

Next meeting
Wednesday 27 June

Come to the cabaret

We are proud to present the Splinter Sisters, fresh from their triumph at the IPEd conference in Hobart. They will sing their way with panache and feeling through *Yarraluma loving*, a literary musical that pays homage to a respected Canberra editor.

Shelley Kenigsberg and Pamela Hewitt are the dynamic duo who are the Splinter Sisters. Their forte is songs from the 60s, 70s and 80s—the content and tone suitably amended and updated for editors, and the grammar checked according to the highest editorial standards.

Tune up your vocal cords to warble the choruses (take note, all of you who sing in choirs), or simply come along for a fun time, lots of mulled wine to warm you up, and tasty nibbles.

As usual, in the Friends Lounge of the National Library, at 6.00 for 6.30 pm on Wednesday 27 June. We will go to dinner afterwards at Delissio, 83 Theodore Street, Curtin. It has an interesting and extensive menu, and they may even tolerate our bursting into song.



Canberra Society of Editors Newsletter

Vol 16 • Number 5 • June 2007

From the President

The weather reminds us that it's that time of year again—time to renew your membership, that is. You will shortly be receiving, as usual, the subscription renewal form, which also enables us to keep your contact details up to date. In the same mail-out there will be a committee nomination form. For 2007–08 the following positions will definitely be vacant: President, Treasurer, Secretary and Membership Secretary. I encourage all members, especially new members, to seriously consider taking on a more active role. When I look at the current committee, I note that it has only one recently joined member on it.

On the website you will find an outline of the roles and responsibilities of office-holders and committee members, as revised in 2006. With a strong committee, and with each person on it doing their job, being on the committee is not particularly onerous—indeed, it can be very rewarding both personally and professionally. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about particular positions, and so would the other members of the current committee.

Janet Mackenzie's IPEd notes touch briefly on the recent national conference, and I'd like to thank Peter Fuller for providing us with a lively and comprehensive account of it. Rightly, he devotes a certain amount of space to accreditation, which vitally concerns those of us who earn a living in this profession of ours. Thanks also, then, to those of you—more than fifty—who responded to the general email request for expressions of interest in sitting the first examination next year. Later this

year the society will be running a workshop to address some of the issues that people have raised, such as how the test will be marked, who examines the examiners, and what the criteria for assessment are. The June general meeting will be an ideal opportunity to talk to Shelley Kenigsberg, who chairs the Accreditation Board, about these and other matters. Our new representative on the board is Larissa Joseph (who replaces Lee Kirwan), with Chris Pirie as her alternate; I'm sure we all really appreciate their contribution to this important work.

I'm happy to announce that we have finally received our copies of *Editors in Conversation*, which this society partially subsidised. The book captures the reflections of eight Honorary Life Members from the Canberra, Tasmanian, South Australian and Victorian societies of editors on diverse issues that affect all of us who are working as professional editors. Our members can buy the book at a discounted price; it will be available at general meetings or by contacting the Secretary.

Finally, those members who had the good sense to come to the May meeting—the self-styled mind-stretching quiz night—were rewarded with plentiful fun, lots of prizes and delicious food. We are all indebted to the indefatigable Ann Parkinson and her co-conspirators Ted Briggs and Elizabeth Murphy.

Virginia Wilton



Canberra Society of Editors Inc.

