
Next meeting

27 October
6 for 6:30 pm

Fellows Lane
Cottage
ANU

Managing the media in crises

What exactly do you tell the media when an Australian footballer is tragically killed while on tour overseas?

And is it possible to generate positive media from a housing dispute that has been running for years?

Issues and crisis management is a crucial part of any organisation's communications strategy, and our guest speaker for October, David Pembroke, will fill us in on what it is like to manage the media during times of crises.

David is the owner of Canberra-based marketing and PR agency, *contentgroup*, and an issues manager for a number of key private and public sector organisations across the territory.

We will go out for a light dinner after the meeting. Please feel free to join us.

Newsletter of the Canberra Society of Editors

Volume 19 • Number 9 • October 2010

Specialised publications

Ian Davis, the Chief Executive of National Publishers, addressed our September meeting about providing specialised publications.

According to Ian, the general news media is facing mounting financial pressures and difficulties in identifying their role and the types of information they want to communicate. Increasingly, even quasi-specialist newspapers like the *Financial Review* lack the staff and resources to cover policy development in detail. The internet provides a huge volume of raw information, but it needs to be searched for and sifted through.

National Publishers specialises in government information, and provides difficult-to-find information on government regulatory matters in simple, accurate, non-specialist language to a variety of audiences.

Ian was a journalist for 20 years before establishing National Publishers about 10 years ago.

He has built up a team of people with specialist writing and editing skills plus an understanding of the perspective of, for example, an

accountant, a fund manager, or a university administrator. They take government information and reprocess it for different audiences. They produce specialist newsletters – often on the same subject from different angles – for industry and professional associations, major companies, superannuation funds and other publishing and communications companies in areas like banking, insurance, health, and education. The newsletters are in the association's name.

The question-answer session at the end was very interesting. Ian described how he started National Publishers and grew it into the company it is today. He also told us how he finds and tries out freelancers. Editors beware—reliability was one of the key criteria Ian used to decide whether he would use someone again.

Natalie Maddalena

New venue for October

The Emeritus Faculty of the ANU has kindly offered us the use of their meeting room for our general monthly meetings.

You'll find us at **Fellows Lane Cottage**, Fellows Lane (off Fellows Road), ANU.

It's not far from University House.

Fellows Road joins both Garran Road and Sullivans Creek Road.

See the map on the back page.

Yes, it's CHRISTMAS again!

This year, the Canberra Society of Editors will be celebrating Christmas at The Brassey restaurant in Barton on 24 November.

The cost will be \$40 for members, which includes two courses and a drink.

Use the contact form at www.editorscanberra.org/about/contact to make a booking.

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Training news:

Training and plans for more

In December 2008, Martine Taylor conducted a survey of training needs, which has been very useful in planning training courses for the past two years (see right).

It is now time for a new survey to enable the committee to plan training courses for the next two years. The questions in the survey are below.

You can respond via email or via the website: <<http://www.editorscanberra.org/survey-2010/>>. Please respond to the survey so we can provide the training you need!

Survey of training needs

- [1] In which of the following subject areas would you welcome a training course?
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| i Editing and proofreading practice | v Grammar and/or writing style |
| ii Indexing practice | vi Wordprocessing |
| iii Editing business practice | vii Other editing and publishing software (e.g. InDesign) |
| iv Project management | viii Website design, implementation and maintenance |
- [2] Can you suggest course topics (and presenters) not listed in Question 1?
- [3] Do you prefer full-day or half-day courses?
- [4] Do you prefer weekday or Saturday courses?
- [5] The cost of courses is usually in the order of \$150 for full-day courses and \$90 for half-day courses. Do you have any comments on the cost of courses?
-

From the editor

Welcome to the October issue of *The Canberra editor* and the beginning of what I hope, as its new managing editor, will be the next stage in its development to a more professional and informative newsletter.

The Canberra Society of Editors has recently seen a wonderful change in the layout and content of its website and a new logo design. Over the next few months, I and other Committee members will be working with the CSE's logo designer to develop a new masthead for *The Canberra editor*.

