



... *the word*

Newsletter of the Society of Editors (SA)
ISSN 1833-3796
January–February 2010

Next meeting

Tuesday 2 March at 7.30 pm
SA Writers' Centre
2nd floor, 187 Rundle Street, Adelaide
Access to lift through Caffè Brunelli
Speaker: Celia Jellett

At our first members' meeting for 2010, Celia Jellett will take us on her **Adventures in Children's Publishing**.

Celia has belonged to the Society of Editors since its foundation and has earned national recognition as a Distinguished Editor. As senior editor at Omnibus Books she has worked with many of Australia's illustrious children's writers, artists and designers.

Come and hear her story, which involves invisible possums, Thespian wombats, a steep learning curve and lots of chocolate.

We'll serve the usual drinks and nibbles during the meeting, but you might also like to join the committee for a meal at 6 pm at **Amalfi Restaurant, 29 Frome Street**, Adelaide.

Please email Susan Rintoul at <SAPresident@editors-sa.org.au> by **Tuesday 23 February** to confirm your restaurant booking. We must have firm numbers.

Contents

December meeting	2
IPEd notes <i>Ed Highley</i>	2
Society membership, 2010 <i>Michael Vnuk</i>	2
Is it a word, is it a game? No, it's a super dictionary! <i>Birgitt Olsen</i>	3
News and views	4
Job advertisements	5

The presidential word

Susan Rintoul

Next meeting

I am very pleased that our first speaker for the year will be Celia Jellett. I taught with Celia at the Adelaide Centre for the Arts for some years and she is still teaching in its Advanced Diploma of Arts (Professional Writing) course as well as working at Omnibus Books.

I have found that it is important to listen to every word Celia says: she never wastes a word, and every one she says is honest, pertinent and often witty. Please make sure you have this date in your diary.

Professional development

The committee has identified professional development as the overriding area we wish the society to engage in this year. To this end we will be conducting at least two workshops, and will also focus on speakers for meetings who will provide skills training. Professional development is our core activity and one where we feel we can most benefit members this year and in future years. The committee is currently talking to speakers here and interstate and planning our program. Please contact us if you have a skills area for which you could offer training or if there is a particular speaker you would like us to include.

Celebration of 20 years

As you may know, 2010 marks the 20th birthday of the society. We are celebrating throughout the year. There will be a gala dinner at which we will honour our founding members. As well, we will be reflecting on our history in coming issues of ... *the word*. Please see our website and the newsletter for further details.

4th IPEd National Editors Conference

Our treasurer now has the complex task of finalising the accounts for the conference, and we expect this to be completed and audited by about June. However, we can report that we expect a profit of about \$20 000, an excellent return. We are providing our national body,

IPEd, with \$5000 of this amount to enable IPEd to build a new website. The committee is discussing how best to use the balance to fund our focus on the professional development of our members.

I would like to ask members for suggestions to enable us to do this.

December meeting

Christmas dinner meeting; Jude Aquilina and Louise Nicholas, guest speakers

Two poets, **Jude Aquilina** and **Louise Nicholas**, authors of the recently released book *WomanSpeak* (Wakefield Press), entertained us after dinner by reading a selection of their poems. Witty, wry and at times bitter-sweet, these gave much food for thought.

Michael Vnuk provided word games for the evening. Peter and Anne-Marie Smith won the Christmas quiz, with Pamela Ball and Rick Mobley equal runners-up. Our speakers helped judge the rewrite of 'Good King Wenceslas' and both Rick Mobley and Pamela Ball won prizes.

IPEd notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors Limited, November 2009

www.iped-editors.org

What do editors want?

Following the IPEd plenary session at the national conference in Adelaide in October 2009, participants were asked to prioritise and comment on seven activities (detailed in the analysis below) that had been identified by the IPEd Council as areas of potential activity for the Institute. The activities were listed on a form headed 'What do editors want?' that respondents (there were 56) completed and dropped into the IPEd suggestion box at the conference desk.

Thanks are due to Rosemary Noble, the IPEd Councillor for the Society of Editors (Victoria), for the following analysis of responses.

A significant number of respondents urged IPEd to:

- find ways to ensure IPEd can act like a peak body (standardise membership criteria across the societies; involve the state societies more; work on getting a secure financial base; concentrate on just a few activities)
- get the accreditation scheme bedded down and develop the next portfolio stage (specific suggestions to the Accreditation Board included holding just one exam in one venue biennially)

In order of priority, the other activities identified were as follows (additional comments pertaining to those activities are shown in brackets):

1. Engaging in marketing/communications/promotion of editing (including promoting to corporations, businesses and agencies; providing an IPEd lapel badge for all members; starting up a national e-newsletter; promoting a members' blog on the website)
2. Coordinating professional development opportunities (incl. national mentoring system; recognising other pathways to success besides accreditation; developing a national register of training people and courses)
3. Continue to develop standards (including making sure the Australian Standards for Editing Practice are up to date and inclusive of new technologies and areas of specialist interest)

The above three priorities ranked quite a bit higher than the following:

4. Establishing a national register of accredited editors
5. Accrediting tertiary courses
6. Providing employment brokerage information (some not sure what this meant; insurance deals; pay scales; developing templates for freelancers)
7. Fostering relationships with other like-minded groups – editors, writers, publishers, indexers, illustrators etc.

