



... the word

Newsletter of the Society of Editors (SA)
ISSN 1833-3796
March–April 2013

Next meeting

Tuesday 23 April 2013

6.30 pm for finger food

7.30 pm meeting begins

SA Writers' Centre

2nd Floor, 187 Rundle Street, Adelaide

Access is via the stairs from Rundle Street or by lift accessible through Café Brunelli

Presentation to new Accredited Editors

At this meeting members who successfully gained accreditation in 2012 will receive their certificates. To celebrate the occasion we will be serving finger food and drinks between 6.30 and 7.30 pm. All are welcome.

All about print-on-demand

Guest speaker for our meeting is **Stephen Lewis**, the principal of Digital Print Australia, a company he founded as a boutique graphic design and typesetting facility in 1973. As printers struggle to find or create new markets in our electronic world, print-on-demand offers an opportunity for all to experience the joy of print in realistic quantities and at realistic prices. Stephen will tell us how it's done and how editors can make best use of the print-on-demand technology. There'll be plenty of time for questions.

If you can join us for pre-meeting drinks and nibbles at 6.30 pm at the Writers' Centre, please email to <rsvp@editors-sa.org.au> by **Friday 19 April**.

Next editors' lunch

Tuesday 21 May, 12 noon

The venue (north of the city) will be advised by general email. Suggestions for a northern venue should be sent to Michael Vnuk <newsletter@editors-sa.org.au>.

Next workshop

Saturday 1 June, full day

Editing for the web

Presenter: Elizabeth Spiegel

Cost: members, \$70; concession, \$50

More details and the registration form will be sent to all members.

Date is now confirmed. The last newsletter said March or April, but the venue was unavailable on preferred days.

The presidential word

Loene Doube

Racking my brains for something interesting to write, and trying to sort out boxes of old society papers, I came across copies of early editions of ... the word. Interesting reading. The earliest one I have is from May 1990, a few months after the society was officially formed. Here are some snippets from the first years of ... the word.

1990

- First president, Pamela Ball, with a committee of four.
- Second general meeting held in March 1990; membership was 41.
- The committee was called a council and had four members.
- Subcommittee formed to create a freelance register; Pamela Ball coordinating.
- Award rates for editors set by the Industrial Relations Commission: \$19,742–\$28,549, for trainee book editor to senior book editor.
- Members in 1990 who are still members include Pamela Ball, Karen Disney and Celia Jellett.
- Speakers in 1990 included Maureen Colman (on the NSW Society of Editors), Mike Page (his life as editor, writer and publisher), Brian Matthews (working with editors), Christobel Mattingley (issues encountered in the production of *Survival in our own land*).

1991

- More than 60 members by February.
- First workshop held: in May, on editing; cost, \$20.
- First edition of the freelance register launched. (Note that Don Dunstan launched the third edition in 1994.)

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- Whole-day seminars from State Print (some of us remember State Print!), on basic grammar, spelling, punctuation and letter writing; basic editing techniques; report writing; and advanced editing techniques; cost, \$75.
- Speakers: George Turner (of *The Australian concise Oxford dictionary* fame), Vic Potticary and Harry Borysewicz (computerised printing, graphic design of print publications), Garry Benson (the future of publishing: desktop publishing and CD-ROM [some things do change!]), Jane Arms (interventionist editing: failures and successes), Peter Goldsworthy (publishing anecdotes, insights [!] into editors).
- Overseas howlers noted, eg on a Swiss restaurant menu: 'Our wines leave you with nothing to hope for'.

1992

- The first mention of a national 'federation' of editors societies; SA decided to support the idea at the April general meeting.
- Speakers: Nick Hudson (of *Modern Australian usage* fame; life in Australian publishing [I bet **that** has changed]), a panel of members (the business of editing), Tom Burton (problems in English usage), Valmai Hankel (State Library treasures), Peter Heaven (paper), Gail Mahon and Fij Miller (proprietors of Kids Books, on books and bookselling).
- In February, an editing master class with Jane Arms.
- A workshop on editing in September.
- A lovely quote from a meeting (thank you, Jill Kitson and Celia Jellett): 'to know you have summoned order and sense out of a thicket of prose is a pleasure undiminished by lack of praise'.

