

A message from Cheryl, our Vice President,



Standing in

I'm writing this article in place of Robin this month. Congratulations on your marriage and best wishes for your future, Robin!

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Wow, the intricacies of our beloved English language! No wonder they say it's the hardest to learn. We have introduced a programme to our school called *The Sound Way*, based on the premise that there are 45 sounds in the English language that go down on paper in 75 different ways, following 24 language facts, and that's it! As a facilitator of the programme, after the training I've also completed most of the programme (six lessons to go out of 36). I thought I had a pretty good grip on English, but I have learned so much.

Some things have given me food for thought. For example, why do we split the syllables in father and brother as fa' ther and bro' ther, but mother is moth' er and sister is sis' ter? I never thought about it until I wrote them one after the other in *The Sound Way*!

I read with interest an article in the current issue of *Cite*, Curtin's magazine, entitled 'Perils of Perfectionism'. It discusses the work of Curtin PhD student, Dolores Elek-Roser, who says there is a perfectionism continuum, with high-achiever at the positive end and clinical perfectionist at the other (pathological) end. It's to do with self-esteem; the high achiever can shrug off a failure, secure in themselves that they've done their best. Perfectionists always feel that they deserve to fail and that they were just 'lucky' or 'it was easy' when they do succeed. Because of the overwhelmingly high goals perfectionists set for themselves, they also tend to procrastinate. These people usually don't recognise perfectionism in themselves, and even if they do, are usually unwilling to change.

Dolores is developing an assessment tool to help detect clinical perfectionism, which she says is quite often treated as depression or an anxiety disorder. It would be an interesting exercise for us editors to undertake! I'm not sure where on the continuum I would be – what about you??

Have a great month – it's time to start preparing for that dreaded EFY already! ☺

Bye!

Cheryl _ 😊

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THIS MONTH'S MEMBERS MEETING

Tuesday 15 June 2010 at 7.30 pm

Editing 101: Tertiary training for editors

Panelists: Dr Ffion Murphy, School of Communications and Arts, Edith Cowan University; Associate Professor Tim Dolin, School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts, Curtin University of Technology; Dr Christine Owen, School of Social Science and Humanities, Murdoch University

All you ever wanted to know about training as an editor? Well no, that's not quite possible in two hours. But for the hottest OVERVIEW in town, come along to the Society of Editors (WA) on the third Tuesday night in June. Our three panellists will briefly summarise the *Editors 'R' Us* offerings of their institutions – undergraduate, honours, post-graduate. And SoE(WA) past-President Kerry Coyle will share her research into some of the on-line and correspondence courses in Australia.

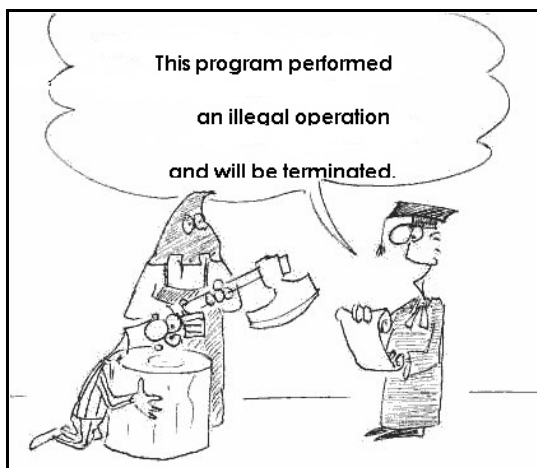
The program includes time for your questions, your feedback on training for editors and networking over tea/coffee before and after the meeting. What more could you want?

Venue: Subiaco Community Centre (Activity Room)

Cost: \$2 members; \$5 non-members

Parking: street parking and Crossways Shopping Centre carpark opposite

RSVP Jan Knight jknight@flyingedits.com.au



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DEADLINE
for copy for the
NEXT ISSUE
of *Bookworm* is
Tuesday, 6 July 2010

Bookworm is prepared as a Word document for ease of proofreading using track changes.

Please ensure that text submitted is in a Word compatible format and images are in jpg or similar. The editor is unable to place a pdf file into a word document without loss of quality.



