

Canberra Society of Editors Newsletter

Vol 19 • Number 2 • March 2010

Next meeting

31 March

6.00 pm for 6.30 pm

Author

Nigel Featherstone

Local author and ArtsACT manager Nigel Featherstone will speak about his craft, the challenges of 'marketing' his creative talent and also about the brave new world of blogging.

Following the meeting we will resume our long-standing tradition of going out for dinner after the general meetings. This is a really good way for members to get to know each other. If you can make some extra time after our general meeting, then please join our guest speaker and your fellow members.

Editors and first-time authors

The CSE warmly welcomed Anne-Maree Britton, Director of the ACT's Writer Centre, to speak at our February meeting.

As a published author, Anne-Maree shared her personal reflections of working with publishers, and also her experiences of helping those many aspiring authors who come through the ACT Writer's Centre.

To warm up the room, Anne-Maree described the purpose and functions of the ACT Writer's Centre. The Centre's mission is to support writers and promote writing in the region. The Centre provides opportunities for writers to increase their skills, increase publishing opportunities for developing writers, and increase employment and promotional opportunities for established writers. Anne-Maree uses her Canberra network to send writers' material to freelance editors to assess, copy-edit or even provide an in-depth structural edit. So, not only does the Centre support our writers, but it supports our editorial and publishing industry as well.

In what was a brave and witty presentation, Anne-Maree then described her recently published short story, 'Some kind of happiness', and her experience working with her publisher Allen and Unwin. Anne-Maree's story has been published in the collection *How Do I Love Thee? Stories to stir the heart*, edited by Valerie Parv (A&U, 2009). This is a collection of romantic stories inspired by Elizabeth Barrett Browning's famous romantic sonnet. Anne-Maree's contribution describes the relationship between a man and woman, and the debilitating effect the man has on the woman and her artistic endeavours. This is semi-autobiographical (with name changes to protect the 'innocent'), and Anne-Maree showed great courage and personal insight in sharing her story with us.

Anne-Maree's editor at Allen and Unwin was Alex Nahlous, and her response to Anne-Maree's story was 'this is certainly an atypical romantic tale, but it is a superbly well-written one, and my edit is super light as a result'. The words any author dreams of receiving from their editor! As Anne-Maree said 'authors just want to be taken seriously and be given constructive feedback'.

In the process of working with Alex, Anne-Maree had to fall back on her own advice that she shares with authors. One example was giving 'texture' to the writing. That is, include the five senses in writing to enable the reader to visualise the story, and also use as a device to manipulate the reader's reaction. Anne-Maree also provided us with samples of Alex's light copy-edit and her editorial comments. For example, on-screen editing showed that Anne-Maree revised the text from past to present tense. Alex's covering letter provided positive and constructive feedback and useful suggestions for Anne-Maree's consideration.

In all, Anne-Maree's experience working with Alex appears to have been an educational, empathetic and rewarding experience; an opportunity too few writers get.

Gabby Lhuede

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Training news

Editing essentials

Claudia Marchesi and Cathy Nicoll are highly experienced editors and teachers. They will deliver a 'back to basics' short course in editing including the nuts-and-bolts and the philosophy of good editing.

De 101

From the periodic table of publication elements, De is the matter to do with Design. A molecule of De pairs with a molecule of Ed to create Com, essential to human life in the 21st century.

Flummoxed by De lingo?
Baulking at De toolbar?
Discombobulated by
De concepts?

David Whitbread will start at the very beginning, a very good place to start. When you read, you begin with ABC. When you design, you begin with De 101.

We'll talk type, shape, pictures, contrast and format for print and screen. Become unflummoxed, debaulted and combobulated.

David Whitbread

David is the author of *The Design Manual* (UNSW Press, Sydney, 2001) which won an Australian Award for Excellence in Educational Publishing in 2002. The second revised and expanded edition was released in 2009. He also co-wrote and art directed the sixth edition of the *Commonwealth Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers* (Wiley, Brisbane, 2002). Formerly Design Director of the Australian Government Publishing Service and Head of Graphic Design at the University of Canberra, he is currently the Corporate Communications Manager at an Australian Government agency in Canberra.

Editing essentials and De 101 (Design essentials)

Presenters Claudia Marchesi, Cathy Nicoll, David Whitbread respectively

Date Saturday 27 March 2010

Time 9.00–12.30 **Editing essentials**
1.00–4.30 **De 101 (Design essentials)**

Location: National Library of Australia
Training rooms 3 and 4 (Take the lift to the training suite.)