One more snippet: in December 1995, editors at UniSA set up a national email list (MAILSERV@...) for editors and invited members to join. Who said e-networking was a modern phenomenon? And the last line of the item said, 'For more information, phone [can you believe it!] Loene on ...'.

And now back to the present where, as usual, there is always lots to read in our newsletter about society activities and editing in general.

Calendar for 2013

General meetings

Venue: usually SA Writers' Centre seminar room

Time: 7.30 pm to approximately 9.30 pm

Pre-meeting dinner (optional): 6 pm

Dates:

- Tuesday 23 April – see page 1 for details
- Tuesday 18 June – note change of date (was 19 June)
- Monday 26 August – annual general meeting, with speakers discussing Hansard
- Thursday 17 October – editors' book club
- Wednesday 4 December – Christmas function, venue to be advised

Workshops

Venue: usually SA Writers' Centre seminar room

Time: morning, afternoon or full day

Day: usually on a Saturday or Sunday

Dates:

Saturday 1 June – see page 1 for some details

Saturday 10 August – practical editing (half day)

Late October – tentative slot

Lunches

Venue: various restaurants or cafes around Adelaide; details to be advised closer to the date

Time: 12 noon (nominal starting time, but you can arrive when convenient)

Dates: every second month; next one: Tuesday 21 May

If you have some ideas for speakers, workshops or other activities, please contact the society's program coordinator, Pamela Ball <pam.ball@bigpond.net.au>.

Conference news

The 6th IPEd National Editors Conference, 10–12 April in Perth, is almost here. Two workshops are booked out ('XML for editors' and 'Tools for onscreen editing'), but places remain in the two-part freelancing workshop.

For all conference information, including a list of the 170-plus attendees (at last count), visit the conference website at <www.ipedperth2013.com.au>. You can also follow all the presentations and plenaries as they happen at Twitter (#ipedcon2013), and read about each day's events at the conference blog (which will be set up on the conference website). Our own Katy McDevitt is the official blogger for the conference.

The next issue of ... *the word* (May–June) will have conference reports.



Society bursaries for the conference

Applications for the bursaries to help members of the Society of Editors (SA) attend the 6th IPEd National Editors Conference closed on Friday 15 February.

The applications were assessed by a panel of two committee members (the president and the vice president) and one distinguished editor. As some applications were from committee members, it was felt that a third party would add integrity to the assessment process. Applicants were notified of the outcome of the assessment on Friday 1 March.

The bursary for an editor with less than 3 years' experience was not awarded.

The bursary for an accredited editor was awarded to Michael Vnuk.

Note that all members who were financial at 1 January 2013 and who attend the conference – except the bursary recipient – will receive the general subsidy of \$250 after their attendance has been confirmed by the conference organisers.

February meeting report

Editing theses – the joy and the challenge

Michael Vnuk

The panel for the evening comprised three editors: Margaret Bowden, Diane Brown (participating chair) and Valerie Williams. Diane began with a provocative introduction, which then opened out to a three-way discussion. The talk was well attended (about 30 present), many issues were raised by panellists and the audience, and many questions were asked. This report covers only some of the main points.

The three editors bring a range of differing experience to their editing of research theses. Among other things, Margaret was a tutor for Aboriginal education, Diane completed her own PhD, and Valerie worked in an engineering firm. All have edited for many clients.

Although their working methods differed a little, they emphasised the need to follow the thesis-editing guidelines.¹ They check and edit syntax, sentence flow, paragraphs, punctuation, repetition and so on, but the structure, content and theoretical arguments are the responsibility of the principal supervisor. However, sometimes it is hard to draw the line.

Requests for editing theses come from supervisors or students, or even from examiners after a thesis has been submitted. Diane always deals with the supervisor and seeks formal permission from the supervisor. She also asks the supervisor to sign off on the thesis version for editing. Institutions may also have their own guidelines or requirements for editing (of varying quality), including specified style manuals.

The previous thesis-editing guidelines required editing to be done on paper, but the current guidelines allow editing to be done electronically. Questions were asked about whether students might accept all the editor's changes in an electronic document without any checking. The guidelines specifically state:

If the thesis is to be edited electronically, the editor and student need to agree on the process by which the student will check each suggested change before accepting it.

Valerie thinks that most students will check all changes. Margaret and Diane send a version with tracked changes to the supervisor. Valerie highlights locations of comments and puts them in a separate document to ensure they are reviewed. Diane asks students to reply to all comments.

