

THE CANBERRA editor

Newsletter of the Canberra Society of Editors

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From the President



Goodness. Is it November already!?

Time seems to speed up as we get older. Although, I'm still working out what to do when I grow up!

This is my last column for 2014. The next edition of *The Canberra editor* will be published in February 2015.

In the past two months, we've not run any training workshops of our own, but two of us went to Sydney in October for the excellent Plain English workshop presented by Susan McKerihan. I think we could persuade her to do it in Canberra next year. We have two workshops in November, on Friday 14th (CSE) and Saturday 15th (NSW), and Katie has written about them elsewhere. I know they will both be good value.

We also enjoyed a most convivial networking lunch at Tilley's (I do like that place!) and two well-attended general meetings in the Ferguson Room. In September, Professor Jenny Corbett, ANU Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Research Training) gave us a lively, enlightening and very relevant presentation about issues for students completing a PhD thesis. Pam Faulks has written an article about Jenny's talk.

Sadly, our October presentation on Australian soldier slang in WWI didn't happen. Our guest speaker, Dr Amanda Laugesen, took ill on the day. But she has offered to give her talk at a convenient meeting next year.

That gave members the opportunity to spend more time chatting over good wine and the excellent spread that Dallas and Damaris had prepared, and also to discuss some Society business in more detail than is usual at these meetings. That was most timely, since it was our last 'official' meeting for the year. Here's a summary.

After the usual formalities—sign our new attendance book, get your copy of ASEP2 and buy one of Elizabeth's books at the front table—I covered a number of matters, filling in for absent committee members for some of them:

- a new Catering Coordinator for next year still needed (hint, hint!)
- encouragingly strong membership renewals and steady stream of new members
- next two monthly meetings (Christmas dinner at The Brassey in November, with guests from writers and indexers; and the CSE/ Writers Centre networking event in February)
- a great program of guest speakers already lined up until July next year (Pam is doing a great job)
- proposals for giving more support to student members and new members (Katie has some plans and Julia is drafting some guidelines for the committee to follow)

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- renewal of Ferguson Room arrangements for general meetings (unanimous support, and Eris will follow this up)
- stocktake of private caches of *Working Words* to help committee decide if we need to reprint for conference
- the upcoming networking lunch and training workshops, plus Katie's plan to have a forward program of PD events for 2015. (Katie has listed some proposed courses in a separate article.)

Then others gave reports and led discussion on some important Society activities.

- Tracy (2015 **conference**, including showing us the website, and discussing accommodation deals, billeting options, and sponsorship needs)
- Elizabeth, with Ted and Pam (progress, plans and growing support for the **mentoring** program, including the just-received email to me from NSW Editors wanting to get on board, at last)
- Ted (**accreditation** renewals for 2009 AEs, on-screen exam demonstration at 2015 conference, next AE exam early in 2016)
- Maree Peterson, Ed and I (IPed):
 - lots of **IPed transition** stuff coming at us now from WP4 and the five project teams, and we all now need to pay more attention to these documents when circulated as we get to the pointy end of this complex 'transmogrification'
 - a new **national survey** of editors (at last), and how it might help editors run their enterprises.

I closed with a mention of the upcoming Oct/Nov newsletter (to a roomful of nodding acknowledgement about the quality of the 2014 editions and Farid's and Gabby's leading roles), and with a few enthusiastic sentences saying how we should be pleased (but not smug) about how CSE is travelling and some of the things we're achieving to improve the lives of members and the profession.

Although we conventionally don't hold meetings over December and January, rest assured that those involved will be very busy behind the scenes preparing for the two really big events in 2015—the completion of the transition planning process for IPed; and the national biennial conference, being hosted in Canberra in May. I wrote more about those in my previous column. You may be contacted to lend a hand here and there, and I can't imagine that offers of help will be turned away!

And we will continue to send broadcast emails to you on matters of interest and importance as they arise.

For those who can't make it to our end-of-year Christmas dinner on 26 November, please accept my warmest wishes for a joyful Christmas and festive season. May you stay safe if travelling, and have a restful time if staying home. And may you all flourish and prosper in the new year. I look forward to seeing you at our special CSE and Writers Centre event at the end of February.

Alan Cummine
President

The next general meeting of the CSE

All members and their friends are welcome to our next meeting.

When? Wednesday 25 February 2015, starting at 6.00 pm

What? Networking evening with ACT Writers Centre

Where? Venue to be confirmed

Who? Speakers or panel to be confirmed

Action? Put it in your diary, and check the CSE website and your broadcast emails for details.

Upcoming courses

Making your business irresistible online

Friday 14 November, University House, 9 am–4 pm

\$200 members, \$400 non-members

Are you confident about your online presence? Are you feeling a little confused or overwhelmed? Many people get caught up in the online technology, so overwhelmed by the options that they forget their actual message—you know that special something only you have and want to share, the reason you started your business in the first place. In this workshop, you'll learn how to present your business irresistibly online by using five simple steps.

To register, click [here](#).

The business of editing

The Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. presents this one-day seminar

Saturday 15 November, 9.30 am–5.30 pm

Aerial Function Centre, Level 7, 235 Jones Street, Broadway NSW

Cost: \$350 (non-members); \$75 (other societies); \$50 (NSW members).

Price includes: morning and afternoon teas, lunch and a post-workshop drink on the terrace.

It is isolating to work alone and while you are busy earning your income, sometimes there is little time or inclination to review how your business is going, how the publishing environment has changed and how, perhaps, you could do things differently.

Aimed at freelance editors and small business operators, this one-day seminar will explore subjects that are hard to wrangle solo and are often overlooked.

