cash bar) will be open. Guests are welcome at \$26 per person.

Our guest speaker at lunch will be Kathy Golski, a painter and a writer. Kathy's latest book, *My Two Husbands*, will be having its Sydney launch the day after our event at Old Parliament House. The Canberra launch will take place immediately after our luncheon and you will be able to get your personally signed copy of the book at a special price. Read more about Kathy on page 7 of this newsletter.

All welcome to the AGM but if you want to join us for lunch you **must** RSVP for lunch before Monday 28 July: Ann Parkinson, email Ann.Parkinson@atrax.net.au; phone (02) 6282 1993. If you haven't done so yet, do so now. *No RSVP, no lunch!*

Note: there is no meeting on Wednesday 30 July.

Canberra Society of Editors Newsletter

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June meeting report

Report on CSE focus groups by Joe Massingham

At the June meeting Dr Joe Massingham presented the results of the focus groups he conducted earlier this year. Joe made two key points about his research:

- The report findings are facts, in that they report what people actually said. Facts which we might or might not like, but only facts, not Joe's own opinions.
- This was his hardest focus group assignment in 20 years, up against many uncooperative respondents.

Joe then expressed his views and made suggestions from these facts. Lively discussion ensued as his views were vigorously challenged: no-one likes bad news.

He believes that CSE is in danger of extinction and still exists only because of the freelance register.

IPed and the relationship between it and CSE is not understood and participants believed that one of them will disappear. Neither meets the need of potential members who want one organisation to enhance their professional progression. They want value for their membership.

Joe's essential conclusion is that CSE needs to communicate more and better. Joe suggested that we:

- look at our and outsiders' unconscious **definition of an editor** (There's widespread

misconception about what 'editor' means, as in: 'I'm not an editor because I edit figures' and 'an editor changes punctuation, not words, that's a writer'.)

- **communicate** with our potential membership and clients, and change our communication method
 - one government agency has two teams of 15 editors and none of them had heard of CSE
 - discontinue paper newsletter and go where everyone else is: online
 - make material in the newsletter more relevant than it is
 - put committee minutes on our website
- **become a professional organisation**, because people accept professional organisations like the CPA which add value (more than just the freelance register) and
 - provide specialist and unique training
 - establish ethical standards
 - protect members' interests
 - promote career development
 - control post-nominals
 - set standard fees (no-one argues with the fees charged by accountants because 'it's the standard fee!')

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IPed Notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors

www.iped-editors.org
July 2008

In 2007, a proposal put to the societies of editors to establish a representative national organisation was ratified. The objectives of the new body—IPed—were to serve all professional editors, student and emerging editors, and those interested in editing, by:

- administering a national **system of accreditation**
- maintaining, updating and disseminating information on **professional standards**
- working to raise the public **profile of the editing profession** in Australia and elsewhere
- coordinating collaboration between the member organisations in **national initiatives** such as conferences
- encouraging the **growth and development of the profession** by exchanging ideas and establishing links with the educational and the publishing industry
- **liaising with educational institutions** for the establishment or extension or modification of educational and training provision for editors
- advising **individuals and member organisations** on issues relating to editing and matters of editing practice
- taking the lead in coordinating national **promotional initiatives** to support growth of the profession

- establishing **awards** for outstanding editors, and seeking grants and sponsorships to support the organisation and its mission
- acting as the **representative ‘voice’** of the profession in public statements or comments affecting editors or of interest to them
- forging **links** with related bodies here and abroad
- undertaking other activities as determined by its governing body.

Now that the first item on this list—a national accreditation system for editors—is no longer just a blip on the horizon, with the first accreditation exam scheduled for 18 October this year, IPed can begin to focus on some of its other objectives.

As noted in last month’s notes, the area of communication, promotion and PR was accorded a high priority by Council at its latest meeting. We must raise the profile of editors, not only in publishing but also in the broader milieu of communication, which is, in reality, the business we are in.

Education and training is another field to be targeted during IPed’s first full year of operations. This will initially involve the finalisation of an inventory of existing courses and programs, and

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Welcome to our new members

Full: Barbara de Costa, Mel Martin, Allan Sharp, Zillah Williams, Christine Alesich and Amy Panter

Associate: Claudine Jamieson, Elizabeth Phillips, James Goodrum and Adrienne Gross

Student: Sonia Pertsinidis and Elizabeth Prentice

Corporate: Biographical Dictionary Unit of Parliament House

From the President

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, and some of the findings were quite controversial. Emotions ran quite high at some points in the meeting.