When any work comes back for further editing, the editors all said that they need to check it carefully for changes. Margaret specifically asks for changes. There were stories of chapters being rewritten or new ones added. Besides causing editing headaches, such changes affect the editing timeline and cost.

The editors have quite different working patterns. Valerie does some editing chapter by chapter. She usually sees improvement in the chapters as the

students absorb the concepts from her earlier editing. Margaret and Diane prefer to work on the whole thesis.

How long it takes to edit a thesis depends on many factors – length, writing quality, subject matter, language difficulties and other editing commitments – but the editors prefer to have at least two or three weeks, especially if they need to fit in their other work projects.

When it comes to the formatting of text, the editors do varying amounts, or they note what needs to be done, or they charge for formatting.

How much to charge for editing is difficult, and the panellists and some audience members discussed various approaches. One viewpoint was that a university funding editing should pay professional rates, given the fees they charge students. Another viewpoint was that students usually gain considerably from their study and ought to be prepared to pay professional rates if they request the work. But others said that rates are not that simple because of financial hardship among students.

Receiving payment can be complicated and delayed due to the differing funding and accounting systems in most Australian universities. Valerie said that when a student paid, they were usually prompt and reliable.

In the past, many students had their thesis looked at informally by a family member or a friend. Although this 'editing' was variable in quality, it often served a useful purpose. Overseas students, for whom English may be their second or even third language, might not have a network of expert English speakers to call on. For them, professional editing is very important. And it seems that native English speakers also need more help these days.

Dealing with non-native speakers means that the editors have to communicate their editing suggestions with language that is simple and clear (and of course courteous), especially if done by email. Valerie recalled a thesis which referred repeatedly to a 'visibility study'. Eventually she realised it was a 'feasibility study'.

As to the question about what topics they could work on, the editors seemed to tackle a wide range of subjects, but not always scientific subjects. Valerie edits mainly scientific subjects, but advises students that equations and formulae are not in her field of expertise.

All three mentioned the breadth of topics that made the editing interesting and enjoyable. Diane referred particularly to the 'mind-stretch' of editing a variety of research topics from many academic disciplines.

Editing theses is not all plain sailing and we did hear stories of technical disasters, insufficient supervision, rushed jobs, and manuscripts that had been not properly reviewed by supervisors before editing commenced.

Some students have become personal friends. One of Valerie's clients lent her a laptop at a crucial time. Margaret has enjoyed some fantastic food. Other clients have continued to send work for editing on returning to their home countries or as they have advanced in their careers. Satisfied clients have often recommended the editors to other students.

The panel gave us a picture of a busy, stimulating field of editing. Although their work has its ups and downs, I felt that the editors gain immense satisfaction from helping students with research that will benefit the students themselves and their wider communities.

¹ The latest guidelines were revised by IPEd and approved by the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies on 12 November 2010. See <iped-editors.org/Editing_theses.aspx>.

IPed Notes

November 2012 – February 2013

This is a regular news item from **Charles Houen**, company secretary of the Institute of Professional Editors Limited. For more information, visit <www.iped-editors.org> or contact <secretary@iped-editors.org>.

Meetings

The IPed Council met six times during the period covered by these notes, on 4 November, 2 December, 6, 13 and 20 January, and 3 February. All meetings were by teleconference. The unusual number of meetings in January was necessary to handle matters relating to the IPed review, the Accreditation Board paper on exam futures, and short-term funding priorities.

Due to the heavy schedule for the IPed Council, these IPed Notes cover both November–December 2012 and January–February 2013.

Accreditation exam 2012

The accreditation exam was held on 13 October and went well. 75 candidates sat the exam, including one person in Spain. The successful candidates numbered 60, an 80% pass rate. The accreditation certificates were posted on 21 February, direct to some new Accredited Editors, and to the societies for presentation to others at meetings.

IPed review

In August 2012, IPed Council established a working party to review IPed and its functions, surveying member societies about IPed's relationship with them. From this, the working party developed four models for IPed's future role and relationships with the societies. The working party report and an overview of the survey results were presented to the Council on 6 January. In February, a second phase working party has elaborated on those models. At the national conference IPed plenary session on Friday 12 April, these models will be presented and attendees will be invited to have small group discussions and ask questions of Council and society representatives. That session will provide further information for Council, through consultation with the societies, to develop the model options to be voted on in a referendum late in 2013.