ABN 77 022 481 553
www.editorscanberra.org
PO Box 3222
Manuka ACT 2603

Committee members 2006–07

President

Virginia Wilton
0417 691 269
virginia@whh.com.au
vwilton@homemail.com.au

Vice President

Ann Parkinson
6282 1993
Ann.Parkinson@atrax.net.au

Immediate past President

Claudia Marchesi
6287 1110 (w)
cmarchesi@netspeed.com.au

Secretary

Alan Roberts
6251 2172
alan.roberts@velocitynet.com.au

Treasurer

Susan Wales
6242 1800 (w); 6259 5342 (h)
swales@earlychildhood.org.au

Newsletter editor, web minder, membership files

Peter Judge
6296 6211 (w/h/fax)
peter.judge@bigpond.com

Membership Secretary

Ed Highley
6296 1461(h) 0412 358 151(m)
ed@clarusdesign.com

Public Officer

Helen Topor
6207 3414 (w)
helen.topor@cit.act.edu.au

Publicity & hospitality coordinator

vacant

Catering coordinators

Jeneen and John McLeod
6291 0861 (h)
jmcleods@bigpond.net.au

IPed delegate

Virginia Wilton
6273 3048 (w)
virginia@whh.com.au

IPed Accreditation Board

Chris Pirie
6282 3730
cpirie@netspeed.com.au

Larissa Joseph
6161 5216
larissa.joseph@gmail.com

Committee members at large

Shirley Dyson
Louise Oliver

IPed notes June 2007

News from the Institute of Professional Editors

The third national conference of editors, held in Hobart, was a huge success, thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended, and a tribute to the capacities of the Society of Editors, Tasmania, which showed that you don't have to be big to be great. The keynote speeches were of high calibre, and the papers and presentations were both interesting and instructive.

Transcripts will be posted on the website of the Tasmanian Society of Editors <www.tas-editors.org.au> as they become available. Among the associated activities, highlights were the launch of *Editors in Conversation*, the reception at Government House, the conference dinner featuring entertainment by the String Chickens (and their rooster), and the lunchtime musical extravaganza by the Splinter Sisters. Events concluded with a taste of South Australian delights to whet our appetites for the next national conference in October 2009.

IPed and its associated groups took the opportunity to meet in person, as well as reporting to the conference and seeking feedback. Most pleasing was the report of the national vote on establishing IPed as a legal entity, which shows editors taking the future of the profession into their own hands by forming a peak body: all societies are overwhelmingly in favour, with an average of 94 per cent. The vote on accreditation, at 84 per cent, is also a resounding mandate to proceed.

The Interim Council has prepared a timeline for incorporating the national organisation:

mid-June Interim Council finds and briefs a lawyer to draw up constitution

end June draft constitution provided to the societies and posted on website for comment
end July comments close
during Aug. Interim Council considers comments and revises constitution as necessary
end Aug. constitution finalised
end Sept. agreement by societies
end Oct. incorporation of IPed.

Renée Otmar's conference presentation on the accreditation examination showed the painstaking work that has gone into its preparation so far. There was lively discussion about the proposed arrangements and, in response, the Accreditation Board, headed by Shelley Kenigsberg, is looking at modifying them.

In particular, those present showed a marked preference for an on-screen examination. The ramifications of this will be explored in an issues paper, which will be available for comment on the IPed website by July. The Accreditation Board expects that the first examination will be held in March 2008; the date and venues will be advertised at least four months in advance.

The website, after much hard work by Mike Purdy, is about to appear in its third iteration: this one is based on the open-source software Drupal, which makes it easy for users to publish, manage and organise a great variety of content. Both appearance and functions will be significantly improved, and the Communication Working Group led by Kathie Stove is engaged in revising and updating the contents.

Janet Mackenzie
Liaison Officer

Annual General Meeting, 26 July

Don't panic! Nobody will try to make you take on some committee office that you don't want to. But this is your chance to see how your society is run, to ask questions and air any grumbles, to meet up with your fellow editors and do a little productive networking. Put the date in your diary now—more details (and a nomination form) will reach you later.

The IPEd national conference, Hobart, 9–13 May 2007

Do editors have an economic value? Saul Eslake might not have put a dollar figure on it, but the ANZ Banking Group's Chief Economist had no doubt that editors make 'a necessary and valuable contribution' to Australia.

In a keynote address to the Institute of Professional Editors' Conference in Hobart last month, Eslake recalled that as CEO of the Victorian Commission of Audit in 1993, he had been charged to report on the state's financial position. The report's 13 chapters had been drafted by 12 staff, occasionally supported by nine consultants, 'each of whom had his own writing style'. Then there were the four commissioners, 'each of whom had his own particular view of what ought to be said, and how'.

It's a familiar dilemma—and Eslake and his team made the wise, practical decision and hired a professional editor. She made sure that an informed non-specialist could understand the analysis and recommendations, provided a useful glossary of technical terms and acronyms, and set a style so that 'it was no longer obvious that most of the chapters were drafted by different authors'.

'I have no doubt that we could not have achieved these objectives without her assistance,' Eslake told his audience on day two of the conference, 'and although I can no longer remember, almost 15 years later, how much it cost the commission, I have no doubt that it was money very well spent.'

So what's a editor worth? The average earnings of \$61 an hour that emerged from Pamela Hewitt's survey of freelancers in 2005 didn't mean that editors would automatically have a gross annual salary of \$120,000. Certainly working for as little as \$20–\$25 an hour was 'unsustainable for a professional business'.