The itinerary is designed to offer the opportunity to get up to date with current trends, tools and ideas that will help your business flourish.

Book into the seminar at [here](#).

To find out more about this seminar, email events@editorsnsw.com or call 02 9294 4999 (voicemail).

Running a business?

A number of organisations in Canberra run courses (often free) to assist you run your business. Visit the following websites if you are interested:

- <http://actdigitalenterprise.com.au>
- <http://www.canberrabusinesspoint.com.au>
- <http://www.canberrabusiness.com>

Planned courses

A calendar of courses is being organised for 2015. Potential courses are:

Selling your services—a sales and marketing course aimed at freelance editors to assist in:

- better understanding and connecting with clients
- developing long-term relationships and future business
- mastering highly effective closing techniques.

So you want to self-publish—learn what it takes to move from writing to marketing your manuscript.

Other potential courses include:

- Advanced Microsoft Word 2011 for Mac
- Introduction to copyediting
- Principles of substantive editing
- Academic editing
- Grammar in a nutshell
- Plain English principles for editors.

If you have ideas for workshops that you would like to see organised, please email Katie@edgeediting.com.au to have them added to our list.

The **networking lunches** will continue from February onwards in 2015.

Katie Poidomani

Professional Development and Training Coordinator

Membership reminder

New members

A warm welcome to these new members!

Full members

Julia Evans (October; upgraded from Associate)

Pam Faulks (October; upgraded from Associate)

Michelle Hey (July)

Julie Irish (July)

Elizabeth Mason (July)

Tehani Wessely (July)

Associates

Michelle Clewett (July)

Darren Goossens (October)

Erin Gregg (October)

Daniel Palamara (July)

Student member

Rebecca Williamson (July)

The new membership fees now apply. Expectedly, membership renewals have dropped slightly; however, overall membership remains healthy with new applications coming in regularly.

Membership of the Canberra Society of Editors offers many valuable benefits! All categories of members are entitled to:

- access the Society's website and its resources, and our Facebook page
- attend the monthly meetings to enjoy informative guest speakers and expert panels, and network with fellow editors and colleagues
- attend the Society's other networking events
- receive *The Canberra editor* published regularly throughout the year
- receive frequent broadcast emails about relevant subjects, events and job opportunities
- access the Society's mentoring program
- join and take part in the Society's discussion group 'canberraeditors' on Yahoo
- access the members' section of the website of the IPEd, our national body that represents and advocates for the editing profession
- receive substantial discounts for professional development workshops, including those conducted by other editing societies
- receive discounted registration for the IPEd accreditation exam and the biennial national IPEd conference (to be held in Canberra in 2015).

In addition, full professional members are eligible for a free listing in the Society's *Directory of freelance editors*. They may also vote and hold executive office on the management committee, where they can have more influence in supporting and guiding the Society and the editing profession.

Finally, a plea: if you renew your membership by direct bank transfer, please include your name as the reference, and send an email to the treasurer Julia Evans (jevans@home.com.au). Every year we receive a few payments with no identifying details. We'd hate to lapse your membership when you've paid your fees!

Linda Weber

Membership Secretary

Wanted: Catering Coordinator for 2015

CSE needs a new Catering Coordinator for our 2015 general meetings. Karin Hosking has managed this role exceptionally well for the last couple of years, but has asked us to find a replacement.

Here's how it works.

Every month, a different CSE member is lined up to arrange the catering of drinks and nibbles and finger food that is a core part of the customary conviviality of our general meetings. All costs are reimbursed. And that catering job is becoming easier with our new portable trollies to carry in the catering kit and the food and wine. Our most recent meeting was especially 'convivial', which raised the bar (sorry!) for next year's meetings.

But what we need most is a person to coordinate this corps of volunteers—to recruit caterers, to organise the roster, and to arrange to transfer the CSE catering kit to the next person. The Coordinator coordinates!

Please tell me (alan.cummine@gmail.com) or Pam Faulks (pam.faulks@gmail.com) that you're interested.

If you need a bit more of a detailed feel for the job, you could ask Karin Hosking directly (chezkaz@gmail.com).

It is an important role but far from onerous, and you're not required to come to committee meetings. It's a great way for a new member to become better known in the Society!

Alan Cummine

President

Mentoring in the ACT

Our latest confirmed mentoring partnership is one that is crossing state borders, with a Canberra mentor helping out a new editor in Queensland, but with email and Skype at our fingertips this is hardly even a hiccup!

We have several other mentorships going in Canberra, both local and 'distant', all working well for both mentee and mentor.

I'd love to hear from others in the Canberra region who might be keen to dip their toe in the water either as mentor or mentee. All you need to do is contact me for an application form and guidance notes, or even just a chat to see what it's all about.

Mentoring is a great way to share knowledge, one to one, at your own pace, and perhaps build a lasting friendship.

Pam Faulks

ACT Mentoring Coordinator, pam.faulks@gmail.com, 0437 570 649

National Mentoring Program

Looking into the 'crystal ball': In the transition from individual societies to a single entity (IPEd) with branches, one function stands out as not requiring much change—our national mentoring program. While we expect IPEd will take responsibility for supporting the mentoring program, it will continue to be run exactly as it is at present, but on behalf of IPEd, from Canberra, with the national coordinators being members of what will become the Canberra branch of IPEd. This arrangement is expected to continue, at least in the short term, for as long as there are members of the Canberra branch willing and able to take on the roles of joint national coordinators.

Support provided by IPEd is likely to include funding for national coordinators to travel interstate to run mentors' workshops, finding rooms and arranging funding for hire of rooms for workshops. It will also facilitate receipt of fees and disbursements of honoraria to mentors.