Accreditation Board: Exam futures

On 13 January, the Accreditation Board presented to Council a paper, 'Achieving a more sustainable accreditation exam'. This paper outlined possible options for future exam delivery, and means of making the accreditation exams more sustainable in terms of volunteer effort, cost and the exam development process. The paper will be presented at the national conference in April, as the first step in determining the attitudes of society members to exam-delivery methods and costs.

Australian Standards for Editing Practice, second edition

The revised edition of the standards was approved, and in February the design and print specification were finalised. The standards are being printed, according to

the number of copies requested by the societies, and IPed is also providing 200 copies for the attendee kits at the national conference in April. A printable version will be made available on the IPed website.

Improved IPed governance and planning

At its February meeting, Council approved a number of new and revised policies to improve IPed governance and planning. These are:

Expenditure policy (revised)

Delegated financial authority policy

Standing committees and working groups policy

It was also agreed to develop position descriptions for Council positions. The Honorary Treasurer position description was agreed.

National Conference, Perth, 10–12 April 2013

As at 28 February, 143 people had registered for the conference, plus others who opted to not have their names listed on the website. IPed will have a plenary session on Friday 12 April as described above under 'IPed review'.

National Conference, Canberra, 2015

Council has approved a proposal by the Canberra Society of Editors to host the national conference in Canberra in 2015. This will be a joint conference with the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers (ANZSI). Planning for this conference is under way.

Is this the best headline ever?

In 1986, British Labour politician Michael Foot was appointed to lead a committee on nuclear disarmament. The London *Times* reported this under the headline:

Foot heads arms body

The subeditor responsible, Martyn Cornell, is quoted on the internet as saying: 'I certainly wasn't going to get "nuclear" or "disarmament" or "committee" to fit.'

Cryptic clue for editors

Here's a cryptic crossword clue which looks like it might have been written by an editor:

Amend 'you am' to 'you are'. How? (6)

It's not easy. The answer is explained on page 8.

Weird beige rules

Loene Doube spotted this statement on the internet:

I before E ...

except when you run a feisty heist
on a weird beige foreign neighbour

Actually, the version I learnt was a more nuanced rule:

I before E,

except after C, when the sound is EE

But even this rule has exceptions, eg *seize* and *fancies*.

On drafts

Joseph M Williams has definite views on the purposes of drafts in his *Style: toward clarity and grace* (1990). This passage is from the preface (page x):

When we create a first draft, we should be most concerned with getting onto the page something that reflects what we had in mind when began to write and, if we are lucky, something new that we didn't.

But once we have made clear to ourselves what ideas, points, and arguments might be available, we then have to reshape that first draft to provide what our readers need. We write a first draft for ourselves; the drafts thereafter increasingly for the reader. That is the central objective of this book: to show how a writer quickly and efficiently transforms a rough first draft into a version crafted for the reader.

Shedding light

It is almost a given that research papers include statements like 'further research is needed to resolve the problem'. So a variation is refreshing. Here is Georgia Green's somewhat resigned assessment of her work:

This paper was undertaken in an attempt to shed light on some very mysterious problems. I fear I have done little more than show which lamps have cords too short to reach the outlets.

Green, G (1972) 'Some observations on the syntax and semantics of instrumental verbs', Papers from the 8th Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society, pp 83-97.

Brevity

'Brevity is the soul of wit', says Polonius in *Hamlet*, and 'Omit needless words' is an injunction often quoted from Strunk and White (*The Elements of Style*). But sometimes being brief is not always good.

Calvin Coolidge, the US president from 1923 to 1929², was known for being uncommunicative – although anyone who can come up with the line 'The business of America is business', as he did, must have some communication skills. One of his nicknames was 'Silent Cal', and the announcement of his death prompted a Hollywood star to ask, 'How did they know?'

His minimalist speaking style is the subject of many stories, the truths of which are hard to confirm. In this respect he seems similar to Reverend Spooner, who did indeed utter some spoonerisms, but surely not all those attributed to him.

An oft-repeated story about Coolidge, which comes in several variants, concerns a woman who approached him at a function. When she announced that she had bet

that she could make him say more than two words to her, Coolidge responded with a dismissive 'You lose.'