If editors were worth more than that, Eslake said, 'perhaps your society needs to be more active in 'marketing' what you do, and in spelling out the tangible benefits which can accrue to government agencies, corporations and other organisations from clear and understandable communications.'

His point underlines again the importance of raising the profile of the profession and improving awareness of what editors do—outcomes which accreditation will help to push forward. The role and status of the profession was a constant reference point throughout the three-day conference, organised by the Society of Editors (Tasmania) around the theme 'From Inspiration to Publication' and held in the sunlit conference wing at Wrest Point. Events on the final day ran jointly with the 2007 Style Council.

Marilyn Dorman, Sharon Nevile and Jennifer Wright from the University of Southern Queensland asked how well editors were reading the signs about changing perceptions of who editors were and what they did. To answer questions about their evolving role, the trio said, editors needed to be able to describe what they did and show how their knowledge and skills had been acquired and developed.

The practical next steps, however, were thoroughly aired at the IPEd Accreditation Board panel session, held on day two to explain developments in the Institute's work. The formation of the federated organisation in 2005 as a successor to the Council of Australian Societies of Editors and the introduction of accreditation meant that editors were poised to move to 'a new level of professionalism'.

Delegates heard that IPEd has a range of tasks in hand, including its imminent legal incorporation, plans for a national campaign to raise public awareness of editors and their work, and an assessment of the training and mentoring that are available around Australia. It was accreditation, though, that people wanted to hear about and talk about.

Under the revised assessment scheme, editors can seek either Accreditation or Advanced Accreditation. To gain the first qualification, candidates will need to pass a three-hour copyediting examination based on *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*. Those seeking the higher qualification will have to submit a portfolio of work. Details are still being worked out, but updates on this, and other developments can be found at <www.editors-sa.org/iped.htm>.

The IPEd presenters had prepared their own question-and-answer sheet, but fielded more questions from the auditorium. What will accreditation cost? Hopefully less than \$400, with possible tax deductibility a sweetener. Will employers know what it means? Yes, after they've been exposed to the publicity campaign now being developed. Can you charge more when you're an AE (Accredited Editor) or an AAE (Advanced)? Possibly—at least you'll have a stronger case.

As questions showed, many in the audience were already gearing up for the initial three-hour test. How and where would they sit the exam? Would it be a paper exam or could people do it at their PC? This seems to be a grey area, with questions prompting further thought about the mechanics of the test. Although candidates can bring some reference texts to the exam room, there will be no short cut to Advanced status. Passing at AE-level is a prerequisite for candidature to the next level—and the pass mark will be



*Saul Eslake and Peter Doherty
were two of the keynote speakers*

(continued on page 4)

(The Hobart conference, concluded from previous page)

around 80 per cent. As one visitor remarked over morning coffee, that would be the minimum to make it credible.

Some conference time was devoted to pleasures: the excellent eating around Salamanca, fine local wines, convivial conversations and a reception at hosted by the Governor, Mr William Cox, at Government House. More seriously, plenary sessions, concurrent sessions and workshops over the three working days covered interests from the general to the specialised. Editing for science, education, finance and the law was given prominence, while Tasmanian and Antarctic themes picked up local interests.

Keynote speakers looked at different aspects of communications. Professor Peter Doherty, who won the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1996, talked about problems in communicating specialist knowledge to public audiences. The first challenge was to 'get people's attention' when the media was chiefly interested in celebrities. Often ideas were better conveyed visually than by the written word—a point Doherty demonstrated with a dramatic clip of an immune reaction, a T cell instructing a malignant cell to suicide.

Yvonne Rolzhausen, the Senior Editor who leads *The Atlantic* magazine's team which exhaustively cross-checks material before publication, stressed the need for accuracy in safeguarding a publication's integrity. And Romona Koval, presenter of the ABC's Book Show, described editors as the 'midwives' of book publishing whose skill rescued many a clumsy but promising manuscript.

Other sessions looked at Web-based publications and stressed the need to draw on both subject and technical expertise when setting up Web sites. There was an appeal for the judicious application of Plain English principles to avoid ideas being dumbed down, and colour, texture, movement and rhythm being lost. Irene Wong, Publishing Manager for the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, detected a degree of 'information anxiety' within large organisations, where complexity meant there are 'many different audiences ... trying to find out what they

must do and how they must do it'. Editors and other communicators 'are often in a position to become information managers', a role which might extend from simple corporate communications to designing and managing online information management systems. Finally, participants had a taste of pleasures to come when the South Australian delegates laid out wine and delicacies with an invitation to the 2009 conference in Adelaide.