While the newsletter team is growing, with Martine Taylor and Damaris Wilson now volunteering to be proofreaders, there is still an opening for someone to format/layout/typeset the newsletter. All it involves is putting the edited text into a Word document (or your software of choice) and then sending it out for proofreading. Please get in touch with us if you can help out.

Courses in the past two years:

Structural editing—Pamela Hewitt
Design for non-designers—David Whitbread
Building an online presence—Michael Cairns
Editing essentials—Cathy Nicoll
Design essentials—David Whitbread
Templates in Word—Brian O'Donnell
Editing as a business—Pamela Hewitt
Small business essentials—Jean McIntyre & David Grantham
The don't panic workshop (editing annual reports)—Helen Lewis
Editing and publishing—Sue Wales & Cathy Nicoll
Grammar essentials—Pam Peters

Martin Holmes

Your newsletter's regular contributors are invaluable but it has been my desire to also include articles from other areas of importance and interest to editors, such as graphic design, indexing, publishing and writing.

The Canberra editor provides regular articles from well-known and professional editors but there is always room for more. If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please read the simple guidelines for all articles at <<http://www.editorscanberra.org/newsletter-guide-2010/>>. Details of the deadline for all copy and email addresses can be found on the back page of the newsletter.

I hope you enjoy this issue of your newsletter. And remember, any comments about your newsletter or the Society are always welcome.

Kerie Newell

Stacking sentences?

In my last article I asked the question ‘What is a sentence?’, and I restricted my discussion to simple sentences. These are sentences consisting of one clause only, but a clause that makes complete sense on its own. I need to tell you about clauses and phrases, which are also strings of words that make a certain amount of sense, but are not complete on their own. You also need to know the difference between simple sentences and those that are not so simple – compound and complex sentences – where clauses are stacked together to make longer sentences. Here we go!

A **phrase** is a group of words that makes some sense, but cannot stand on its own because it is not a complete idea. There are noun phrases (*the tall girl*), verb phrases (*would have been seen*), prepositional phrases (*in the locker room*) and others.

A **clause** can be a sentence (*The boy kicked the ball*), also known as a main or independent clause; or it can be a group of words that has a subject and a finite verb but is only part of a sentence (*when it was tossed to him*), also known as a subordinate or dependent clause.

In the sentence *The boy kicked the ball when it was tossed to him*, *The boy kicked the ball* is the main clause (it is also a simple sentence), and *when it was tossed to him* is a subordinate clause. This kind of sentence is a **complex sentence** – it consists of at least one main clause and at least one subordinate clause – *when* is a subordinating conjunction.

A **compound sentence** consists of two or more main clauses: *I am good at spelling and you are good at grammar, but we both need help with report writing*. The three main clauses are joined together with coordinating conjunctions.

A reminder about sentence types: the new terms are declarative, interrogative, directive and exclamatory, tending to take over from the old moods indicative, imperative and subjunctive. In ‘What is a sentence?’ I did not discuss subjunctive mood because it often involves complex sentences. I like to think of subjunctive as the ‘wishful thinking’ mood. Here are some examples:

- *God save the Queen!* (a simple sentence with the implied thought: ‘I wish/pray that God might keep the Queen safe’)
- *If I were a rich man, I would buy a big house.* (a complex sentence with the subordinate *if* clause followed by the main clause; note that *were* is used to express the subjunctive, meaning ‘I’m not a rich man but if only...’ – so not the past tense *was*).

Paragraphs are more stacked sentences! Beware! A paragraph is a unit of thought, not of length, so don’t let your writing or that of your client ramble on and on. The

ideal paragraph should be organised with a topic sentence containing a guiding idea, some sentences that support the guiding idea and are linked appropriately, and a final sentence that pulls the paragraph together and points to the guiding idea in the next paragraph. Here is an example:



- *You may have some difficulty [guiding idea] in writing a paragraph. [topic sentence] First of all, think about the idea you want to get across. Second, write a sentence that expresses that idea. Third, think about and write down the ideas that support that idea. Finally, write the paragraph, making sure that the sentences are tied together neatly with transitional devices like the ones used here—first of all, second, third etc. [supporting sentences] Writing a paragraph will not be difficult [reflecting guiding idea] if you approach it systematically.¹*

What do you suppose the next paragraph might be about? Yes, a *systematic approach to writing a paragraph*—flagged in the last part of the final sentence.