It certainly presents us with lots of opportunities. Some of the things Joe recommended can be done relatively easily and quickly, but many will take longer. For example, we have included in this issue a summary of the last two committee meetings to give you a better idea of the sort of things the committee does. This is a small thing but I am interested in whether you find it useful.

Elsewhere in this newsletter Gil Garcon has described some of the key points from the meeting, and the full report is on the website. Make sure you read it and tell us what you think.

Fifteen of us attended a highly successful Writing for the Web workshop conducted by Simon Hillier. I'd like to thank Kerie Newell and Margaret Millard for organising this, the first workshop we have presented in quite a while. We are planning another workshop on an editing-related topic in November, and of course we have the accreditation exam workshop coming up for people who are planning to sit the exam in October. I would like to think that this is the beginning of a revitalisation of our skills development for members.

You don't need me to remind you that the AGM is coming up very soon. Please come along and have your say.

And please volunteer for the committee. All positions including the executive positions are open. Executive positions can only be held for two consecutive years, and our Vice President Ann Parkinson and Secretary Alan Roberts have both been in these roles for two years. So we need to elect new people to at least these two positions. We need people with a variety of experiences on the committee—both newer and longer-term members. So if you are thinking "I'm too new to go on the committee" then put your mind at rest—you are the very person we need. Life won't be dull for the next committee, as it meets the challenges outlined in Joe's report.

As this will be the last President's column for 2007–08, I'd like to thank you all for your support over the past year, and particularly all your hard-working committee members.

I look forward to seeing you on 2 August.

Ted Briggs



Registrations open for the first accreditation exam

Registrations for the first accreditation exam, to be held on 18 October 2008, are now open.

You can apply by logging on to the website of the Exam Secretariat at <http://www.sapro.com.au/iped/register.htm>.

Additional information—guidelines for candidates and Q&A—is available on the IPEd website at <http://www.iped-editors.org/content/accreditation-program>. These documents will give you all the information you need to apply for the exam.

The revised sample exam is also available on the IPEd website. If you are unsure whether you're ready to take the real thing, try 'sitting' the sample exam. If you don't yet have two to three years' full-time experience or equivalent, the exam will still be available when you are ready to take it.

This exam is the result of many years of hard work by dedicated and highly skilled editors from all societies, all committed to serving the best interests of the editing profession. We believe that serious professional editors will regard the achievement of

Accredited Editor (AE) status as an essential step in their careers. The AE will become a valuable asset in marketing your services and gaining greater remuneration.

You will find details regarding payment and deadlines on the Sapro website. Note that the exam fee is tax-deductible. You can pay by EFT or AnyPay, money order or cheque; unfortunately, we cannot process credit card payments because IPEd is not in a position to cover the 3% fee.

For further information, contact Larissa Joseph at larissa.joseph@gmail.com

Larissa Joseph

An exam preparation workshop will be held in Canberra on Saturday 23 August 2008, from 2 to 5 pm.

More details to follow soon.

Grammar's in style ... meet some of the players



Lately, I've been meeting more and more people who are keen to understand more about English grammar, either because they missed out at school or because they are learning another language and the teacher expects them to understand the terms used to talk about English grammar. People say to me 'I

know when it's right or wrong, but I don't know why' or 'I mix up adjectives and adverbs because I never learned which was which, and Spellcheck is no help' or 'Why is "jury" a single unit one time and a plural idea another?' or 'I can get a message across by texting on my phone—I ought to be able to use the same way of writing in everything, but I get bawled out if I do!'

Briefly, writing by the seat of the pants, or going with gut feeling, is OK if you are quite sure that your target audience will go along with you, but it's best to back this up with a little formal understanding of how things work.

The words 'adjective' and 'adverb' are labels that are applied to certain words—they indicate the function of those words in a particular sentence. Many words in English can have more than one function—take 'still', for instance: in *He is sitting still* 'still' is an adverb; in *We came to a patch of still water* 'still' is an adjective. And Spellcheck is no help because it is spelt correctly. If you write **There books are on the shelf*, Spellcheck will not pick up the error because 'there' and 'their' are both perfectly good English words.

Words like 'jury' can be either singular or plural, depending on what job they are doing in the sentence. *The jury delivered its verdict* is correct because the jury is acting as one entity on this occasion. *The jury straggled out into the street to meet their families after the long day in court* is also correct because, on this occasion, we think of a group of twelve separate individuals who make up the jury, each with a family—a plural idea.