We think the situation looks rosy for our national mentoring program. It is already functioning well, with a number of mentorships now under way. Mentorship pairings are now both intrastate and interstate, and the program has attracted editors from outside Australia as well. So far, we have been able to accommodate non-Australian residents by ensuring that they are as qualified as Australians to be part of the program, and by 'attaching' them to one or other of the existing societies. We envisage no problem in the future, and welcome any opportunity to share what we believe is the most mentee-friendly mentoring program for editors in the English-speaking world.

Mentorships: Congratulations to Queensland, Western Australia and the ACT—all three have been busy developing mentorship pairings and currently have 11 mentorships up and running.

Workshops: Elizabeth and Ted are happy to run mentors' workshops wherever required, with the expectation that local coordinators will be able to run these workshops themselves later. So far, Elizabeth has run workshops in Melbourne (2), Brisbane (1) and by the end of November will also have run one each in Adelaide and Perth. Any member of any society who would like to be a mentor in our program is asked to attend at least one mentors' workshop before starting on their first pairing with a mentee, if possible. Mentoring means different things in different places and in different situations, and we need to ensure that our mentors are all 'on the same page'. The workshops are free, and you are welcome to attend more than one—either in person or by Skype. Contact your local Mentoring Coordinator for details. If you don't know who that is, contact Ted or Elizabeth.

Happy mentoring!

Ted Briggs AE

tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au
Joint National Coordinators

Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE

emmurphy@ozemail.com.au

Stop Press!

A truly 'national' Mentoring Program?

On 30 October, CSE President received an exploratory email about mentoring from the recently elected Professional Membership Coordinator in the Society of Editors (NSW).

Arising from that inquiry, NSW has been sent a package of the basic information now used by the 'national' program and all the mentoring coordinators in the other states and territories, and is in discussion with the National Coordinators about how Editors NSW can start a mentoring program for its members.

If NSW adopts and joins, that would make the Mentoring Program truly 'national'. A great achievement in only two years. Watch this space!

National survey of editors 2014

IPed has commenced a national survey of editors for 2014. Members have until **midnight Saturday 15 November** to complete the survey, which can be found [here](#).

This survey provides vital information that will help IPed and the Canberra Society of Editors to more confidently plan and deliver services and promote the profession. Many editors who found the results of previous surveys very helpful have been asking for the survey to be done again, especially to provide information about the profession and about reasonable rates for our services—although the survey covers many more matters than that.

It is very important that as many as possible take part. The more members that participate, the better informed IPed and editors' societies will be about the editing profession and the needs of members.

I urge you to set aside no more than half an hour to take part in this survey. I'm sure we will all benefit from the knowledge it will provide.

Alan Cummine
President

write | edit | index

2015 Australian Conference for Editors, Indexers, and Publishing Professionals
Canberra, Australia, 6–9 May 2015

Registrations to open soon!
Keynote speakers to be announced!
QT Canberra special accommodation offer!

Visit the conference website: writeeditindex.net.au for all details.



To advance the
profession of editing



YOU'RE INVITED TO THE CSE CHRISTMAS DINNER 2014

Calling all members! Please come along to the CSE EOY & Christmas dinner; we'd love to see you there.

Wednesday 26 November 2014. Drinks from 6 p.m at The Brassey in Barton



An evening of excellent company, great food, outstanding networking, and an engaging guest speaker, David Vernon, Chair of the Board of the ACT Writers Centre, who will regale us with tales of the centre and Canberra writing scene.

Cost: \$60 a head for pre-dinner drinks and canapés, two-course meal, tea and coffee and a generous tab for beverages—alcoholic and non-alcoholic.

Note: If you are a vegetarian or have other special dietary requirements, please purchase your ticket and email Kaaren with your requirements.

Tickets: Through TryBooking at [CSE Christmas Dinner 2014](#). Book now!

Questions? Direct these to VP Kaaren Sutcliffe at Sutcliff@smartchat.net.au

Vale Susan Butler

4 May 1948–4 October 2014

‘My precious friend and partner’, Professor Colin Butler called Susan. He writes ‘My beloved wife Susan passed away, peacefully, surrounded by Buddhist prayer, on October 4, at midday in Canberra’.



All in the CSE who knew Susan will have fond memories of her vivacity, warmth, friendliness, generosity and her interest in all aspects of the written word.

I first met her when she made possible a CSE workshop with prominent editor Pamela Hewitt: she hosted it at her and Colin’s Canberra pied-à-terre (their main home was in Tasmania) because there were not enough participants to finance premises hire. Six of us crowded around the table for one of the best workshops ever—cosy, fun and productive. And then we all did it again for a different topic the next year. Many will remember her participating in an interactive panel at the Writers Centre in May 2013 in a lively discussion between writers and editors. Kaaren Sutcliffe, who facilitated, has kindly supplied the bio then given for Susan:

Susan Woldenberg Butler does writing, editing and research. Two works of medical fiction have been published by medical publishers in the UK, one of them last year. Numerous short stories have appeared in Australia, the UK and the US. She is on the international editorial board of a US online medical humanities journal. Editing and research experience includes international development, health, food, climate change, environmentalism and social sciences. She has also developed and maintains two websites and is currently part of an editing team rewriting an Australian government website. Details are on her website: www.susanbutler.com.au

Bios are sketches only, barely hinting at the depth and richness of the subject’s activities. For a taste of those qualities, this brief review of the first of her *Black bag* trilogy is copied from her website:

Black Bag Moon: Doctors’ Tales from Dusk to Dawn drives us straight to the heart of human communication and collides head-on with the business of living and dying and the things that matter, those impacting small and large issues of daily life like neighbours and deluded loved ones, difficult patients and bureaucrats. We even encounter one of the casualties, a doctor’s wife.