Cost: members single session \$95
both sessions \$145
non-members single session \$195
both sessions \$245

The fee for both sessions includes a sandwich lunch.

Bookings Cathy Nicoll<cathy.nicoll@atrax.net.au>

Payment **EFT** to: Canberra Society of Editors
BSB 805 022 account number 0342 3503

Please accompany your EFT with the relevant notation:

<surname> <editing> or <surname> <design> or

<surname> <editing & design>

Cheque to: The Treasurer

PO Box 3222 Manuka ACT 2603

Please note: you must make a payment to confirm your booking.

President's report



Peter Judge once described the newsletter as the 'glue that holds the society together'. He's right, of course, because it is our main means of communicating. You might notice that the editor, Gil Garcon, has introduced a few changes, one of which is shifting the deadline for copy to the first of each month. There are also some new contributors, and a write-up of the previous meeting. If you have a short article you can contribute, or perhaps a short comment as a letter to the editor, please feel free to send it through to Gil. If you want to contribute regularly, be aware that the deadline for copy is the first of each month.

There's been some more change on the committee. I would like to welcome back Margaret Millard as treasurer. The role of membership secretary is still open. This position looks after membership applications and keeps the list of members up-to-date. All you need is the ability to manage application forms, contact new members as they are accepted, and use an excel spreadsheet (or equivalent). I would like

A word from your editors

Original contributions from members, in their own words, make this newsletter what it is. So Kerie and I prefer not to edit our fellow editors, unless asked to. However, if we pick up something that appears to be an error, we will check with the author.

Talking of which, last month in my keenness to get the newsletter to the printer, I failed to incorporate all of the corrections. So if you noticed an error or two, just blame it on my clumsy fingers.

Generally, Kerie copy-edits and I typeset. Full pages and columns—and no loose bits—is a good look. Because we won't cut your contribution to fit the space, would you mind helping out by choosing an appropriate word limit? In the current rather dense layout, half a page is about 350 words, a page about 800 words of plain text or 700 with four dot-points or subheadings. And if you provide 1500 words or more the whole centrefold is yours!

It's your newsletter and your space, so have your say. Kerie and I look forward to your contribution to the newsletter and our society.

Gil Garcon

to thank Ara Nalbandian for his time in this role. We are very grateful for everything he has done for the society.

There is also now an opportunity for someone to be the society's publicity officer. The position involves contacting local media and letting them know about our general meetings and other activities. The committee will help you with contacts, which will initially be the community billboards like 'Fridge Door' and 'lit bits' in *The Canberra Times*. You can contact me if you are interested.

Finally, we are re-instating the long-standing tradition of going out for dinner after our general meetings. This is a really good way for members to get to know each other better, especially if you have only recently joined. If you can make some extra time after our general meeting this month, then please do so.

See you all at the March meeting.

Cathy Nicoll



Would you like to be able to communicate complex information clearly and accurately?

Would you like to be able to use editing skills to improve your own and other people's work?

Biotext, a leader in science writing and editing, runs a highly acclaimed training course for anyone who writes or edits material dealing with science and technology, for any audience.

Places are limited, so register soon:

May — biotextcanberra.eventbrite.com/

- Best writing course I have ever attended. Scott, Brisbane.
- Has helped immensely by providing a clear outline of what to be aware of when writing and editing. Katherine, Brisbane

For further information: www.biotext.com.au or email kylie.evans@biotext.com.au



Social networking sites: a useful resource for editors

This is the first in a series of articles on electronic editing, so I'll start by introducing myself. After obtaining a BSc at Leeds University and a PhD at Sussex, I spent twenty years teaching and researching biochemistry and immunology in France, Scotland and Africa. I then returned to London, with my young daughter, to take a master's degree in science communication at Imperial College. As I finished this degree in 1999, a serendipitous meeting with Janet Salisbury of Biotext led me into a career as a science editor and relocation to Australia.

Now, the flexibility of electronic editing has lured me into going freelance—next year, I hope to be writing this column from an exotic location (the south of France, perhaps ...).

Over the past few months, I've developed a strong interest in ways to speed up electronic editing. I arrived at this through my membership of the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences (BELS). BELS has a discussion forum, and a few months ago I was intrigued by a post from an editor who said she'd found work through the microblogging site Twitter, the social networking site Facebook and the business networking site LinkedIn. I duly signed up to all three and will use this first article to discuss these sites from the perspective of a freelance editor.