I v these days txt msgs will b ok. One of these days, thought transference might be possible and become OK too. For the moment, however, we have to write in the code that most people relate to, and that is standard English grammar. If we don't, we risk being misunderstood, and that is time-wasting and costly in business.

What has this to do with editing? Everything! If you can't explain to an author why they should be using an adjective and not an adverb in a sentence, in my view you are not doing the full editing job. Our aim, surely, is to help the author to write well, so that next time, they will write with fewer grammatical errors. Is this doing you out of editing work? No.

My experience is that editors who explain stuff to their clients are the ones who get more and more work—not less.

So what are these *players* in English grammar? You have probably heard of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, verbs, prepositions, conjunctions and articles, even if you don't know what their role is. They are known as *parts of speech*. You're about to find out about a few of them—more next month.

Nouns

Nouns name things. There are several types of noun—common, proper, collective and abstract.

Common nouns name everyday things that you can touch: pen, pencil, children, party, desk, office, apple.

Proper nouns name particular things and always start with a capital letter: Australia, Elizabeth, Mount Ainslie, Sunday, Prime Minister Rudd.

Collective nouns name groups of things: team, audience, congregation, herd, flock, jury.

Abstract nouns name things you feel and think, but can't touch: peace, love, hate, spirituality.

Nouns have number, gender and case.

Number in English is either singular or plural. Plural is marked by one of several plural markers: -s, -es, -en, for example, as in hat/hats, box/boxes, ox/oxen.

Gender is sometimes marked, as in actor (masculine) / actress (feminine), but this marking is disappearing, with, for example, actor being applied to both male and female stage performers.

Case is not visibly marked in nouns except in the possessive case: *Mary's umbrella*. Other cases are shown by the position of the word in the sentence: *Mary (subject) lost her umbrella (object)*.

Pronouns

Pronouns stand instead of nouns. If there were no pronouns, we would have to write: 'When Joe arrived at Joe's home, Joe made Joe a sandwich and read the article Joe's son had given Joe.' As we do have pronouns, we can cut out the repetition and write: 'When Joe arrived at *his* home, *he* made *himself* a sandwich and read the article *his* son had given *him*'.

There are different types of pronoun: *personal*, *reflexive*, *relative*, *interrogative*, *demonstrative*, *indefinite*. The two illustrated in the sentence above are *personal* (he, his, him) and *reflexive* (himself).

Personal pronouns have 'case'—*he* is subjective case, *his* is possessive case and *him* is objective case. *Himself* is reflexive—that is, it reflects on a person or thing earlier in the sentence—in this sentence 'he' in '*he* made himself a sandwich ...'

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

Adjectives

Adjectives modify (tell you more about) nouns and sometimes pronouns: 'My *black* briefcase is missing. Yours is *brown*.' *Black* modifies *briefcase*; *brown* modifies *yours*.

Adjectives can have three 'degrees of comparison': Jane is a *quick* (positive degree) worker. Pip is *quicker* (comparative degree) than Jane. Toni is the *quickest* (superlative degree) of all.

Nouns and verb participles can also act as adjectives: *cattle* (noun) truck, *rising* (present participle) sun, *driven* (past participle) snow.

Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs, and also have three degrees of comparison: He runs *quickly* (modifies the verb 'runs'). She is *very* fat (modifies the adjective 'fat'). This train travels *quite* slowly (modifies the adverb 'slowly'). While Jane works *quickly* (positive degree), Pip works *more quickly* (comparative degree), and Toni works *most quickly* (superlative degree) of all of them.

There is a lot more that can be said about these parts of speech. Any good grammar book or website will tell you a lot more. The examples given here have been adapted from my book *Effective writing: plain English at work*. It is out of print, but reprints are available from me—email for details.

Next month we'll meet verbs, prepositions, conjunctions and articles. Who needs all this terminology? We all do, as competent editors. It's part of the metalanguage of editing—the language of language—it allows us to talk about language in its own words. And this is what's important to the 'teaching' aspect of responsible editing.

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

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Committee meeting summaries

This is a summary of key points from recent committee meetings. If you'd like more information on any of the items discussed, contact any of the friendly committee members.

Committee meeting 25 June 2008

President's report.

Joe Massingham had delivered a draft of his report and copies were circulated to the committee.

Treasurer's report

CSE's funds have been handed over to IPEd in full and the account will be closed by 30 June.

Margaret will circulate a draft 2008–09 budget out of session.