General readers and healthcare professionals alike will enjoy a journey to the place ‘where the science that is medicine bumps thrillingly against human fear, passion, despair and hope’, as Dr Alec Logan said in his Foreword to *Secrets from the Black Bag*.

Much of Susan’s writing drew on the rich panoply of rural Tasmanian characters she met while closely involved with Colin’s general medical practice work there, from 1989 to 1996.

Colin is now organising publication of the last of the trilogy, *Black bag fix*, completed shortly before Susan’s death, and is looking at her ‘promising ms, *The Aftback chronicles—the secret lives of stuffed animals*’. You can see (and order) her other books on this site, too, including the very funny *More stories of Campbell Town* and her cookery books. Cooking was one of her great passions.

Susan’s other great interest and area of work was BODHI, the Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health and Insight, in Asia, which she helped found and of which Colin is Medical Director. It is under the patronage of the Dalai Lama and runs programs in, for example, dressmaking skills for girls and women, youth sexual health, animal welfare and especially in education for discriminated minorities, e.g. the Chakmas in NE India and infant-school lower-caste Dalits. You can see more at www.bodhi.net.au (where tax-deductible donations can be made in Susan’s name).

Susan’s journey started in Louisiana, USA, took her working and studying in the USA and India, where she and Colin met at a wayside stop for western Buddhists in 1985, and then to Australia. They twice visited India together in the early 1990s. Her journey and their partnership were illuminated by the principles of Buddhism.

To read Colin’s blog and other loving tributes to Susan, including one from Pamela Hewitt, go to <http://susanwoldenbergbutler.wordpress.com/>

Goodbye, Susan. Peace to you and yours.

Leanne Pattison

September general meeting



Working with graduate students

Our guest speaker at the September general meeting on Wednesday 24, was Professor Jenny Corbett, who is Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Research Training) at the Australian National University (ANU).

Throughout the lively presentation and discussion, Professor Corbett took us through many of the issues associated with completing a PhD thesis: expectations, the role of the supervisor, required skills, funding and outcomes. And of course, the ethical dilemma associated with editing a PhD thesis.

While IPed's 'Guidelines for editing research theses' and the related ANU policies set out 'the extent and nature' of assistance that can be provided, there is still confusion and misunderstanding. Not only are many academic supervisors unaware of the policies, but there is inequity in the level of funding for editing provided in the different faculties and research centres.

When completing a PhD thesis, students need to produce a professional and readable product as part of their journey to becoming a scholar. As part of this process, students need to demonstrate their original contribution to knowledge, as well as their ability to manage a research project. Importantly, they also need to be able to communicate their research process and findings—both in written and oral formats.

And this is where there are different attitudes to a student employing a professional editor. If one of the items a student is being assessed on is written communication skills, should they be seeking editing assistance at all? The university's (and to a lesser extent the supervisor's) reputation is also at stake—if a student graduates with a PhD from ANU, but in later work environments it becomes clear that their writing is not at an acceptable level, this reflects poorly on the university.

ANU has a high percentage of international students who do not have English as their first language (about 30% of PhD candidates), but there are also many domestic students who have poor writing skills. And while the policies may indicate that supervisors should be responsible for clarity, structure and internal consistency, not all supervisors would see this as their role. Time pressures on supervisors also play a part here while they ensure that the research is robust; original contribution to knowledge also has greater priority to them. In many ways, the policies are not in fact aligned with reality.

Providing greater in-house assistance to students may be part of the solution to ensure that students gain sufficiently developed writing skills. Courses available to students include referencing and how to write an abstract, but perhaps there is also a role for members of the Canberra Society of Editors to assist in this training capacity.

Professor Corbett certainly got us all thinking deeply—despite the policies—about our role as editors when it comes to PhD students, but she also opened the door for further discussion on this important topic, which we look forward to progressing.

Pam Faulks

CSE General Meetings Coordinator

Ray Bradbury on writing:

When writing, just jump off the cliff and build your wings on the way down.

The SfEP conference 2014

Editing: fit for purpose

This year's Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) conference was held in the magnificent surroundings of Royal Holloway College at London University, UK. The highly ornate building was the brainchild of Jane, wife of Thomas Holloway, a self-made multimillionaire. Jane suggested he spend some of his money on a college for women, and Royal Holloway was born, opened in 1886 by Queen Victoria and patronised since by a succession of royals, including the present Princess Royal.

CSE members at the conference, Damaris Wilson and Elizabeth Manning Murphy, were impressed by the extravagance of the architectural features, including a magnificently decorated ceiling in Founders' Hall where the conference dinner was held. More of the dinner later.



Royal Holloway's ornate architecture and the blue and white ceiling in Founders' Hall, Royal Holloway.

But to what you want to know: what speakers were there, and what did we think of them?



Robert McCrum, mid-speech.

The Whitcombe Lecture was a plenary session, and the speaker was Robert McCrum, an internationally renowned journalist with *The Observer* and editor of long standing, and an author of many books, including *My year off*, the story of his recovery from a stroke. The lecture was reminiscent of last year's lecture by Carol Fisher Saller who urged us to forget the 'doom and gloom' that was around in editing circles because there was in fact every indication that people are reading more than ever in this digital age. This would make editors more necessary than ever. Robert McCrum must have been a fly on the wall at that lecture because his theme was very similar: more people are reading in more media than ever before; more new titles are being published than ever before; and the IT industry has turned every writer into a freelance typesetter. In other words, this is not the end and not the beginning, but, in the words of his subject—the end of the beginning. His talk included a wide-ranging historical discourse, which teamed well with the tiered scholars' benches that we sat along, complete with brass-lidded inkwells—one reminder that we were in a place of learning and that writing was what our profession addresses.