Paragraphs need to be varied in length, and there is nothing wrong with a single sentence paragraph occasionally to make a strong point. Likewise, there is nothing wrong with a much longer paragraph if you are writing or editing a descriptive passage in a novel, for example. Always remember the target audience—business people don’t have time to read rambling paragraphs, but there is nothing nicer than curling up in a big chair on a winter’s day with a novel that absorbs you with descriptions of lazy summer days that unfold through long paragraphs. To finish this chat about sentences and how they can stack up, my advice would always be to think of the reader. Will short, punchy simple sentences be best to get a message across economically? Or will the reader be comfortable with complex or compound sentence structures?

Finally, how long should paragraphs be? The answer to that is much the same as how long a piece of string should be because length is not the primary consideration. I contend that if a writer can put together two consecutive well-planned paragraphs, he or she can put together just about anything—it’s just a matter of building on the basic foundations of appropriate sentences and appropriately stacked sentences in well thought through paragraphs.

Elizabeth Manning Murphy, 2010

Note 1: For a longer discussion about paragraph writing, see *Effective writing: plain English at work* by Elizabeth M Murphy (Pitman Publishing, Melbourne, 1989). This example is taken from Chapter 6 of that book. (Copies available from the author).

Thinking about words: on passion and imperturbability

l'Anglais avec son sang-froid habituel

Back in the 1950s there was a British cabaret singer and song-writer called Paddy Roberts who often had a nice turn of phrase in a lyric. One such turn that I still remember from those distant days is his translation of *l'Anglais avec son sang-froid habituel* (properly 'the Englishman with his accustomed imperturbability').

Roberts' first stanza goes: 'Oh the Englishman is noted for his "sang froid"/which translated means his usual bloody cold/.../And he never says a word if he can help it/That's why people say he's always full of phlegm/He's quite unmoved by atom bombs/and rockets to the sun/He never speaks to strangers/for it simply isn't done/But when cricket starts his fury's uncontrolled ...' And later, 'All the French and the Italians/chase their women round like stallions/But the Englishman's a suet pud ...'

I forget what prompted this flash of memory, but it started me thinking about *sang froid*. We use it to mean calmness,

imperturbability, impassivity, but generally in quite a different sense from its literal translation 'cold blood'. Things we do *in cold blood* are often rather dreadful, as Truman Capote's *In cold blood*, a semi-fictionalised account of a particularly brutal quadruple murder in Kansas in 1959. We have been using 'in cold blood' in this sense since the early 1600s; 'sang froid' didn't come into use for another century. The French, who invented the term a couple of centuries earlier, define it as 'the ability to keep mastery of oneself and to remain calm in all circumstances', and also to behave coolly and calmly when 'insulting someone, or killing them or cutting their throat'—I'm not sure which of these crimes is the more heinous in French eyes.

Blood can also very often be hot, and this concept has been used in the sense of excitable or passionate since Shakespeare's time. It can also be red or blue: if red-blooded, you may be full of life and spirited; if blue-blooded, you are either seriously anaemic or seriously aristocratic. Blue blood began as a Spanish phrase, *sangre azul*, applied to old Castilian nobility who claimed that they were of pure line, uncontaminated by Moorish or Jewish elements. The expression may have originated from the greater visibility of veins through a paler skin. 'Blood' has suffered changes of pronunciation through the ages. We

now say 'blud', rhyming with flood, but in earlier times it would have sounded more akin to rude or wood.

'Full of phlegm', says Roberts, and certainly if you are gifted with *sang-froid* you may be phlegmatic.