Finally – after an introduction that really should have been briefer – here's a story about Coolidge of relevance to editors. (Again, it's hard to confirm if it is strictly true.) The Cambridge scholar FL Lucas wrote about brevity in his essay, 'On the Fascination of Style' (1960):

But clarity and brevity, though a good beginning, are only a beginning. By themselves, they may remain bare and bleak. When Calvin Coolidge, asked by his wife what the preacher had preached on, replied 'Sin,' and, asked what the preacher had said, replied, 'He was against it,' he was brief enough. But one hardly envies Mrs Coolidge.

What they say about editors

A regular feature to highlight what people – authors, reviewers and others – say about editors.

The editor as lifeline

William Golding, the man who wrote *Lord of the flies*, is the subject of a book by John Carey entitled (somewhat predictably) *William Golding: the man who wrote 'Lord of the flies'*. When the book was reviewed in the *Economist* (5 September 2009), the reviewer noted Golding's important relationship with his editor:

Fear, he [Carey] believes, was Golding's sharpest emotion, the fear of writing itself being one of the worst. His books emerged painfully through many revisions, each draft being a way of postponing the final one. His tactful, patient, encouraging editor at Faber, Charles Monteith, was a lifeline to him, a friend on whom he relied more than any other during the second half of his life.

The editor as slasher (almost)

The April 2012 issue of *Blue Pencil*, the newsletter of the Society of Editors (NSW), reports a talk by journalist Rick Feneley to that society. Now working with the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Feneley admits to having the 'rather naive thought' at the age of 26, while he was a night editor at the *Daily Telegraph*, of writing the 'great Australian novel' during his daytimes.

The great Australian novel was slow work, taking me five years to complete. And it was not so great. It might have been better if the Australian publishing industry could afford to pay more for book editors. My editor was terrific – but her fee was something insulting and they could not keep her on the case for long enough to slash another 100 pages; which would have been a big improvement.

Fiction is nothing less than the subtlest instrument for self-examination and self-display that Mankind has invented yet.
—John Updike (1991)

[This lofty sentiment is a rather daunting statement to an editor if they have never edited any fiction.]

² Coolidge was vice president until the sudden death of Warren Harding. He was reelected in his own right in 1924, but did not stand for another term in 1928.

New editor needed

Michael Vnuk

Here is your chance to be more active in the society and to practise your editing skills.

The position of editor of ... *the word*, the newsletter of the Society of Editors (SA), will become available later this year. I have told the committee that I will resign from the committee at the next AGM (26 August). By then, I will have served five years on the committee, with two years as newsletter editor. The new editor will begin with the September–October 2013 issue.

The newsletter editor is a committee member, although this is not essential for the position. Committee meetings occur monthly. The newsletter editor does not usually have many other committee tasks.

I have been preparing the newsletter in Microsoft Word, converting it to a PDF with Word's in-built PDF function and then sending it to the committee member responsible for emailing items to all society members. I also print a few paper copies to post to institutions such as the State Library of South Australia.

The newsletter has six issues per year. I have aimed to publish by halfway through the nominal period covered by each issue (eg by 1 April for the March–April issue), although work or family commitments sometimes interfere. The issue notifying the AGM must be sent to members more than three weeks before the AGM to fulfil a requirement of the society's constitution.

The newsletter's contents comprise three types of material, as follows:

Regular required material needs to be in every issue. This material is usually prepared by others and requires a small amount of editing and checking:

- notices of coming meetings, workshops, lunches and other society events (prepared by other members)
- reports of the above events (we usually try to involve other members in preparing these reports)
- calendar information (from the program organiser)
- the presidential word (prepared by the president)
- IPEd Notes (supplied by the secretary of IPEd)
- general society information and contact details (standard material at the back of each newsletter, which rarely changes).

Occasional required material covers a range of items that depend on what is happening around the issue date, such as the following. Editing requirements vary:

- list of members (once a year, from the membership database officer)
- profiles of new members (new members join us at irregular intervals, but I have been less than comprehensive in my reporting)
- conference news and conference reports
- exam news.