If the IPEd conference was concerned with the future of the profession and the changing nature of editing, the common themes of the Style Council 2007 sessions were the changing nature of English and the future of the language.

Pam Peters, Associate Professor of Linguistics at Macquarie University, had found colloquialisation gaining ground in written English since 1993. Punctuation was becoming less rigorous, and among experts there was a growth in disputed definitions—just what do we mean by the phrase 'to beg the question'? Yvonne Rolzhausen had found new words being drawn into *The Atlantic's* repertoire from such disparate sources as Arabic and the Internet.

Everyone agreed that the Internet was influential—it had 'enlarged the consumer market for words and communication', Pam Peters said. But was it mostly beneficial? Bruce Moore, Editor of the Australian National Dictionary at ANU, thought it presented a problem for lexicographers seeking to pin down meanings because sites tended to feed off one another.

Peters thought we might be reaching a point where linguistic standards could no longer be imposed, although the Internet might bring about some form of standardisation to English usage around the world. Former News Ltd style master Kim Lockwood foresaw a form of English becoming the world language, but Peters was more cautious: the rise of India, China and South America could bring competing languages. It is important to have a reasonably uniform way of speaking English. If any of these things happen, tomorrow's editors are going to have their work cut out.

Peter Fuller



Pam Peters

Onscreen editing workshop

Due to the unexpected absence overseas of Steve Neilsen, we regretfully had to postpone this training day. The new date is 30 June. We are circulating an email to all those who have registered. There may be some vacancies—if you are interested, contact the Treasurer at the address below.

In this highly interactive session, Clive Huggan and Steve Neilsen will be projecting displays from a PC and a Mac on to side-by-side screens. In this way, users of both types of computer will be able to follow a familiar version of Word while Clive and Steve tease out the software's many capabilities. Emphasis will be on practical means

of saving time and implementing onscreen editing in directions nominated by participants.

By bringing your own computer, you will be able to take home the software customisations you develop on the day.

Cost, \$140 members, \$180 non members, includes morning and afternoon tea and lunch. Venue: Crosbie Morrison Building, Australian National Botanic Gardens. Limit: 20 participants.

To enquire about a place, contact the Treasurer at <swales@earlychildhood.org.au> with the message line 'April workshop booking'.

Fiddly bits—invoicing



Hooray! The job's done and now it's time to get paid for it—but how? If you're not used to sending invoices, and if you're like me (not good with numbers) and prefer old-fashioned methods to computerised financial management, here's a mock-up invoice that you could adapt to suit yourself.

What are the important elements?

The name of your editing service, logo if any, contact details, your ABN if you have one, and one line about what your service provides—perhaps editing, writing, consulting.

The words 'Tax Invoice' if you are GST registered, or just 'Invoice' otherwise.

The identification number and code for this particular invoice. The format I use is consecutive number / year / code for type of work. So this document would be the 157th invoice Inky has ever sent out, this year (2007) is abbreviated to 07, and the job was an edit. You can make up a list of codes to suit your work: EDIT for all editing jobs, WRTG for all writing jobs, and so on.

Next comes the 'Reference' where you quote the document in which the agreement is—in this example, an email dated 4 January 2007. And then put **the date of this invoice**—for example, 25 June 2007. After that, I recommend putting in **the name of the client** (person or organisation), and this is followed by **the name of the person designated to receive the invoice**—this could be the individual you have worked directly to, a project manager, or someone in a payments office. Put the full mailing address here. If you are printing this on an envelope, just select the whole address and it will automatically go into the envelope address on your computer. If you are using window envelopes, you may want to re-organise the order of the items so that this address appears in the window.

Then comes the important bit—a **brief statement of what work you did**, perhaps how many hours it took, plus your hourly rate, and finally **the total payable**. If you are GST registered, you need to show the amount of the GST and finally the total, including GST.

If you are working within Australia, and you are GST registered, you add 10 per cent to your basic hourly rate. If your client is outside Australia, you do not charge GST at all—your work is an 'export' for this purpose, and exports do not attract GST.