Twitter

I haven't quite worked out the point of Twitter—I tried 'tweeting', but soon gave up. The interface seemed a bit overwhelming, possibly because I 'followed' too many organisations and people. I signed up for tweets from various friends and relations, plus those from the UK's *Guardian* newspaper (on science and environment) and the Council of Science Editors.

Basically, tweets are so short (less than 140 characters) that it's hard to get a good sense of whether they are of interest. Also, I haven't been able to find a way to tweet meaningfully about projects I am working on (which apparently is the way to get yourself noticed by potential clients).

The weekly blog that I write about my business (ozeditor.wordpress.com) is set up in such a way that the posts automatically appear as tweets, but I doubt that anyone is actually reading them.

Facebook

I've been signed up to Facebook for a while, but only took it seriously once I got the idea that it could lead to work. Recently, a colleague commented on my Facebook page that I had discovered 'Facebook, the freelancer's friend'. However, my initial experience of the site was that it was more of a foe than a friend, because most of my interactions on it were purely social—chatting to extended family and reconnecting with old friends—which was pleasant, but time consuming. That situation has changed in recent weeks, since both BELS and the Council of Science Editors now have a Facebook presence. I'm finding their posts interesting; recent topics include:

- an interactive digital textbook platform that allows lecturers to update their books and share them with students online
- whether print editions are 'greener' than electronic documents
- the need for scientific standards in publishing
- different manuscript tracking systems.

Facebook posts can be longer than those on Twitter, so it's easier to get a feel for whether you might want to click on a link and read more. As with Twitter, I've linked my blog posts to Facebook, and have actually had some responses from readers (which hasn't been the case with Twitter).

LinkedIn

Theoretically, LinkedIn should be good for finding work—you can post a profile that includes your work and education history, recommendations from clients, information about projects you are working on, and so on. So far I haven't found work through LinkedIn, but I can see that it might happen in the future, given that I've found a copyeditor and a designer (both in the US) through the site.

However, in terms of editing, LinkedIn has been a real goldmine. The trick is to find the right groups to join. I've joined 'LinkEds & writers' and its subgroup 'Copy-editors and proofreaders'. Both have been invaluable.

Through the discussions on these groups I have:

- purchased several tools to speed up electronic editing, and books on how to use MS Word more effectively (I plan to write about these in future articles)
- signed up to a weekly newsletter with tips on using MS Word 2007 (wordribbon.tips.net) or earlier versions of MS Word (word.tips.net)
- signed up for the online version of the *Chicago Manual of Style* (www.chicagomanualofstyle.org), which is much cheaper than buying the book
- discovered some helpful settings for creating PDFs
- followed some interesting discussions on style guides, points of grammar and the difference between copy-editing and rewriting.

Conclusion

Now that I'm linked to the right groups, I'm finding that social networking—particularly through LinkedIn and Facebook—has many advantages. It's great to be connected to an online 'family' of editors, sharing resources, ideas, frustrations and successes.

Nevertheless, social networking will never quite take the place of a chat with a colleague over a cappuccino.

Hilary Cadman

Positions vacant

CSE membership secretary

This position looks after membership applications and keeps the list of members up-to-date on a spreadsheet.

You receive application forms and contact new members as they are accepted.

CSE publicity officer

The position involves liaising with local media and informing them about our general meetings and other activities.

Contact

Cathy Nicoll on 6259 2984
or at Cathy.Nicoll@atrax.net.au

IPEd notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors Limited

Big news to start 2010: our South Australian colleagues have offered IPEd an open-ended, interest-free loan of \$5,000 to redesign and re-organise the content of the IPEd website. The IPEd Council has accepted this very generous and welcome offer. Upgrading the website to improve its functionality and better reflect the purpose, aims and aspirations of our profession has been a project on the council's agenda for some time, but its implementation has been, until now, impeded by a shortage of the wherewithal to do so. The work is now under way, managed by IPEd's Communication Committee (CommComm) headed by Rowena Austin (SA). In consultation with councillors and other interested parties, the committee has drafted a site map and is seeking expressions of interest from web design firms familiar with the needs of professional associations.

Another current CommComm project is the production of a brochure designed primarily to promote to employers the use of professional editors. The text of the brochure has been finalised and a designer is now being sought. Copies of the finished product will be distributed to our member societies. It should prove to be a useful tool for individual editors as well as for corporate promotion activities.