Optional material is optional. The editor has to consider space available, time available for editing, the balance of material already in the newsletter, the likely value to members, and so on. I have aimed to have some

optional material in each issue for interest and because I like to assemble it. Members have contributed some optional material, and I have found or created the rest. The editing of this material can vary a lot. Items include:

- notices of other workshops, talks, etc
- positions vacant (depending on closing date)
- member news
- articles or items on editing from books, newspapers, websites, blogs, other society newsletters, etc
- reviews of books and other resources
- letters
- cartoons, quotes and other fillers.

The editing required for newsletter items ranges from almost none (after all, some material comes from careful editors) to major, especially if outside material needs to be shortened or adjusted to fit the newsletter's style. General editing includes layout and page-fitting. I also send a near-final draft to the committee for checking, especially for factual errors. Depending on individuals' availability, I receive a few responses which always provide useful amendments.

Although the newsletter is sent by email, it is designed as if it were to be printed. Perhaps the newsletter could change to take advantage of technology. For instance, the newsletter could be a briefer document of summaries or headlines which are all linked to the full article or notice on the society's website or on other websites. This type is becoming common for the newsletters of many organisations, and companies like MailChimp provide free software to help with this approach.

Perhaps the newsletter could appear monthly. Perhaps it needs more graphics or photos. Perhaps it could be prepared by an editorial team rather than an individual. Perhaps it needs a different emphasis or a wider coverage of editing matters. All of these ideas are possibilities which need to be determined by the new editor in association with the committee.

Editing the society's newsletter is interesting and worthwhile, and is good practice for any editor. Think about whether you could be the next editor.

If you need to know more about editing the newsletter, contact me <newsletter@editors-sa.org.au> or the president <SAPresident@editors-sa.org.au>.

Other help needed

If the role of newsletter editor is not to your liking this year, then you could volunteer next year. Alternatively, you could help the society in other ways. The committee is always looking for people to help in any capacity, particularly with our general meetings. And you don't have to be a committee member.

Contact the president <SAPresident@editors-sa.org.au> if you wish to help.



The society is online at Twitter (@socedssa) and Facebook <www.facebook.com/SocEdsSA>.



Confession time

Carol Fisher Saller is an editor of *The Chicago Manual of Style* who blogs at the Subversive Copy Editor Blog <www.subversivecopyeditor.com/blog>. In her post of 25 March she asked for copyediting sins, starting with a few of her own. One concerned a lengthy reference book for which she failed to notice until it was at a late stage of production that the paragraphs on Mies van der Rohe appeared under R instead of under M. Ten pages had to be reflowed and all those page numbers in the index had to be adjusted accordingly by Saller.

The comments on the blog recount many other errors, such as a 'polo bear' ('polar bear') that was only caught at the last minute, despite being previously checked by at least four people. A calendar distributed widely had dates including '33 April'. A full-page ad accidentally published upside-down could have been a real disaster, but the editor managed to convince the advertiser that the ad would receive more attention.

Unusual names

The *Style manual* says for writing of proper names of people and organisations (and, presumably, products):

Precise citation: Always show a proper name in the style the owner uses. (page 122)

However, this is in the section on capital letters and it's not clear whether the advice also embraces the use of weird punctuation, odd typography, unusual symbols, and so on.

The *Economist* has changed its style recently. For instance, the company which calls itself 'Yahoo!' will now be only 'Yahoo' in the *Economist* pages. But BlackBerry still has the internal capital. <www.economist.com/blogs/johnson/2013/02/exclamation-mark>.

A more detailed discussion of the problem can be found at <www.theslot.com/webnames.html>. Bill Walsh, a US newspaper copy editor and author (his books include *The elephants of style* and *Lapsing into a comma*), argues persuasively to omit or standardise almost all the nonstandard parts of proper names. Here is a taste of his opinion:

In the old days, battles on this front usually involved companies that insisted on being identified in all caps. The uppercase treatment, after all, makes something STAND OUT. But there weren't as many battles as there are today, because copy editors and even writers knew that logos are logos and English is English. 'You want all caps?' an ink-stained wretch with a green eyeshade might have asked. 'Go buy an ad!'

The introduction to a work is not the mysterious and formidable affair that many deem it, but a very common-sense and natural procedure. It is simply saying what is necessary to make your reader aware just how you are going to treat your subject.