Phlegm goes back to the Greek *flegma* 'inflammation, heat, morbid clammy humour' (as the result of heat), and ultimately to a Greek word for 'burn'. But if we say someone is phlegmatic we mean calm, unemotional, perhaps to the point of dullness, and not that they have a runny nose or a chesty cough.

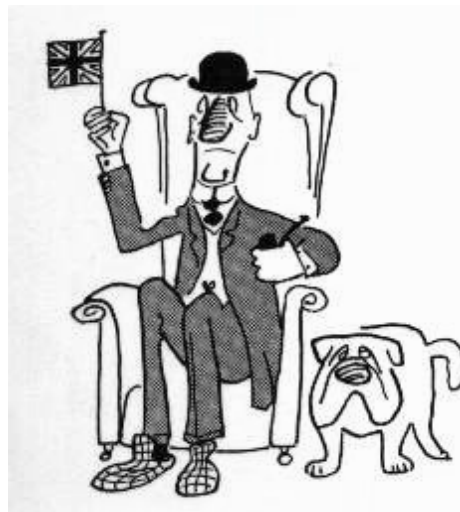
Thinking about blood takes us to the heart of the person and of the matter. The heart at various times has been seen as the centre of one's being, the seat of one's inmost thoughts and feelings and indeed of that obscure and

nebulous entity, 'the soul'. The soul, as one's spiritual aspect, is often referred to as if it has an existence separate but inseparable from the rest of us—'body and soul'—and therefore aptly placed at our heart, even if most of our other sentient functions go back to the brain.

Feelings and emotions have long been located elsewhere in the body. The largest of your organs is the liver, which apparently not only produces the gastric juice bile (a bitter fluid for emulsifying fats) and detoxes the

venous blood but also serves (depending on who you are talking to) as the seat of love, passion or courage. To be 'lily-livered' is to be cowardly indeed. In your hand, the hepatic line, the 'line of the liver', runs from the wrist to the base of the little finger; it should run straight, because a wavy line indicates theft and an evil conscience. Carter's Little Liver Pills were the most celebrated laxative in my youth, a concoction of the chemical bisacodyl, but the name reflected a sales appeal to the public consciousness rather than an attempt at precision—their action was limited to the lower bowel and left the liver firmly alone.

An excess of bile was thought to induce melancholy or ill-temper, especially the 'black bile' (a quite imaginary fluid supposedly secreted by the spleen or the renal glands, for which no function had then been discovered). Indeed, our word 'melancholy' comes straight from the Greek, the



Thinking about words (continued)

melan- part meaning black (it's the black pigment melanin that gives us our tan when we are exposed to UV light and colours our melanomas when we overdo the tanning) and the *-choly* meaning bile. Another word for bile is 'gall', although nowadays we find this term used mostly for animals, for example in the ox-gall used as a wetting agent by water-colour artists. You may say sarcastically of someone, 'I like his gall!', referring to some bitter comment or streak of character. But 'galling' has no relation to the liver. That's a horsey term, referring to the sores caused by an ill-fitting harness. A remark that's 'a bit galling' may have a similar irritant effect on your state of mind. And an insect burrowing into your prize shrub to lay its eggs may make the hapless plant respond to the irritation by producing a gall.

Since Shakespeare's time a quick temper has been blamed on the spleen, although before then it was also variously seen as the seat of melancholy or of mirth, a tricky combination of functions. If you 'vent your spleen' on somebody or something you are probably in today's parlance 'spitting the dummy'. Meanwhile, if all goes well, the fist-sized organ tucked away on your left side is peacefully filtering nasties from your blood and getting rid of red blood cells that have passed their use-by date (they only last about four months) and recycling the cells' iron content, oblivious to its putative emotional role.