Other potential activities mentioned by just one or two delegates were:

- taking over the production of the next edition of *Style Manual*
- developing awards and scholarships
- fostering special-interest groups.

The IPEd Council thanks all respondents for their contributions, which will inform its planning in the year ahead and beyond.

Ed Highley, Secretary

Society membership as at 1 February 2010

Michael Vnuk, Membership Secretary

Honorary life members

Pamela Ball

Karen Disney

Full members

Eleanor Ahern
Patrick Allington
Susan Arthure
Rowena Austin
Katherine Bahr
Pamela Ball
Nena Bierbaum
Margaret Bowden
Pam Boyle
Angela Brennan
John Bridgland
Christopher Bright
Elizabeth Brookes
Marcus Brownlow
Peter Carter
Diana Chessell
Carolyn Cockburn
Penelope Curtin
Marie Danvers
Andrea Day
Karen Disney
Loene Doube
Jane Edwards
Maureen English
Steve Evans
Gunta Groves
Susanne Hagan
Anne Hamilton-Bruce
Marianne Hammat
Sky Harrison
Julia Haska
Jacque Hibburt
Sally Howes
Celia Jellett
Barry Jeromson
Fiona Johnston
Cheryl Jordan
Pam Kelly

Ruth Kennedy
Sheryl Klingner
Eugenia Koussidis
Kate Leeson
John Liddle
Rosemary Luke
Jo Mason
Holly McCausland
Will Menary
Yvonne Miels
Garry Mighall
Heather Millar
Valerie Mobley
Lisa Morrison
Renee Naylor
Eva O'Driscoll
Bernard O'Neil
Birgitt Olsen
John Pfitzner
Andrea Rankin
Gill Ratcliff
Susan Rintoul
Sally Roberts
Miranda Roccisano
Angela Schoen
Geraldine Sladden
Isabella Slevin
Jessica Smith
Anne-Marie Smith
Danny Stevens
Cecile Storrie
Kathie Stove
Mary Lou Tucker
Michael Vnuk
Adele Walker
Paul Wallace
Sue Warman
Lynette Washington

Julie White
Valerie Williams
Lucy Williamson

Sara Wilson
Matthew Wright-Simon

Associate members

Fiona Abraham
Storey Chambers
Gayna Checkley
Jennifer Coleman
Marie Francis
Yvonne Heitz
Elizabeth Ingerson
Leeston McNab
Lesley Morsman

Jane Oliver
Brian Phillippo
Justin Putland
Bridget Ransome
Jennifer Rocca
Ros Schwerdt
Josie Stevens
Kim Taeuber

Is it a word, is it a game? No, it's a super dictionary!

Birgitt Olsen

At the risk of ruining my name and reputation (not that either are all that hallowed anyway), I am going to ask you fellow editors: don't you find looking up words in the dictionary quite tiresome sometimes? If the dictionary is an expensive printed tome, doesn't it irritate you to find yourself looking up twenty other words besides the one that you were looking for originally, while your book-cradling arms begin to tremble? And if it is online (and free) don't you find your relief outweighed by the lightweight, limited content?

Living in the electronic age of communication, we know that gone are the days when the standard dictionary provided the answer to most things wordy. But if the dictionary cannot do it alone, then where can we, the cadre of correctors, turn to for our quick authorisation? How do we recognise, certify and integrate neologisms, coolspeak and techno jargon and still meet the deadline?

This is where you turn to Wordnik, a free online dictionary that's anything but limited.

At Wordnik they claim that people can more easily make sense of a word by reading it in context, so I decided to test that claim by looking up a few unusual words that might not have a ready definition. My first word was fortuitously located in Wordnik's very own FAQs – disemvowel. Disemvowel? Given Wordnik's

own usage of that word, I was surprised that they provided no definition, except for an explanation in the comment section. But – they did give eight contextual examples of the word. I read through them, eagerly at first, then with perplexment and then with a sneaking feeling of stupidity. I had to admit to myself that I had gleaned only a partial understanding of the word from its use in context. In desperation I turned to Wikipedia, bless its indefatigable database, which provided me with an excellent definition.

A search for a second word, the Aussie slang term bogan (a word that originally mystified me, the foreigner, until the *Macquarie Dictionary* explained it nicely), surprisingly yielded no less than 47 contextual examples (and no definition). Upon reading through the list, I felt I got a good understanding of this word, but maybe this was because I already knew what it meant.

I also looked up a South African term for a young criminal/gangster originating from the Apartheid slum townships designated for black people – tsotsi – and found four contextual examples, which, I must say, would not have helped me much if I had no previous idea of what the word meant.

‘So why are you telling me about this unhelpful dictionary?’ I hear you ask.