After the total, tell the client how you want to be paid. I do not recommend putting your bank details in this invoice—better to ask them to send you a form to complete or send the details on request. Be aware that there are unscrupulous people everywhere, and do not give an opportunity for someone to gain unlawful access to your bank account. Finally, I like to get a **remittance advice** from the client, by email or mail, and I always tell them that I'd like to be **paid within 30 days**. I'm not sure that it helps

 **Inky's editing service**
Inky Penn & Associates
 ABN: XX XXX XXX XXX
 Editing, writing, consulting

Mail PO Box XXX MyPlace ACT 26— Australia
Phone 02 62— XXXX
Fax 02 62— XXXX
Email inky@— .com.au

Tax invoice

Invoice number
157/07/EDIT

Reference
My quote dated 4 January 2007 (email)

Date
25 June 2007

Client
Department of Bits and Pieces

Contact
Joe Blow
Communication Unit
Department of Bits and Pieces
PO Box XXX
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Fees payable for the following services:

To A\$*
 Copy-editing *Bits'n'Pieces Style*, including consultation time
 20 hours @ \$XX.XX/hr + GST \$X.XX/hr = \$XXX.XX

TOTAL PAYABLE THIS INVOICE (including GST): \$XXX.XX

*Please make cheque payable IN AUSTRALIAN CURRENCY to **Inky Penn** or direct credit to **Inky Penn**—(BSB and Account number on request only)

Mail: PO Box XXX, MyPlace ACT 26— Australia

Remittance advice please by email or mail

Settlement within **30 days** would be appreciated.

THIS COPY	
Client
Client file
Central file
Tax file
Pd
Bkd

Form updated 01/01/07

much, but at least you can refer to this request if the client is really tardy about paying.

The little box at the bottom is not part of the invoice, but very handy as a record of where copies of the invoice have gone. Some clients like two copies, so this can be noted. I keep a separate file for each client, plus a central file as an on-going record for the business, and a tax file that my accountant needs. When payments are received, either by cheque or electronically, I note the details at the bottom of that box. I keep these files in hard copy form as well as on the computer.

This is not, by any means, the only way of invoicing. It works for me, and it might work for you. Several colleagues have used the format and adapted it to their own needs. It works both as a hard copy invoice for mailing and as an electronic invoice, sent in or with an email. My accountant is happy with it (and I do like to keep him happy!), and I have found no reason to alter the format for a number of years. I keep it on my computer, so only need to alter the details of each new job, and make sure the invoice number is updated by one every time. One less fiddly bit to have to fiddle with.

© Elizabeth Manning Murphy, 2007
 emmurphy@ozemail.com.au

Thinking about words—money in the bank

‘I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows ...’

Shakespeare

‘A bank is a place that will lend you money if you can prove you don’t need it.’

Bob Hope



It’s a couple of years since I had thoughts about money in its various shapes and guises (*The Canberra Editor*, May 2005, ‘Lucrative reflections’), but at that time I didn’t include thoughts about what you might do with it and where it might be put. Some recent Big Bills—and I make no apologies for upper case!—requiring money shuffled between accounts have made me conscious of how easy it is these days to move money from one place to another and kiss it goodbye. All done without leaving the computer keyboard. But what about the *words* we use to talk about these things?

Where do you keep your money? Under the mattress? Piggy bank? Credit union? Bank? A bit here and a bit there? Invested in stocks and shares? And what is the relation between wild thyme and, say, Westpac? Quite close, actually—*bank* can mean a ‘heap’ or ‘pile’, even a ‘mound’ or ‘mount’. If you have made your pile, you certainly have an amount to put in the bank! If not, on your next visit to Europe you may need to visit a pawn shop, in France the *mont de piété* and in Italy the *monte di pietà*, both from the Latin *mons pietatis* or *mons caritatis*, the ‘bank of piety’ or of ‘charity’. But don’t expect charity when you redeem your pledge ...



Your bank is a very venerable institution, although not always under that name. It certainly goes back to biblical times. When Jesus attacked the money changers in the Temple he ‘overthrew their tables’ (Matthew 21, 12–13). At the time of the Second Temple Jews were required to pay half a shekel annually to the Sanctuary, and the changers operating in the Court of the Gentiles provided travellers with the correct money, charging up to 8% for converting foreign currencies or coins that were religiously offensive because they had portraits on them. The tables or benches that were overthrown were indeed early *banks*—the word comes from the Italian *banca* or *banco*, both meaning originally a shelf or bench and later a tradesman’s stall or counter. The French picked up *banca* as *banque*, and Old English had *banke*.