IPEd has produced its first 'annual' report, which covers the period between its incorporation on 22 January 2008 and 30 June 2009. The report can be found on the IPEd website and the member societies have been asked to distribute it with their newsletters. This first report gives details of the establishment of the company in addition to annual financial and operational information, and lists the achievements of the period covered.

All aspects of the 2009 IPEd accreditation exam, held on 12 September last, have now been finalised. A detailed report on the exam can be found on the website. No exam will be held during 2010, but the Accreditation Board has begun work on the 2011 exam, including research into the possibility of an onscreen option.

(continued on page 7)



Thinking about words: capital cattle

Having an interest in words can have some disadvantages. The greatest of these is probably the time you spend (waste?) in musing about where words have come from, and their relations to other words. We are used to thinking that English shares French and German origins roughly half and half: in either language we can generally find some English near-equivalent. So when I recently happened across the German word *Vieh* (pronounced ‘fee’), meaning ‘cattle’, I was struck by how different it was from anything in English to do with the farmyard. The usual French words for cattle, *bétail* or *bestiaux*, at least sound as if they have something to do with animals. Was *Vieh* the odd one out? Or was the word ‘cattle’ the rogue?

Chasing ‘cattle’ took me into some interesting byways. German words like *Kuh*, *Kalb*, *Ochse* and *Stier* (cow, calf, ox and steer) are closer to the English than the equivalent French *vache*, *veau*, *boeuf* and *taureau*, although we can see our words ‘veal’ and ‘beef’ there – the French know their food! But *cattle* ... What’s *that*? Well, the Oxford English Dictionary as usual turns up trumps, tracing ‘cattle’ back to the Latin *capitalis*, meaning head or principal. It seems that this word was used in mediaeval times to refer to your ‘principal sum of money, capital, wealth, property’. *Caput* was your ‘head’ in Latin, and the phrase *caput pecuniae*, literally ‘head of money’, referred to your stock of cash. We recognise *pecuniae* in our English word ‘pecuniary’, but where did the Romans get that word *pecunia* from? Surprise, surprise – *pecus* was their word for a herd or flock, and so it seems that your wealth was measured on the hoof.

In England, in feudal days the word *cattle* originally meant movable property or wealth, as being the only personal property, and then came to mean ‘live stock’. A 15th-century phrase ‘goods and catells’ to cover your assets has an echo in our modern ‘goods and chattels’. So where did the term ‘chattel’ originate? Once again in the Latin *capitalis*, through a bit of French-English legal jargon. Back in the early 12th century the word *chatel* meant a ‘good or property’, but later had more the sense of ‘profit’, perhaps because you contracted with your lord to rear his cattle and share the profit (or any loss) with him. The modern French word *cheptel* has exactly this contractual sense, and is often also used for

the stock of beasts that are the basis of the contract, that is, the ‘cattle’. So we are back to where we started.

Probing further into the etymology of *Vieh* I found that in German it also began with the meaning of goods or money, again with a link to Latin *pecus*. *Pecus* gave *Vieh*? Well, Grimm’s Law tells us that p:b:v:f can interchange in the course of a language’s evolution, so why not? We’re not worried when Latin *pater* gives English ‘father’ or German ‘Vater’, or that your star sign *Pisces* means ‘fish’. However, the plot gets a bit thicker when my German dictionary points out that *pecus* is also related to *pectere*, meaning to comb. It seems that both *pecus* and *Vieh* were originally used mainly for a flock of sheep (well, you comb the wool, don’t you?), although *Vieh* now means a stock of any kind of farm beast.

I mentioned earlier that *Vieh* is pronounced ‘fee’, but the similarity of pronunciation is only the beginning. Turning back to the OED, the very first definition of ‘fee’ is ‘Live stock, cattle, whether large or small’. The OED also links ‘fee’ to *pecus*, although by now we might have come to expect this. If you had property ‘in fee’ you had exclusive rights to it, and in that sense it is related to ‘feud’ and ‘feudal’. (But ‘feud’ in the modern sense of a state of bitter enmity was also in use by the 16th century.) It’s only in the late 16th century that we arrive at our familiar understanding of the word ‘fee’ as ‘the remuneration paid or due to a lawyer, a physician, or (in recent use) any professional man ... for an occasional service’. So we are paid in money, not cattle, for our editing, and we can be mightily relieved that we don’t have our fees cluttering up the back yard, waving their horns and mooing at us.