Some of the shorter seminar and workshop sessions that we attended included:

Marketing tools for the freelance editor—Mary McCauley’s session was comprehensive and concentrated on five main areas: customer service, creating a commercial brand, building up a website, networking and the use of social media. Damaris found the session to be well presented, including a great set of guidelines for the editor faced with marketing their skills in this digital age.

Related to it was John Esperian’s talk on *Setting up and maintaining a website*. This was down-to-earth and very useful. He used as his example the Wordpress blog/website that is familiar to many of us, and he included helpful hints for making a website more useful, including providing a clear visual message, matching website and business-card design, writing succinctly about yourself and providing testimonials.

A particularly interesting workshop was one that really had little connection with editing—Patricia Gidney’s *Calligraphy and illumination*. This was a highlight of the conference for Elizabeth who had studied and practised this art in the past. Patricia set out the penmanship and design traditions of the craft professionally and illustrated her talk with examples of beautifully illuminated work on paper, vellum and other materials. She demonstrated her skill by using a variety of pens, including quills cut on the spot. This was an inspiring session for anyone wanting to try their hand at this beautiful form of writing.

Other sessions attended by one or other of us included Gareth Haman’s talk on *Proofreading e-books*; Melanie Thompson’s *Time for a new hat*—a partial echo of a similar session last year; Bas Aarts’s *On corpora*, which concentrated on three areas of a new research area in language studies: corpus linguistics, with emphasis on grammar, language use and language change; and Gale Winskill’s *An introduction to editing fiction: mind over matter*. A panel discussion, *Meet the client*, included speakers Jo Bottrill, Michele Staple, Amanda Vinnicombe and Annabel Wright who all gave their views on what an editor needs to know about their client in a world where the publishing landscape is changing all the time, and where clients may be from the publishing sector, business, academia or elsewhere.

We cannot conclude without a mention of the guest speaker at dinner in Fellows Hall—Mark Forsyth. His talk was enjoyed by all, and reflected his written commentaries on words and the English language. His writing includes *The etymologicon* which was a *Sunday Times* No. 1 bestseller.

In general, the fellowship and networking aspects of the conference were useful and pleasant, though we missed the inclusion of any speakers from beyond the UK. One image sticks—the old style inkwells with brass covers in the opening session’s lecture theatre, and the genuine quill pens of the Calligraphy session. In an age when handwriting is all but dead and even emails are threatened, it was a real thrill to encounter two examples of old-fashioned writing tools that symbolised that writing is not dead and that old-fashioned values are still relevant in writing and editing.

For more, visit the SfEP website at www.sfep.org.uk/conf14/

Damaris Wilson

Freelance editor, Founding member of Canberra Society of Editors

Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE

Hon Life Member, Canberra Society of Editors, Associate, Society for Editors and Proofreaders (UK)



The hand of Patricia Gidney demonstrating the art of calligraphy.

Gian goes global!

On 26 September 2014, Elizabeth Manning Murphy notched up two more 'firsts' in her long and distinguished career as an educator and linguist, including one for a homegrown Australian product: a maiden visit to Belgium and the first-ever presentation of the 'Grammar in a nutshell' workshop outside Australia to a varied group of linguists and wordsmiths at the University of Antwerp. Initially intended as a follow-up for the class of Master's in English students, the workshop attracted a number of outsiders too.



A classroom within the School of Applied Linguistics at Antwerp University was full of attentive attendees to Gian. Professor Kris Van de Poel in the red jacket is sitting on Elizabeth's right side. Purchased copies of *Effective writing* were on the tables around the room.

It's chestnut season here in autumnal Antwerp, so it's an appropriate time to be talking about nutshells and shelling out the odd 'grammatical conker', which Elizabeth certainly did to her group of 20+ attentive attendees as she took them back to the basics of English grammar, from a writer's perspective. She was in the capital of the province of Flanders as the guest of the Department of Applied Linguistics, her invitation and arrangements having been orchestrated by Professor Kris Van de Poel.

Among the comments received from attendees—each of whom received a copy of Elizabeth's *Effective writing: plain English at work* (2nd ed., 2014, Lacuna Publishing) (there's another 'first'!)—were: 'A refreshing and eye-opening view on grammar, lined with a hint of witty humour'; 'Producing writing that will have the desired impact on the reader does not require elusive skills, it is doable: that's what the workshop highlighted to me'; '... as captivating as it was practical, leading us through the maze that is English grammar ... a workshop highly recommended'; and '"Grammar in a nutshell" is long experience translated into inspiring guidance'. Fair praise indeed from attendees for whom English is either a second or a foreign language. And a fitting postlude to a successful afternoon's workshoping.

John Linnegar

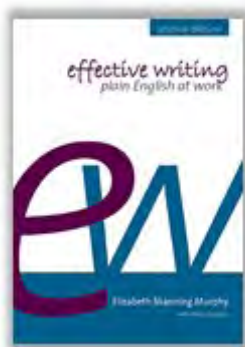
Immediate Past Chair, Professional Editors' Group, South Africa
Accredited Professional Text Editor
PhD researcher, University of Antwerp



I took this photo in the centre of Antwerp when I was there as the guest of the Applied Linguistics Department of Antwerp University at the end of September. If ever anyone had a bad case of itchy pencilitis, it was me that day! I would have loved to be able to climb up to the signboard over the grog shop with a big black felt pen to correct all the errors. I think if I ever return to Antwerp, I might set this signboard as an exercise for students at Antwerp University—find and correct all the errors on the signboard. Thanks to John Linnegar for pointing the sign out to me.

Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE
emmurphy@ozemail.com.au

Book review



Effective writing: plain English at work (second edn) by Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE with Hilary Cadman AE, published by Lacuna Publishing, Sydney, 2014; 179 pages plus index, includes illus.

Pbk at www.lacunapublishing.com and from the authors. 978-1-922198-14-3, RRP \$38.50 incl. GST.

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Effective Writing is as useful a book as you'd want.

It's a plain-language, no-nonsense guide to written communication for a number of audiences: those for whom English is a second language, a student wanting to overcome the current shortfalls of English language education in schools in Australia, and those learning the craft of office communication—particularly in the public service.

Well set out and easy to navigate around, it provides the right balance between being an easy DIY guide to good written communication and an explanation of the intricacies of English grammar should you wish to delve a bit deeper.

It has a nice introduction that does not pontificate but succinctly introduces the essential elements of effective writing. The short self-assessment after the introduction is a great idea, sowing the seeds of self-doubt in the reader and enticing them to actually read the sections where those doubts lie. Although the book continues with activities to challenge the reader, the tone is pleasantly professional and not 'schoolmarmish'.

One suggestion for the next edition (and I don't doubt there will be one) is to include an example of a brief. While there are publications (particularly in-house publications) which are specialist guides to office and public service correspondence, an example here would not go astray.

Finally, I wouldn't wonder that it's proven a handy reference for the professional. I'll bet there have been, and will be, many occasions where a professional editor will say to himself or herself, 'Hmmm ... I wonder what Elizabeth and Hilary say about that?', and reach out for their copy.

(BTW, the reviewer is not a professional editor, just someone who daily turns out the most turgid of public service writing. For this reason, this review's grammar might not be up-to-scratch. I invite youse all to correct it while I go back to consulting *Effective Writing*.)

Dallas Stow

Grammar, punctuation, and language change—a media portrayal

Few topics incite such fervid sentiment as English language change. It is perhaps as polemical and divisive as politics or religion. Many linguists labour to promote non-prescriptive approaches to language use, arguing that all language varieties are of equal value, regardless of their social or political associations. Each variety is a robust and internally consistent linguistic system. But despite this noble endeavour, there is something in many of us that rails against 'misuse'.

Certainly there is no shortage of language commentators. A recent article, '[The death of grammar and punctuation](#)' in *The Canberra Times* by Alexandra Cain, takes a humorous approach, feigning to embrace language simplifications and misuse. 'I've come to the conclusion we should stop whinging and accept the fact proper language is dying'. Weary of futile resistance, she suggests we 'accept our fate and embrace poor use of language'. She proposes that we eliminate apostrophes altogether, accept misspelling of homonyms, ignore split infinitives and numerals for numbers below ten, and embrace text spellings like 'luv', 'tomoz' and 'wot'.

A feature of many lay commentaries on language is misuse of the term 'grammar', mistakenly equating it with spelling. Cain proposes instituting a 'new language' called Manglish, but what she is suggesting is orthographic reform (e.g. to accept 'wot' for 'what'), not a new language. In jest, she exhorts the reader to resolve the complexity of spelling homophones such as 'there', 'their' and 'they're' by rendering them homographically as 'there' to convey all the three different meanings. 'Just pick one and be done with it', she says. She also asks whether

punctuation is needed at all as opposed to the IPEd website example, 'Let's eat grandma' versus 'Let's eat, grandma'.

The same mistake is made by pop parodist Weird Al in his satirical attack on 'Word Crimes'. The song begins, 'Everybody shut up!', and goes on in an abrasive, didactic tone to suggest, 'If you can't write in the proper way ... literacy's your mission'. And help is at hand as he raps:

'That's why I think it's a good time
To learn some grammar
Now, did I stammer?
Work on that grammar'.

His litany of transgressions includes omission of the Oxford comma, incorrect spelling, misuse of quotation marks and writing numbers as numerals.

As linguist Lauren Squires comments, in her [Languageblog](#) post responding to Weird Al's skit, 'this reflects a widespread divide between the use of the term "grammar" in everyday language and "grammar" by linguists'. Squires is not enamoured of Weird Al's sense of humour. She sees it as encouraging a sense of linguistic supremacy—'Many linguists are having a hard time laughing with Word Crimes: to do so feels like complicity in an ongoing project of linguistic discrimination that intersects with class, race, and other kinds of discrimination'.

Standard English has no inherent higher value than any other variety of English but, as the language of power and privilege, command of this variety is advantageous. Speakers of standard English have a vested interest as gatekeepers. Even those who speak standard English natively have to work to acquire formal-register standard English. As Squires writes, 'the notion of "Proper English" typically serves to prop up the already-privileged speakers whose native language variety it is (sort of) based on'. Rather than imparting privilege per se, a lack of command of standard English can result in discrimination.

Language change is inevitable. Just ask any parent of teenagers. Rachel Clun gives an overview of 'Teenglish', extracted from the latest release of new words from Oxford Dictionaries, in her article '[Oxford Dictionaries helping parents out with teen slang](#)'. This new lexicon contains adjectives (adorbs: adorable), verbs (to mansplain: a man explains something to someone, usually a woman, in a condescending or patronising way), abstract nouns (douchbaggy: obnoxious or contemptible behaviour) and more of the odious textspeak that bothers Weird Al so much (LOL and SMH). But Clun reassures the reader, 'Don't worry; your proper English is safe'.

Change is unsettling. It engenders either adaptation or obsolescence. Perhaps vehement prescriptive sentiment derives from this uncomfortable fact. Weird Al looks for a linguist ally in his language crusade. 'You should hire some cunning linguist to help you distinguish what's proper English'. But those cunning linguists are in fact his archenemy, advocating as they do the equality of all language varieties, and asserting that all living languages change, constantly.