You can never have too many penguins

Kerry Coyle's report on the May meeting

Robyn Mundy, author of *The Nature of Ice*, published by Allen & Unwin in 2009, was guest speaker at our May meeting. Her experience as a first-time writer was inspirational – and daunting.

Robyn's love affair with Antarctica began on her first visit in 1996. She now works part of each year on ship-based tours to the polar regions. She has summured at Davis Station, Antarctica, working as a field assistant for a study on south polar skuas, and in 2008 she and her partner Gary, a seabird biologist, lived at Mawson Station, studying emperor penguins.



Obviously, Antarctica forms the backdrop to *The Nature of Ice*, a suspense story about two photographers on two Antarctic expeditions a century apart. Robyn weaves the story of Australian polar explorer Douglas Mawson and his epic 1911–14 sledging journey with a contemporary story of love and loss.

Robyn's literary adventure began as part of a PhD in writing at Edith Cowan University. An account of her triumph in satisfactorily uniting the parallel stories would require more space than I have so I'll focus on the publishing process.



Robyn posted her manuscript to Allen and Unwin in Sydney in December 2006. No agent, no competitors, just Allen & Unwin. Four months later she received a rejection letter, but a rejection letter with a 'promising' note. It came with a detailed reader's report that encouraged Robyn to make certain changes and resubmit the manuscript. Robyn took up their suggestions and exactly one year after she first submitted the manuscript, the publisher accepted it. ('It was the best Christmas present I ever had').

Most of 2008 was taken up with the two editing processes via email – a structural edit ('after three months I was completely over it') and the copy edit ('You develop such a trust'). While the historical chapters came through the editing processes with only minor changes, the modern chapters needed to be pruned to accelerate the pace ('I took pages out.') and the main character of Freya needed to be anchored more. ('The editor thought that too many things about Freya were left unspoken and she was right. Withholding those emotional insights perpetuated a distance'.)

Robyn constantly reconsidered how the character of Freya grew and changed through the book and clarified what Freya learnt about herself and how Antarctica the place changed her. The editing process was definitely hands on and very hard work.

However, Robyn said the publisher's attitude was encouraging and helpful. 'We want you to be happy,' they said. And the upshot? 'It really was a very nice outcome,' Robyn said, as she showed us magnificent images of Antarctica and the development of her book cover – a close-up of a woman focusing an old-fashioned camera, a tiny icy scene in the viewfinder. For your first taste of Robyn's book, see her book trailer on YouTube. ■





Tools of Trade

with Carla

In my second column, I thought we could look at gerunds and the possessive. I just love the word 'gerund'. Non-editors react to the word 'gerund' in the same way

that vampires react to garlic, wooden stakes and silver bullets: fear.

Gerunds and possessives are also one of those things that fall into the why-didn't-anyone-tell-me-this-sooner category of grammar. Later realisations result in panicky moments of 'Oh crap! Did I fix that in the book I worked on last year before I learned this fabulous gem?' So, here is one of those things that I never knew before editing came into my life. I would like to share it before you find yourself in an 'Oh crap!' moment.

First, a gerund is the -ing form of a verb functioning as a noun.

Sleeping is good for your health.

It is just like the participle, just doing a different job.

I am *sleeping*.

The sneaky things can also pose as adjectives and adverbs.

A *sleeping* baby is cute. (adj.)

The toddler ran *screaming* to its mother. (adv.)

The 'rule' of gerunds and the possessive stems from the idea that a gerund should be treated as a noun when acting as a noun.

My nightmares kept me awake all night.

In the example above no one would

argue that the noun 'nightmares' should be preceded by 'me' and not 'my'. 'Me nightmares' just seems daft, doesn't it? So why, when we substitute a noun ending in -ing, do we get confused?

His snoring kept me awake all night. (correct)

My husband's snoring kept me awake all night. (correct)

Him snoring kept me awake all night. (incorrect)

When the gerund is the subject of the sentence, the possessive is needed. It gets contentious, however, when the gerund moves about to somewhere else in a sentence.

Timmy is not happy about *Toby's* eating all the cake.

Timmy is not happy about *Toby* eating all the cake.

Some would argue that removing the possessive would not make it wrong, just change the emphasis. The first example emphasises that it was the eating of the cake that upset Timmy; the second, that it was because Toby was the culprit. Equally, for many people, the first just seems not quite right, or too formal.