Finally, ladies, your unique organ, the source of all mankind, has long been grievously slandered. The Greek for womb, ὕστερα (*hystera*) gave us 'hysterical' in 1657 (from *hysterikos*, 'belonging to the womb') and then 'hysteria'. The OED says, rather provocatively, 'Women being much more liable than men to this disorder, it was originally thought to be due to a disturbance of the uterus and its functions.' I won't enter into that particular discussion, except to say that both the French and the Germans have slang terms for the condition (*mal de mère*, *Mutterweh*) linking it with 'mother', and that the French *hystérique* was there almost a century before the English equivalent, which may say something about those excitable foreigners ...

See where musing on a few body bits can lead you. I promise to be less visceral next time.

Peter Judge

Sources: *Oxford English Dictionary* Second Edition on CD-ROM (v. 4.0), 2009. *Encyclopædia Britannica* 2009 Ultimate Reference Suite. *Le Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé*, at <<http://atilf.atilf.fr/tlf.htm>>. The illustration and words of 'The Englishman ...' from <www.sterlingtimes.org/memorable_images48.htm>

Vale Clare Booth Steward

Long-time members of the Canberra Society of Editors will remember Clare as a vibrant personality who enlivened our monthly meetings with her humour and no-nonsense approach to business from the President's position during 1998.

Clare passed away peacefully on Wednesday 25 August 2010 in Pambula, NSW, at age 66, with her husband Eric Steward and her son Matthew Calthrop with her. She had battled cancer for more than a year.

For many years Clare was a journalist of distinction with the Australian News and Information Bureau, and one of the first women journalists to be sent on an overseas posting from the ANIB, on the initiative of my late husband, Hugh Murphy, then ANIB Editor in Canberra. When she married Eric, she moved to the NSW south coast and further developed her editing career, concentrating on spiritual works that interested her.

Over the years, and particularly during her recent illness, Clare and I shared many moving moments when we visited one another. I admired her strength and the faith that carried her through bouts of treatment for her illness. Clare was a good and caring friend, devoted to Eric and to her family, an inspiration, a fun person to be with, and a journalist and editor of note in Canberra and overseas.

I, and all those who knew her in the Society will miss her.

Elizabeth Manning Murphy

Membership secretary wanted

The position of membership secretary is now vacant because Shirley Aitchison is moving to the north coast later in the year. While this is good news for Shirley, it does mean she can no longer continue in that role. The task for this position is to receive membership applications, pass them on to the committee, and contact the applicants to advise them of the outcome. If you are interested, contact us at <<http://www.editorscanberra.org/about/contacts/>>

Insurance

AON Insurance is offering access to professional indemnity insurance to all full members of the Canberra Society of Editors. The rates are very competitive.

If you are interested, contact us at <<http://www.editorscanberra.org/about/contacts/>>.

Out and about

Welcome to new members

The Canberra Society of Editors would like to welcome its new members: Dr Michael Rolph, Beth Battrick, Luke Robert, Jane Clement, Lorese Vera, Maude Caruana, Amanda Laugesen, and Meredyth Mackay.

The Atlas Award

Are you ready to be Australia's next big thinker? Entries for the Atlas Award are now open and close on 14 December 2010. Further information about the Atlas Award is available at <www.atlasproductions.com.au>

New publication

Ruth Colman's *The Briefest Punctuation Guide Ever!* is a concise and practical guide to punctuation. Ms Colman lives in Maitland, NSW and is a semi-retired teacher and copy editor. Published by UNSW Press, the book was launched in September and is available for \$16.95.

If you have any invaluable information for this column, please contact the editor at <kerie1@optusnet.com.au>.

IPEd news

News from the Institute of Professional Editors Limited
August–September 2010

IPEd held its 2010 annual general meeting on 5 September by teleconference. Activities and progress over the 2009–10 year will be covered in an annual report in preparation. At the AGM, Rosemary Noble (Vic.) retired as Chair of the IPEd Council, and Rosemary Luke (SA) was elected to the position, with Tina Thornton (Tas.) as Deputy Chair. The Council extended its warm appreciation to the noble Rosemary for her steady guidance of institute activities over the past year. She remains as a councillor.