In your bank you keep an *account*, also with French roots but stemming from the Latin *computum*, a calculation. Modern French is *compte*. It is no accident that you go to a *counter* to get service in the bank. Formerly the counter would have been a table on which your money was counted, and in the early days of shops you would have made your purchases at a table behind which the salesperson stood, on which your payment would have been counted. Nowadays cash registers have changed all that, and even cash is giving way to plastic.

The plastic is also largely replacing the *cheque*, and *why* do we spell it like that? Is it just that the French use *chèque* and we think it more elegant? Our American cousins spell it like it sounds, *check*, and that’s how it started—a piece of paper with a counterfoil that the drawer kept as proof of payment and to check any possible alterations. Your cheque stubs are your checks.

Cash? Once the word meant the chest or strong box, the *caisse*, in which your money or other precious goods were stored safely. The French for a savings bank is still *Caisse d’Epargne*, and the origins of the word again go back to the Italian, *cassa*, meaning not only chest but also ‘a Merchant’s cash or counter’. In English it very early on came to mean the contents of the chest rather than the container—an example of *metonymy*, a figure of speech where something is referred to by the name of a related part, like when the rest of Australia says disparagingly that *Canberra* has made some unpopular Government decision.

Your investments also have Italian roots. *Invest* formerly meant to dress or clothe, probably rather formally, and *divest* to undress or to get rid of. However from the 17th century on it acquired its banking connotations. An early Italian-English dictionary (Florio, 1611) has *investire* ‘... also, to employ or lay out money upon any bargain for advantage’, which is what we hope for our investments today, although the taxman usually then manages to take ‘advantage’ of *us* to a disproportionate extent. We tend to think of the *bargain* (‘something you can’t use at a price you can’t miss’) as something of value we’ve acquired cheaply, although at first the word seemed to focus on the *agreement* struck between two parties, the outcome of *bargaining*. The OED says sadly, ‘the etymology being obscure, the development of meaning is also doubtful’. I thought that Ambrose Bierce might have had some more enlightened comment on bargains in his *Devil’s Dictionary*, but the closest I could find was his definition of **compromise**:

Such an adjustment of conflicting interests as gives each adversary the satisfaction of thinking he has got what he ought not to have, and is deprived of nothing except what was justly his due.

Many of us who look askance at the banks’ inventiveness in finding new charges to slug us with tend to favour *credit unions*. These were an American invention, and an early description (1881) has them ‘founded and managed by a warm-hearted humanitarian for the purpose of elevating the moral and material welfare of entire classes of society’. I have to admit that the one that looks after my tiny capital

seems to sneak in a few more charges from time to time, but on the whole the philosophy that it exists for the benefit of its members seems to persist. Certainly it claims that ‘we’re committed to enhancing your financial well-being in a socially responsible way’. That word *credit*, by the way, is all to do with belief (*credo* or *creed*) and trust. *Credit* is something entrusted to you because your credit is good.

A *piggy bank*? Piggy banks, whether plain or patterned, certainly look cute. But the origin of the name is not what you might expect. In medieval times, *pygg* referred to a type of clay used for making household objects, such as jars. These would have been used for various purposes, such as storing salt, then an expensive commodity. What more natural than to hide your savings in one of these kitchen pots and jars, a *pygg jar*. By the 18th Century, the spelling of *pygg* had changed, the *pygg jar* used for your spare cash became your *pig bank*, and in due course both the name and the container evolved to the *piggy bank* beloved by children.

In the days before the pig’s umbilical plug was added you had the choice of fiddling the coins out one by one on the blade of a skillfully inserted knife blade or smashing the pig with a hammer. Either way, the little pigs taught generations of children the virtues of frugality—or the heady excitement and instant rewards of breaking and entering.

Or under the mattress... Modern French has *matelas* and Italian *materasso*, but it seems to have its roots in Arabic, where *al-matrah* means a place where something is thrown, in this instance mats or cushions. A comfortable point at which to stop.

Peter Judge

Sources: As always, the *Oxford English Dictionary* on CD v. 3.0 and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2006 on DVD. *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (1993). The happy little pig is actually a German *Sparschwein*, from *Wikipedia*.

CSE exhibits genius at its May meeting



A splendid opportunity to show off and a clutch of inviting prizes were the lures for the May meeting. It was what has become the annual quiz night and the attendance was gratifying, with the femmes, and at least one Garçon, arriving in a variety of moods, from the light-hearted to the transparently competitive.