Fowler says, 'The possessive with the gerund is on the retreat, but its use with proper names and personal nouns and pronouns persists in good writing.' In informal writing it might not be appropriate. My tip is simply to be aware.

Do you have a topic you would like discussed? Email me at carlamorris@ozemail.com.au.

Carla Morris, AE



It was the dead of night. A shadow slunk down the street. It was Charles with the dickens of a problem. He was off to mail his manuscript. (He huddled) his guilty secret, petrified lest friends find out and ridicule him. The manuscript was rejected. More rejections pierced him before he won the hearts of millions with such classics as *Oliver Twist*. From Grantley Morris <http://net-burst.net/hot/cope.htm>



BOOK EARLY—PLACES ARE LIMITED

professional development workshop

Advanced editing skills

Saturday 24 July 2010

8.45 am–4 pm

Professional development starts from the moment you begin your editing career and is an ongoing process throughout. This workshop is aimed at improving editors' skills and knowledge in areas that even experienced editors sometimes find daunting, and will also be of value to those just starting out.

Our presenters are:

- Carla Morris and Amanda Curtin (legal and ethical issues)
- Mar Bucknell (handling quotations and references)
- Anne Surma (advanced copyediting—punctuation and style)

Venue: Building 3, Room 3.209 (first floor, near staircase inside main entrance)
Edith Cowan University, 2 Bradford Street, Mt Lawley

Registration 8.45 am for a 9.00 am start.

All you need to bring is writing materials. Tea/coffee and a light lunch provided.

Free campus parking on Saturday (except for bays marked 'reserved' or for disabled drivers). Enter from Bradford Street and turn left. The closest parking area is in front of Building 3.

Register by Saturday 17 July

to u.shaw@bigpond.com

\$60 members

\$85 non-members

When registering, please indicate:

- method of payment (cheque/EFT)
- any special dietary requirements

Bookings will be confirmed on receipt of payment.

Send cheques to Saturday Workshop, Society of Editors (WA) Inc., PO Box 99, Subiaco WA 6904

or pay using EFT, BSB 806036, Account 17594, Account name Society of Editors (WA) Inc. (enter your full name in the Reference/Description window)



Spotlight on Kerry Coyle

My finest hour

Editors always stumble at the first word. Hi all? Dear colleagues? I cheated this time and hope you'll forgive me. Which just about sums up my reflections on a life of political reporting and corporate editing.

My best stories for newspapers came out of state and federal parliaments from members who were friends enough to leak the latest party room developments – cheating of sorts – though this was in the notoriously 'leaky' ships of Malcolm Fraser and Bob Hawke, themselves both masters of the game.

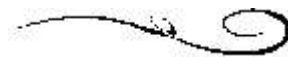
Now as an editor I find that time is the enemy. You can't help but think you are cheating *somebody* when deadlines loom or jobs are dropped on your area at the last minute – with a sheepish grin at most.

In 2007 I left *The West Australian*, where I was a subeditor, to become editorial manager in the IT department at the Department of Agriculture and Food. Three years later

I found a most fantastic gig for 12 months as Managing Editor at Curtin University. At the department, and now at Curtin, I wore two hats – I was in charge of project management and operations – controlling the publishing process and editing as needed. Two hats go with the territory but do nothing to alleviate my concern that one role or the other suffers on any given day. 'I hope you'll forgive me', I say when I leave a meeting early. 'Pardon me,' when I've found it easier to say 'sorry' than ask for permission. 'I hope you'll forgive me.'

Highlights? Of course, there are many. A Master of Journalism from Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Loving husband and two gorgeous adult sons. An unblemished record as a daily sub-editor (by which I mean no writs made it to the courtroom). Stacks of writers who appreciate a helping hand along the way. Wonderful, dedicated staff. The odd diploma. The birth of your first glossy magazine (circulation 105 000). I could go on.

But (pathetically) I edited my first reference list recently and, oh, the joy. Commas just here, italics just there, and dates just so. No cheating allowed. It was my finest hour. ■



A warm welcome to new members



Natalie Rose of Woodlands

Peter Meldrum of Butler