New members

Membership applications from Barbara De Costa, Mel Martin, Allan Sharp, Zillah Williams, Sonia Pertsinidis were approved, as was a corporate membership application from the Biographical Dictionary Unit of Parliament House.

Membership card

After considering benefits, pros and cons, the committee will issue cards for 2008–09, but that producing them electronically would be investigated for the following year.

Committee manual

The committee decided to re-institute and revamp the office bearer manuals developed a couple of years ago.

Newsletter

It was suggested that we consider a sub-committee to

define guidelines and procedures for producing the newsletter.

Committee Meeting 17 July 2008

Arrangements for AGM

Acceptances were coming in slowly and there had been queries about bringing guests to lunch. It was decided that guests were welcome at cost (\$26).

Treasurer's report

Draft 2008–09 budget discussed for presentation to AGM.

Training

An exam preparation workshop needed to be held before the final registration date. Provisionally scheduled for 20 September.

Planning has started for a workshop on an editing-related topic in mid-November.

Timing for EdEx. It was decided to call for nominations for a convener at the AGM, with the first task being to decide on a date. It was also suggested to outsource as many of the organisational tasks as possible.

New members

Membership applications from Amy Panter, Christine Alesich, Adrienne Gross, Claudine Jamieson and Elizabeth Phillips were approved.

Thinking about words: flaunting his nepotism

The *Canberra Times* on 18 June may not have achieved its customary standard of tastefully edited grammatical prose throughout the issue, but in two places it did prompt a little thinking about words. In the first of these, one of the Letters to the Editor was rabbiting on about Iguanagate and how shocking that one of the alleged culprits himself had written the apology for the manager of the Iguana to sign. The writer concluded, ‘Talk about nepotism: this must be an outstanding example’. Outstanding perhaps, but not, I think, an example of *nepotism*—more about making shrewd use of your mates.

Nepotism makes headlines in politics and business from time to time, when somebody appoints a relative or friend to some plum position. Have you ever wondered where the word comes from? It has, literally, a venerable origin, back to medieval days when popes would appoint their ‘nephews’ (often in fact their illegitimate sons) to high positions in the church, so enriching and aggrandising the family. The Italian word *nepotismo*, from *nipote*, nephew, was coined to describe such practices. The *Macquarie Dictionary* tries to push the etymology back further to the Latin *nepos*, ‘ancestor’, but in classical Latin *nepos* was a grandson, and if you wanted a Latin nephew he would have to be *filius fratris* or *filius sororis*, the son of my brother or sister.

The popes used to make a really big thing of nepotism. The practice of creating cardinal-nephews began with the Avignon Papacy in 1309. Nearly every pope who appointed cardinals appointed at least one relative to the College of Cardinals; fourteen of these cardinal-nephews were later elected pope! Pope Alexander VI’s son Cesare Borgia was made archbishop and later cardinal; his mistress’s brother, Alessandro Farnese, was made a cardinal and then went on to become Pope Paul III. He in turn appointed two nephews cardinals at the tender ages of fourteen and sixteen. All good salacious stuff, and Pepys recorded in his diary reading a translation of *Il nepotismo di Roma* in April 1669, just two years after original publication.

This papal rort was stopped by Pope Innocent XII, who issued a bull *Romanum decet Pontificem* (‘It befits the Roman pope’) in 1692, forbidding the appointment of family members to high church offices except for, at most, one *qualified* relative who might be made a cardinal. Having a trusted relative in the administration could be advantageous, and many of these appointments turned out also to be highly competent.



Urban VIII, ‘the last pope to practice nepotism on a grand scale ... he enriched his family to an extent that astonished even the Romans’

The second item in that *CT* issue prompting some thought was a report on a telephone scam offering bogus holidays. The staff writer said that the American ‘rogue operator’ continued to flaunt the law. *Flaunt the law?* Never—you *flout* the law when you mock it, and you *flaunt* your finery, sometimes inappropriately.

But Pam Peters admits this is a common confusion, with some legitimate overlap in cases where you are flaunting your ill-gotten gains or flouting convention. The origins of both these words have baffled the experts. *Flout* may just possibly be linked to playing the ‘flute’, which in 16th century Holland also had the sense of mocking or deriding. *Flaunt* has perhaps a link to *vaunt*, boast, with a bit of *fly* or *flout* added for good measure.