At its regular monthly meetings in August and September, Council monitored and discussed progress on several current projects.

The redevelopment of the website is proceeding apace. The final design has been approved but the magnitude of the task of populating the site has resulted in a postponement of the launch date, originally scheduled for 1 September. Various councillors and committee members have written updated copy for the site and the content is being managed by Communication Committee stalwarts Rowena Austin and Rosemary Luke, both members of the SA society.

In parallel with the new site, an A4 flyer promoting the value of editorial services has been produced and will be freely available to societies and their members. Only a few have been printed, its primary use being seen as an electronic document. The Council hopes that editors will find that the flyer has many uses including, for example, as an appendage to project bids.

The Accreditation Board has been occupied with three main tasks over the past two months: development of the next

accreditation exam, scheduled for May 2011; updating its Procedures Manual; and setting the criteria for renewal of accreditation. Work on the first is ongoing; the other two are virtually complete. The Procedures Manual is a substantial document detailing exam procedures and the activities and responsibilities of every member of the exam team before, during and after the event. Accredited editors wishing to remain so will need to apply for renewal of accreditation every five years, success being dependent on, among other things, continuing employment in, and contribution to, the profession.

Revision of the Australian Standards for Editing Practice, first published in 2001, is being managed by Ted Briggs of the Canberra society. A first draft has been produced and circulated for comment. More work is needed to bring the standards in line with contemporary practice, particularly the major and continuing impact of electronic editing, publishing and communication technologies.

In consultation with the societies, a group in WA headed by Anne Surma has revised IPEd's policy on 'The editing of research theses by professional editors', first developed in 2001. The revision was made to take account of the changing environment in which editors and students work, particularly in relation to electronic or on-screen editing. The Council will now seek endorsement of the revised policy by the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies committee of the Australian universities.

The call for contributions to the IPEd Occasional Papers series was launched earlier in the year. The period for submissions has been extended to 31 October.

Ed Highley, Secretary

Speech recognition

Over recent weeks I've started using Microsoft's speech recognition, as part of my continuing efforts to avoid a repetitive strain injury. The program comes with the operating system if you have Vista or Windows 7, or can easily be installed if you have an earlier version. A 2009 review of speech recognition programs <<http://tinyurl.com/234nqhf>> found that the free program from Microsoft was almost as good as Dragon Naturally Speaking, which is generally acknowledged to be the best speech recognition software.

Speech recognition can open programs, switch between applications and type dictated text. The Microsoft system includes a tutorial to get you started, which involves repeating a set of sentences about speech recognition. This serves two purposes. It gives the user information about what the program can do, and at the same time gives the computer information about the user's speech patterns.

The system is constantly learning, and improves each time it is used. For example, if I say 'the dog is black', the computer might misunderstand, and insert the phrase 'the dock is that'. If I then say 'correct', the computer will highlight what it just typed (i.e. 'the dock is that'), and present me with up to 10 numbered options for what I might have said (anything from 'The Doc is not' to 'the jockey's that'). Hopefully, the list will include the term 'the dog is black', in which case, I simply say the number for that term, followed by 'OK', and the computer inserts the correct words. The correction allows the computer to learn more about my speech patterns, as it matches the correct words to the sounds it heard me make.

Things don't always go quite that smoothly. For example, the program likes to be spoken to gently and calmly. Thus, if the computer has misheard a phrase and I say 'correct' in too sharp a tone, it assumes that I have moved on to the next words in the sentence, and types the word 'wrecked' – or something of that ilk – rather than going back and highlighting the erroneous phrase. Similarly, if I get frustrated and my tone of voice changes, the program starts to behave like a grumpy teenager, wilfully misunderstanding my words, and becoming ever more sullen and unresponsive the more annoyed I get.

Another issue is that the program is set to automatically insert a double space after a full stop, which is odd, given that double spaces are not necessary when using a word processor.