If ‘cattle’ can lead us into so many unexpected byways, can words like ‘flock’ and ‘herd’ do the same. Apparently not. The origins of ‘flock’ are obscure – the word only occurs in English and Norse, not in the other Teutonic languages, and while it now mainly refers to sheep or geese it was formerly applied to a body of men. A ‘herd’ in English can be either a mob of beasts or the person who looks after them, although most other European languages distinguish between the mob and the person: in French, the *troupeau* has its *gardien*, and in German the *Herde* has its *Hirt*. If you want to specify what kind of *gardien*, it

might be a *vacher* (a cowherd), a *porcher* (a swineherd) or even a *bergère* (a shepherdess). Or a *berger* (a shepherd), but say *berger* to a Frenchman and his first thought is of an Alsatian dog, a *berger allemand!*

Thinking about cattle led me to wonder about the word ‘agist’ or ‘agistment’, words that I had never met before I landed in Australia. It turns out that these come from French *gîte*, nowadays usually referring to a bed and breakfast place, or a holiday cottage – somewhere to spend the night. The origins of *gîte* are in an archaic verb *gésir*, ‘to lie’, itself derived from Latin *jacere*. Those of you who like prowling around old graveyards when you are overseas will often have seen the words *ci-gît* or *hic jacet* on tombstones, both meaning ‘here lies’. And when you agist horses or cattle, that’s where they lie, too, probably chomping on breakfast in bed!

Thinking about words? But why these words, in particular? I reckon it doesn’t really matter which words we think about. As professionals, *whichever* words we use for fun or profit, we should be in the habit of using them thoughtfully.

Peter Judge

Sources:

Oxford English Dictionary Second Edition on CD-ROM (v. 4.0), 2009.

Das Herkunftswörterbuch: Etymologie der deutschen Sprache, Duden Band 7, 2007.

Le Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé, at <<http://atilf.atilf.fr/tlf.htm>>.



IPEd notes (*from page 5*)

Over the Christmas–New Year holiday period, IPEd-appointed adjudicators Stephanie Holt (Vic.) and Virginia Wilton (Canberra) completed judging of the sixteen books entered for the 2009 Barbara Ramsden Award for excellence in editing and made their recommendation to the award committee. The award is a major literary prize for a book in any field of literature. It is a joint activity of the Fellowship of Australian Writers (FAW) and IPEd, and recognises the contributions of both author and editor to the final work. The name of the winning book remains secret until announced by FAW. We’ll let you know when the cat is out of the bag. The list of books from which the winner was chosen is on the IPEd website.

During the IPEd national conference in Adelaide in October 2009, Pam Hewitt (NSW) collected data for her latest national survey of editors, this one being the fifth. The data from the 89 respondents indicated, among other things:

- a possible movement back to in-house editing and away from freelancing
- a reduction in usage of the terms editor, copy-editor and substantive editor in favour of, for example, project manager, communications manager and writing consultant
- the emergence of professional development as a clear first priority for editors
- an increase in the reported national average hourly rate to \$66, up a modest \$4 an hour since the 2007 survey.

The full report is on the IPEd website.

The next IPEd national conference will be in Sydney next year with our colleagues in the Society of Editors (NSW) as hosts. The IPEd seed fund of \$2,000 to help support the planning and organising of the national conferences has now been transferred from SA to NSW.

The IPEd Council is exploring the possibility of creating a peer-reviewed ‘IPEd Occasional Papers’ series with the aim of encouraging editors and those working in editing-related fields to share their ideas, views and reflections on editing as theory, as practice and as a profession. All such papers would of course be good, but the best of them might warrant special presentation at, for example, our national conferences. Feedback on the proposal, via your society’s councillor, would be welcome.

*Ed Highley,
IPEd Secretary*

Would you like to help review the Standards for Editing Practice?

IPed has asked the Canberra Society of Editors to review the Standards for Editing Practice, <<http://iped-editors.org/content/publications>>, particularly those aspects relating to the use of technology. This is being driven by the desire to introduce screen-based editing into the accreditation examination.

I would like to get together a small working party to review the standards, determine if any areas need updating, and if so, come up with a set of recommended changes. I expect to then workshop these with a wider group drawn from the CSE, and then make them available to members of other societies to review.

If you are interested in being part of this working group, please contact me by phone on 0407 018 433 or by email at <tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au>.

Ted Briggs, CSE delegate to IPed

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April 2010 newsletter

The copy deadline for the newsletter is the first day of the month. Please email your letters and contributions to <Gil.Garcon@ato.gov.au> and <Cupertino@lizzy.com.au> with your phone number.

If undeliverable, please return to
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