Still mulling over sources of confusion, I headed to my local supermarket to find that its aisle labels include *stationary* and *confectionary*. Well, why not? Both are perfectly good words, even if they don’t mean quite what was intended. Looking at the first, both *stationary* and *stationery* began life as the Latin *stationarius*, originally a soldier on a military station, hence stationed in one place,

not moving on. In the Middle Ages the *stationer* was a bookseller who was licensed by a university to have a station or shop in the university grounds; indeed, when the academic language was Latin his licence would have called him a *stationarius*. Other unlicensed unfortunates would wander about in hope of a sale. So, the stationer had his station, and before long was selling *stationery* as well as books. By the 17th century stationery became a specialised trade, distinct from bookselling (which had often included printing and *bokebynding* as well).

Confectionary really is a word, but referring more to the nature of the confectioner’s trade than to his products. Like the stationer with his stationery, the *confectioner* sells *confectionery*, a sweet business to be in. Note that the word *confection* has covered a wide range of things in its lifetime, mostly involving a mixture of different ingredients—the Latin *confectus* means put together, prepared or completed—and as far as the language goes, you might equally well be confecting jam or a deadly



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(*Thinking about words*, continued from page 6)

poison. In France a *confection* is a ready-made fashion garment—sweets are *confiserie*.

In both these last examples, the *-ery* and *-ary* forms stem from the same root; they were used quite indiscriminately in their early history and have caused confusion ever since. I mentioned another pair with this same usage pattern in my March 2006 'Thinking': *complement* and *compliment*. At first only the *-ement* spelling, which had reached us straight from the Latin, was used for both its modern senses, whether completing something tangible or fulfilling a courtesy. Around the middle of the 17th century *compliment* crept in from the French to replace *complement* in the sense of the 'neatly turned remark implying praise' that we know today. The confusion is equally rife with the adjectives *complementary* (something that adds to something else to make a whole, or to perfect it) and *complimentary*. It's rather nice to book into a hotel and have your welcome completed with a complimentary (that is, a free) bottle of champagne (although 'free' in this instance may be illusory...).

But three hundred years later people still get these expressions wrong; the meanings and the understanding are becoming blurred. Is it perhaps because nowadays people are in too much of a hurry to think about the words they use—or worse, no longer care about them? As editors, an important by-product of every job we tackle is promoting that caring. We should never underestimate that aspect.

Peter Judge

Sources: The *Oxford English Dictionary* Second Edition on CD-ROM v.3.0. *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage*, Pam Peters, CUP 2004. The website <www.answers.com/topic/nepotism>. The image of Urban VIII is from <www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/galileo/urbanVIII.jpg>.

About Kathy Golski

Kathy Golski is a painter and a writer. Her first book, *Watched by Ancestors*, was published in 1998 by Hodder to critical acclaim. It was based on the diaries she kept during an extraordinary two years spent with her young family in the wilds of the New Guinea Highlands.

Her second book, *My Two Husbands*, just published by Penguin, is a warm and moving account of the author's life and love with two men and the children born to her two marriages.

Kathy has exhibited her paintings in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Brisbane and Warsaw, and her work is well represented in public, corporate and private collections. Kathy lived in Canberra for fifteen years, and now lives in her birth city, Sydney, with her anthropologist husband and various members of her extended family.

Spotted in a recent edition of a local paper (which shall remain nameless)...



(*June meeting notes*, continued from page 1)

Joe touched on other possibilities about timing and topics for meetings, information which we should provide on the website, and promotional opportunities.

Joe concluded that, while people working in isolation like connecting, it is sad that so many editors are isolated, and are so deliberately. CSE needs to communicate with them; and to do so we must dramatically change our attitude and procedures. **We need to communicate more and better.**

Gil Garcon

(with help from Ted Briggs)

(*IPEd notes*, continued from page 2)

the identification of new opportunities. Just one of the areas of great potential here is the specialist training activities currently run by the societies for their own members. IPEd can open such professional development opportunities to a much wider catchment.

Two standing committees—Communication and Professional Development—have been established to carry forward this work. Full details are on the IPEd website.

Ed Highley

Secretary

We want you...

...to be on our new committee!

This is a fantastic opportunity to make a difference to the society in this time of change.

No experience necessary!

Length of membership is not an issue.

In fact we particularly want at least some newer members of the Society on the committee.

*Contact Ted Briggs to find out more or to volunteer.
Email <tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au> Phone 6161 4924 (ah) 6265 0916 (bh)*

Don't wait to be asked!

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Newsletter schedule

The next newsletter will appear in August 2008 and for that issue the **copy deadline is Friday 7 August**. The editor welcomes contributions by email to tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au, using Word for Windows, for PC or Mac.

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