Alexandra Cain (*The Canberra Times*), after concluding that 'proper language' is inevitably dying, encourages us to submit to the momentum of change and 'accept our fate.' Interestingly though, she betrays an unstoppable urge to do the very thing she purports to abandon. She proposes the creation of 'a new institution dedicated to enacting new language rules', with the implication that the new rules, once enacted, will be enshrined and fixed in this new institution. At least language change will finally be stopped in its tracks, even if it comes at a cost of conceding substantial ground.

Wiley discount to IPEd members

Wiley has offered society members a discount on the newly released 3rd Edition of *The Australian Editing Handbook*. This edition includes information about the new challenges that editors face in the digital age including: editing on-screen, digital publishing, handling ebooks and print media versus online publications. Wiley is sending a review copy of the book to IPEd so we will provide further details in due course. In the meantime, here is information about the discount offered.

Society members will receive a 20% discount off the RRP, with the offer expiring at the end of the year.

If members would like more information about the book or to make an order, visit www.wiley.com. To receive the discount, enter Promo code 'IPEd' at the checkout.

Margaret Telford

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A distinct moral tone infuses many opinions on language use and change, invoking the concept of what is 'proper'. Many of the 86 comments to Cain's article speak scornfully about the sins of poor language use. They impute such character flaws as laziness and sloppiness. 'Blunt tool' opines that 'incorrect, lazy, sloppy use of language blunts a very useful tool, and allows the reader to make some disparaging assumptions about the writer.' 'Florence' complains that 'the language used in text messages (R U coming, etc.) is extremely discourteous to the receiver by assuming that the receiver is as illiterate as the sender.' This is a strange point though, as the use of abbreviations in this context is surely about saving space and time rather than an indication of demeaning assumptions about the recipient's literacy level. On the contrary, it assumes a high degree of literacy in being able to 'unzip' the abbreviated code.

Lauren Squires identifies a message in Weird Al's song 'that there is a right way to speak/write, and if you don't do things that way, you're a bad person (or a sewer person? or a person with a disability?) who should not breed'. Weird Al accuses the perpetrators of Word Crimes of being childish, stupid, incompetent and physically challenged. There is such an intolerant, aggressive mood to his rant, culminating in a threat of violence, 'That makes me literally want to smack a crow bar through your stupid head', that it leaves you wondering which party he is sending up: the Word Crime perpetrators or the 'word law' enforcers? Probably both.

Cain's aspiration, 'I'd also have my way with numbers', sounds almost sexual, as though language change is akin to submitting to deviant instincts. This suggests a puritanical view, a sense that language innovations debase both the language and the user, and that we are all burdened with this sinful proclivity against which we need to be constantly vigilant.

Cain is getting to the heart of the matter when she contemplates, 'Although the pedants may disagree, maybe we should accept there's no right or wrong way to use language'. Language is a complex phenomenon. It is as much about expressing identity and enacting social relationships as it is about conveying a particular message. Language is a human endowment. A person need not have perfected formal-register, standard English, nor must they have internalised a style manual, to be entitled to self-expression. A commenter to Cain's article, 'gman', insists that 'punctuation and grammar [are] not as important as the message'.

It is worth recognising there are not only different varieties of language but also different registers of use within each particular language. Which register is appropriate will be determined by the domain of use. Just as eloquent prose would be impractical and rather surprising in a text message, 'textspeak' and incorrect punctuation are unlikely to appear in a published textbook. As Associate Professor Louise Ravelli counsels Cain, 'I don't think grammar and punctuation will [ever] disappear'. We can allow technically incorrect language use without worrying that it will taint the language or render the writing and editing professions obsolete.

For that matter, even the professionals don't always get it right.

Amusingly, a *Sydney Morning Herald* article '[Good English language skills required for this job](#)' by Jim Bright underscores the pivotal role that good language use plays in career success, but starts with an undetected errant note, 'Kerrie Leishman illo to come next week'. How vital, the editing profession!

Melissa Crowther

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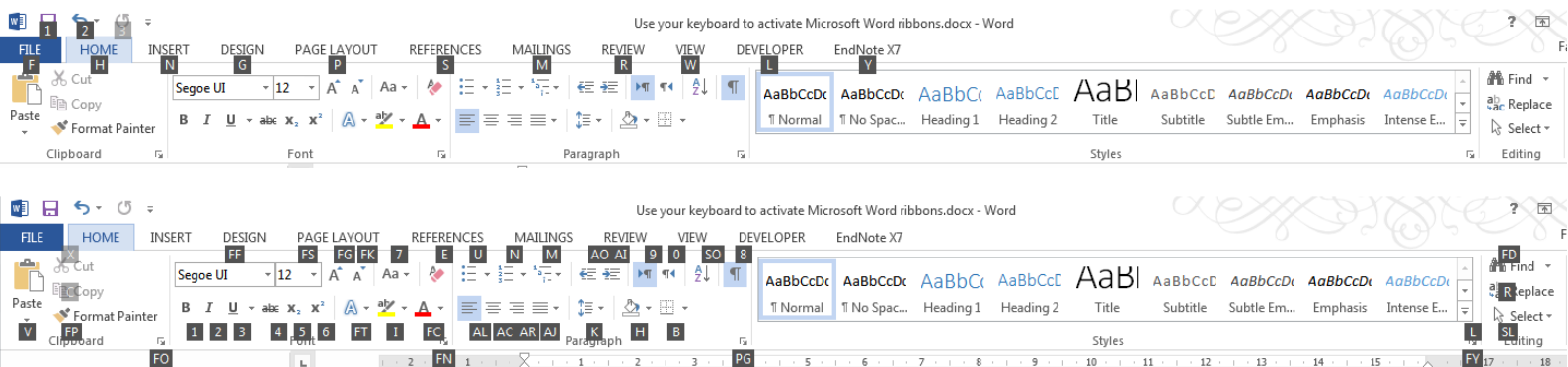
Kurt Vonnegut on the semicolon:

Here is a lesson in creative writing. First rule: do not use semicolons. They are transvestite hermaphrodites representing absolutely nothing. All they do is show you've been to college.