The ice-breaker came as we were downing mugs of delicious, mind-improving soup: How many editors does it take to change a light bulb? A number of witty answers were offered but I think most of us finally applauded the convoluted effort by Dallas Wilson—that amazingly gifted public service writer—if only to bring it to whatever conclusion he was attempting to reach.

The ‘Weird Words’ section was fun (What is an arse-foot? What item of clothing is called the ‘indescrībables’?), the ‘Vocabulary’ section relatively easy (though *syzygy* and *zydeco* caused frissons), the ‘Proverbs’ section impossible (from my point of view) as was ‘Last Lines of Well-Known Books’ (apart from ‘Amen’—due to an endless Protestant upbringing, I knew *that* one).

‘Editors and Editing’ was comforting and familiar, especially the introductory epithet by T S Eliot, ‘Some editors are failed writers, but so are most writers’, a lovely little pearl that I have satisfyingly repeated to myself on more than one occasion when dealing with a particularly imperious but not overly gifted author.

‘First Sentences’ was the last gasp as far as I was concerned. There, staring sensibly back at me, were examples from all those classics read and mostly forgotten so long ago: *Northanger Abbey*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Time*

Machine. Where was *The Naked Lunch*, Basham’s *The Wonder That Was India*, *The Road to Oxiana*, Robert Graves’ *Goodbye to All That*, *The Iliad* or something by Tim Winton? But these selections are all subjective aren’t they?

And didn’t we have a good time under the watchful eyes of those Tennysons and their Irish wolfhounds?

Lee Kirwan

PS. Brian O’Donnell posted a stunning score, just ahead of the pack, and was acknowledged as the genius of the evening. I succumbed to mediocrity (typifying ‘the living death of the middle classes’, as Baroness Blixen so astutely put it), escaping both brilliance and disgrace. Ann Parkinson, who organised the swell event, was the overall winner and deserves our thanks in bunches.

Coming attractions

Future monthly meetings will include:

July: AGM at National Library

August: Marion Halligan (author) and her editor Roseanne Fitzgibbon

September: Mark Baker, editor of the *Canberra Times*

October: Lindy Shultz will discuss her experiences of copyright

November: End-of-year dinner at Poacher’s Pantry, Hall, with bus transport to and from

February 2008: Janet Salisbury, *Biotext*, will speak about science editing (a reprise of her conference paper)

The Sentence

For some years now
 he's wanted to write
 a sentence *à la* Henry James,
 a sentence of some length, *mais oui*,
 with several subtle
 subordinate clauses
 and certain sly parentheses,
 inserted as required,
 a sentence that will share the weather
 and, on its way, be light with thought,
 a tone detached but
 dense with gossip,
 a sound that says: Surrender now
 this precious fortnight of your life,
 I have a story here for you —

and stories must be never hurried —
 and, yes, most probably it has
 Americans, fresh-faced in Europe
 back before the First World War,
 consorting with *La Belle Époque*,
 or something rather like it,
 where money's rarely any problem
 and you, dear reader, in due course,
 will find you've somehow come to care
 for these sweet mannequins of mine
 who, starting from a well-made phrase,
 can stroll for days in sentences
 as sinuous as air.

*Geoff Page, from Agnostic Skies
 (Five Islands Press, 2006)*

Contents

Next meeting	1
From the President	1
Committee members 2006–07	2
IPEd notes June 2007	2
Annual General Meeting, 26 July	2
The IPEd national conference	3
Onscreen editing workshop	4
Fiddly bits—invoicing	5
Thinking about words—money in the bank	6
CSE exhibits genius at its May meeting	7
Coming attractions	7
<i>The Sentence</i> , poem by Geoff Page	8
New members	8

The Canberra Editor

is published by Canberra Society of Editors,
 PO Box 3222, Manuka ACT 2603.
 © Canberra Society of Editors 2007. ISSN 1039-3358

Newsletter schedule

The next newsletter will appear in July 2007 and the
 copy deadline for this issue is 6 July.
 The editor welcomes contributions by email to
 <peter.judge@bigpond.com>, using Word for Windows,
 for PC or Mac.

New members May 2007

Canberra Society of Editors welcomes as new full members
 Virginia Cooke and Tiffany Henderson.

POSTAGE
 PAID
 AUSTRALIA

SURFACE
 MAIL

If undeliverable, please return to:
 Canberra Society of Editors
 PO Box 3222, Manuka ACT 2603
 Print Post approved P 299436/00098