On the positive side, when I manage to speak calmly and naturally, and use words the program can cope with, the speed is definitely better than my fastest touch typing. Opening programs with speech recognition also works well, probably because the spoken commands are repetitive. I find it very satisfying to say 'Start Word', 'Start Excel', 'Start Outlook', etc, when I turn on the computer and see the programs magically open.

So far, I think the frustrations probably outweigh the benefits. However, I'm persevering, using the program for a short time each day, so that I can gradually train it to respond better to my voice. I managed to dictate the first paragraph of this article, but have to admit that I then gave up and typed the rest of it.



More on changing to MS Word 2007 or 2010

For those of you are who resisting the change to MS Word 2007 or 2010 because of worries about your ability to cope with the new interface, there is yet another tool to help you. An add-in called Toolbar Toggle allows you to add the old-style toolbar to the ribbon in MS Word 2007 or 2010, or get rid of the ribbon completely. A trial version is available from <www.toolbartoggle.com>.

What would you like to see in this column?

Are there any issues with onscreen editing that you would like me to tackle in this column? If so, please send your ideas to me at hilary@cadmanediting.com, and I will do my best to cover them in future articles.

Hilary Cadman

IPed accreditation exam: member survey

IPed has begun planning for the 2011 accreditation exam, which is provisionally scheduled for May 2011. The exam has been developed as a means for editors to benchmark their professional competence and to assist employers in their selection of editors. For further information on previous exams, see the IPed website: <www.iped-editors.org>. (Please note that this website is currently under development and information relating to the 2011 exam will be available in November.)

The Accreditation Board is now reviewing venues and other requirements, and would welcome an indication of whether you intend to sit the exam. This does not represent a commitment on your part, but it will help with the work to be done in the months ahead. We are also seeking to gauge the interest of state and territory society members in alternative formats and modes of delivery for the exam.

Please complete the survey by logging into <<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RTKMV2K>> and submitting it by the closing date: Friday 22 October 2010

Larissa Joseph

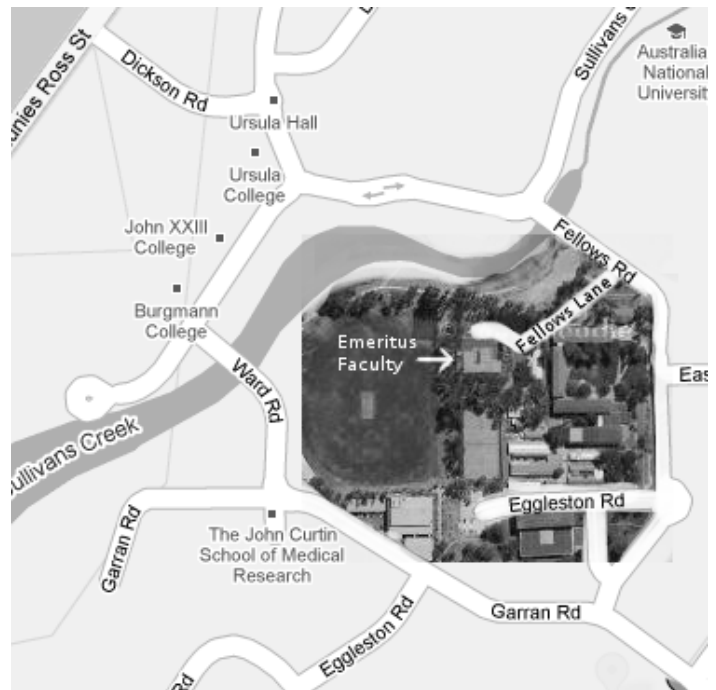
Don't forget: we have moved

The October meeting will be held at the Emeritus Faculty of the Australian National University, in the Fellows Lane Building.

The Fellows Lane Cottage is a small white cottage overlooking a rather pretty stretch of Sullivans Creek.

You can get there by turning into Fellows Road from Sullivans Creek Road (which runs along Sullivans Creek) or Garran Road (in front of University House)

This map (see right) should help you find it.



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The Canberra editor

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The editor welcomes contributions by email to: <kerie1@optusnet.com.au>.

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