—John F. Genung (1893)

Cupertinos

What do you call it when a spelling-checker substitutes the wrong word? Writers and translators working for the European Union dubbed such errors 'Cupertinos' because of the number of times that 'cooperation' in their publications became 'Cupertino' through careless, reckless or too-trusting use of a spelling-checker. To see examples for yourself, Google the phrases 'economic cupertino' or 'cupertino agreement'. (Enclose the phrases in quotes to ensure you get the exact wording.) The general problem is also called the 'Cupertino effect'.

Some of you may recall that the city of Cupertino, California, as the location of Apple's headquarters, but the replacement occurs with non-Apple software too.

Here are just two famous examples. Reuters had this sentence:

The opposition blames the government and the pro-government Muttonhead Quail Movement (MQM), which runs Karachi, for the violence.

Alas, MQM is the Muttahida Quami Movement.

And the *Denver Post* once referred to Voldemort (from the Harry Potter stories) as 'Voltmeter'.

Have you seen any interesting Cupertinos?

You can read more Cupertinos at Wikipedia ('Cupertino effect'); in Arika Okrent's article at *Mental Floss* <<http://mentalfloss.com/article/32294/cupertino-effect-11-spell-check-errors-made-it-press>>; and at the *Regret the Error* website <www.regrettheerror.com>, which also collects many other types of errors in journalism.

March editors' lunch

The editors' lunch on 27 March was held in the southern suburb of Seaford. We were a smallish group, but the southern location encouraged a member to come from Victor Harbor to join us. Among other things, it was interesting to hear about the diverse occupations we had before becoming editors.

We will be north of the city for the next lunch on Tuesday 21 May. The venue will be advised later.

The Proofreader's Parlour

Louise Harnby curates The Proofreader's Parlour blog <www.louiseharnbyproofreader.com/blog.html>. It has much interesting material, including a weekly review with links to 15 or 20 recent online articles on editing, proofreading, freelancing and publishing.

Harnby has just published an e-guide entitled *Business planning for editorial freelancers: a guide for new starters*. It's available in a number of formats for a small price and her press release says that it covers business planning, training, getting experience, financial assessment, networking, promotion, tools for the job and much more. More details are at her website.

Would anyone like to review the e-guide? In particular, is the publication focused on the UK, where Harnby lives, or is it general enough for Australian readers?

Good vibrations

What if there was a pen that could detect errors as they are written? According to the website of Munich-based Lernstift UG <www.lernstift.com>, the Lernstift pen does exactly that:

Learning to write bears two main challenges: (1) writing legibly and (2) writing correctly. Lernstift helps with both:

In Calligraphy Mode the pen vibrates once if a letter is written wrong or illegibly.

In Orthography Mode the pen vibrates once for a misspelled word and twice to point out grammatical errors in a sentence.

But there's no need to give up your editing job just yet, because more careful reading of the website shows that Lernstift UG (which calls itself 'the good vibrations company') has only done some very preliminary work on the pen. They are also appealing for funds to develop the pen's software and then test the system.

Cryptic clue explanation *(from page 4)*

Answer: REFORM

To see why the answer is REFORM, remember that most cryptic clues are meant to look like (fairly) normal English sentences, but beneath this usually irrelevant and sometimes distracting surface meaning the clue nearly always comprises two parts: a definition and some wordplay. Both parts give the same answer, and whether you solve from the definition or from the wordplay (or even from letters you have inserted in the grid by filling in other intersecting words) doesn't matter. You can use either part to check the other.

The definition may be one or more words, and is typically at the start or the end of the clue. Here is the clue again, with the definition part underlined:

Amend 'you am' to 'you are'. How?

The solution will be a word that means 'amend' and the wordplay will also get us there. In this case, the wordplay seems to be asking us how to change 'you am' to 'you are'. If we replace the 'm' of 'am' with 're', we make 'are'. We could say that we are using 're' for 'm', and by putting these letters together, as RE+FOR+M, we have REFORM, which is a definition of 'amend'.

Anything is better than not to write clearly. There is nothing to be said against lucidity, and against simplicity only the possibility of dryness. This is a risk well worth taking when you reflect how much better it is to be bald than to wear a curly wig.

—*W Somerset Maugham*

Telling me to 'Be clear' is like telling me to 'Hit the ball squarely.' I know that. What I don't know is how to do it. To explain how to write clearly, I have to go beyond platitudes.

—*Joseph M Williams (1990)*

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The **deadline** for contributions
for the next issue of ... *the word*
is **Monday 13 May 2013**