Taking in the shortcuts

Use your keyboard to activate Microsoft Word Ribbons

Ribbons, first introduced in Microsoft Office 2007, are customisable, graphical control interfaces combining toolbars and menu bars. In Word, Ribbons are organised into eight different Tabs: **File**, **Home**, **Insert**, **Page Layout**, **References**, **Mailings**, **Review**, and **View**. Additional Tabs will appear contextually if pictures, tables, shapes, or charts are selected; or if an installed add-on is activated. In my screenshot, I have a Tab for **EndNote X7** and I've turned on the **Developer** Tab by customisation.



Habitually, you would use the mouse to click on different Tabs to access the associated controls. However, to speed up editing tasks, you can press a few keys instead to access Tabs and controls—your fingers are on the keyboard already if you're a touch-typist! You'd save a lot of time if your hand avoids moving between mouse and keyboard for every little change you make.

It sounds like gibberish if I ask you to select a sentence and press the following keys once on your keyboard—**Alt + H + FF**—and then type Times New Roman (or times new ...), or try **Alt + H + AJ**—but magic happens if you follow my commands. Logic is mostly behind the sequence of commands to help you remember them—they're not completely nonsense. Once you figured out the underlying logic, you won't even look at the letters (KeyTips). Let me explain.

Pressing Alt or F10 once and releasing them activates the first level of control on Ribbons, highlighting each Tab by showing you KeyTips. The following KeyTips or 'access keys' appear for the corresponding Tabs: **F** for **File**; **H**, **Home**; **N**, **Insert**; **G**, **Design**; **P**, **Page Layout**; etc. Now, if you press any of these KeyTips, you'll activate the corresponding Tab and access the second (sometimes leading to third) level of control which is the actual function you want to achieve. For example, after pressing H, you'll access the controls under the **Home** Tab. These include **FF** for **Font Type**; **FS**, **Font Size**; **PG**, **Paragraph settings**; etc. Thus, to change the font type, you'd go to **Home** Tab after pressing **Alt + H**, then **FF** to activate the **Font Type**, and simply type in the font you want, or press the Down Arrow to see the Font list, or browse it by using Up or Down Arrow keys. Once you typed Times New Roman or chose your font, simply press Enter. Now the font of the selected text is changed. Try the second example yourself and see what happens. Try these last two without selecting any text and see what happens: **Alt + W + Q + E + 150** or **Alt + W + S**. Can you figure out the logic behind the sequence of commands? Can you remember them? Visit articles on keyboard shortcuts in previous issues too to get hints. At times, they all work together—Ribbons and Shortcuts.

Watch this [YouTube](#) video for American-accented instructions and examples on using the Ribbons, if you'd prefer.

Farid Rahimi
Newsletter Editor

As happens to most of us from time to time, I continue to receive my share of humorous and interesting 'spam' emails forwarded by friends with a bit of time on their hands. Some of the emails are clever as well as funny, particularly those where 'wordplay' is involved.

I kept this one from last year. My interest grew and my smile widened as I kept reading, and it made me wonder how many other words can be five (5) different parts of speech! Perhaps you other linguists and dictionary-junkies can tell us.

If this one missed your own inbox, I reproduce it here (with a few minor tweaks) for your entertainment.

An amazing two-letter word ... UP

This two-letter word in English has more meanings than any other two-letter word, and the word is 'UP'. It's listed in the dictionary as five parts of speech: prep., adv., adj., n., v. It's easy to understand the preposition UP, meaning towards the sky or at the top of the list. But when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake UP?

At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP, and why are the officers UP for election (if there is a tie, it is a toss-UP), and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report?

We call UP our friends, brighten UP a room, tidy UP the desk, polish UP the silver, warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and fix UP the old car.

At other times, this little word has special meanings. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UP excuses. And of course you can be unfortunate enough to get into trouble with a simple slip-UP and end UP in a police line-UP!

To be dressed is one thing, but to be dressed UP is special.

And this UP is confusing: a drain must be opened UP because it's blocked UP!

We open UP a store in the morning but we close it UP at night. We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP.

To learn about the proper uses of UP, look UP the word UP in the dictionary. In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes UP almost 1/4 of the page and can add UP to about thirty definitions.

If you're UP to it, you might try building UP a list of the many ways UP is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don't give UP, you may wind UP with (UP to) a hundred or more.

When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out, we say it is clearing UP. When it does rain, the earth soaks it UP. When it doesn't rain for a while, things dry UP.

As dutiful Australians, we save UP for a home but then have to UPSkill constantly to pay UP.

One could go on and on, but I'll wrap it UP for now, because I don't want to stay UP any longer! My time's UP.

But before I shut UP, one more thing. What's the first thing you do in the morning and the last thing you do at night?

'U'

'P'

Did that one crack you UP?

If you forward this to everyone in your address book, you are UP to no good. Better to send it only to those you choose to look UP in your address book. It's UP to you. So don't screw UP.

I hope you've all managed to keep UP with me!

Now let me wish everyone 'compliments of the season' ... because Christmas is coming UP.

Ara Nalbandian

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All articles must be in .doc format.

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