Well. Actually, I think Wordnik is extremely helpful, especially if you need to find out the meaning of a strange word in a hurry and don’t have immediate access to specialised or region-specific dictionaries. Wordnik at least recognises words that no other online dictionary seems to have heard of. And I think most will agree that people are good at divining the meaning of a word from reading or hearing it in context. It’s perfectly possible that my unsatisfactory gleaning of meaning could be due to Wordnik’s contextual examples only being ideal 99% of the time, and to my being a bit of a slowcoach when it comes to this kind of assimilation.

Wordnik also supplies the opportunity of hearing pronunciations; reading about etymologies, related words and statistical data regarding the usage frequency, alternative forms and punctuation related to the word; as well as allowing users to make comments about that word. This is quite a lot, from one dictionary, for free!

Being user friendly in the full sense of the term, Wordnik also relies on users to contribute to the information base. But this doesn’t mean that you get half-baked and insufficient data. Just try out any known and established word, and you’ll see.

I have to say that I found it exciting to find a dictionary that grows before your eyes. It’s wonderful that new

words have a fighting chance of making it to adulthood. And equally, if Wordnik withstands the test of time, ancient, no-longer popular terms and nerd words need no longer drop off the edge of the dictionary margin and into the abyss of the forgotten and unwanted.

Enough of the commentary. This is what they say:

Here at Wordnik, we show you what people actually do with language, not what we'd like them to do. We think it's important to show real information about every word – even the ones that aren't considered standard. However, just because a word is in Wordnik doesn't mean you have to use it!

Long live Wordnik!

<www.wordnik.com>

Calling all science writers

The South Australian Department for Environment and Heritage is establishing a database of good science writers and would like the contact details of anyone who would fit this category, and a sample of their work.

Please direct all correspondence to Leah Young,
Marketing and Public Relations Officer
Corporate Communications
People and Strategy
T: 08 8463 4445
F: 08 8207 1772
E: leah.young@sa.gov.au

News and views

Shortlisting of member's book

Culture is ... Australian Stories across Cultures, the 2008 MWAA anthology published by Wakefield Press and edited by Society of Editors member Anne-Marie Smith, has been shortlisted for the Australian Human Rights Commission Literature Non-Fiction Award.

<www.humanrights.gov.au/hr_awards/shortlist.html>

Ex libris

The Art Gallery of South Australia is presenting an exhibition entitled ‘Ex libris: The printed image and the art of the book’. The exhibition covers three forms of book-related art – illustrations, bookplates and books created by artists. The exhibition opens on 13 February and admission is free.

Punctuation mark for sarcasm?

Check it out at

<www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2010/jan/20/rise-of-the-sacmark>

Using Word macros

Paul Beverley has written a 35,000-word book on using Word macros for editing. As Paul says, 'I should perhaps say "am writing" as it's very much a work in progress, but there's lots of useful stuff there even now. The book is free and available from my (advert-free) website at <www.archivepub.co.uk/TheBook>.'

Word puzzle

Which common (English) word of 9 letters enables you to remove one letter at a time and always have a whole word left, right to the last letter?

Answer in next newsletter – Ed.

Job advertisements

One of the significant benefits of society membership is receiving occasional job advertisements by email. As most advertisements request interested people to contact the advertiser directly, the committee is usually not aware of whether anyone applies or if any applicant is successful. The committee is interested in any feedback that members may have concerning the advertisements, applications and particularly successful job outcomes. Please send your feedback to Susan Rintoul at <SAPresident@editors-sa.org.au>.



Imaginative appellation seen in Krakow, Poland, by Pamela Ball

**Deadline for copy
(letters and contributions)
for the next issue of
... *the word* is Friday 12 March.**

Society of Editors (SA)

PO Box 2328 Kent Town SA 5071

<www.editors-sa.org.au>; <eds@editors-sa.org.au>

Send news, reviews or comments for ... *the word* to the Editor, Celia Jellett: <newsletter@editors-sa.org.au>.

For further information about the society, contact:

Membership Secretary, Michael Vnuk:

<membership@editors-sa.org.au>.

President, Susan Rintoul:

<SAPresident@editors-sa.org.au>.

Treasurer, Loene Doube:

<SATreasurer@editors-sa.org.au>.

Membership

To join the society, send a completed application form <www.editors-sa.org.au/?q=node/9> to the address above, or by email to <membership@editors-sa.org.au>.

Full membership of the society is open to anyone who is engaged professionally in any aspect of editing for publication, on a full-time or part-time basis, or who has had such experience in the past.

Associate membership is open to any interested person.

Subscriptions and freelance register fees are due 1 July each year, and cover the 12 months until 30 June in the year following.

You need to be a full member to be included in the freelance register.

\$80 full membership

\$50 associate membership

\$60 freelance register

Rebates are available to those studying full-time or living over 50 km from the Adelaide GPO.

If you have an inquiry about your membership status, email to: <membership@editors-sa.org.au>.

Freelance register

The Freelance Register is available at: <www.editors-sa.org.au/FreelanceRegister.php>. Please contact the society if you would like your details to be included. Full membership is required for inclusion.

Society meetings

General meetings are open to all members, prospective members and guests and are held (unless otherwise indicated) in the Seminar Room of the SA Writers' Centre, 2nd Floor, 187 Rundle Street East, Adelaide.