



The Gifts of the Magi: to value, to share, to heal

The significance of the Magi's gifts – gold, frankincense and myrrh – may be interpreted from many viewpoints. As a storyteller, I like to think of the gifts as representing: something to treasure; something to sweeten life; and, something to aid wholeness. But let me offer you a story.

In days gone by three kings set out on a journey to worship a new-born prophet and took with them three offerings – gold, frankincense, and myrrh – so as to discover whether this prophet was a god, or an earthly king, or a healer. For they said, 'If he takes gold, he is an earthly king; if frankincense, a god; if myrrh, a healer.'

When they had come to the place where the prophet was born, the youngest of the three kings went in all alone to see the child. He found that he was like himself, for he seemed to be of his own age and appearance. And he came out, full of wonder. Then in went the second, who was a man of middle age. And to him also the child seemed, as it had seemed to the other, to be of his own age and appearance. And he came out quite dumbfounded. Then in went the third, who was of riper years; and to him also it happened as it had to the other two. And he came out deep in thought. When the three kings were all together, each told the others what he had seen. And they were much amazed and resolved that they would all go in together.

So, in they went, all three together, and came before the child and saw him in his real likeness and of his real age; for he was only thirteen days old. Then they worshipped him and offered him the gold, the frankincense, and the myrrh.

from *The Travels* of Marco Polo translated by Ronald Latham

According to medieval legend the names of the three were Melchior, King of Arabia, who brought gold; Gaspar, King of Tarsus (Turkey), who brought myrrh; and Balthasar, King of Ethiopia, who brought frankincense.

Many believe that these gifts brought to the Christ Child by the wise men may well be the origin of our present-day custom of gift giving at this time of year.



May this special season
be filled with joy, hope, companionship
and time to refresh your spirit.





Space to celebrate...

As you read this, we will have entered that magical month where Christmas lives; the month of shopping for secret Santa presents, gifts for the family, and food for the Christmas table.

Personally I'm opting for online shopping this year. Three major things put me off Christmas – shopping, queues and parking. As a celebration month, though, it is exciting and heralds good cheer, warm thoughts towards others, and holidays. Around this time of year, the papers start extolling the virtues of 'shopping to save the planet' and recycling in its various entities.

To celebrate our year as working editors, the committee has done a great job of merging these themes this year. Instead of our usual networking meeting, you're invited to eat and drink with colleagues in a preserved wetland right in the heart of Wembley. What a surprise to find a myriad species of birds and other creatures living right next to traffic jams on the way to work! The dedicated folk at the WA Gould League run the Herdsman Wildlife Centre to educate the community about environmental concerns. They're about minimizing waste and developing sustainable lifestyles, all while interacting with the natural ecosystems within our urban limits. We'll take you on a walk through the wetland to meet some of the characters that inhabit the lake. You'll also consume delicious food and wine and be entertained by a musical duo while checking out sundown over the lake.

The committee would love to see you there. So if you haven't been to a meeting for a while or are too busy during the year to interact with others in the business, it's not too late to reserve a place.

Happy celebrating!

Robin

Robin Bower — President

CONTACTS

President

Robin Bower
<robinb@westnet.com.au>

Vice President

Cheryl Bettridge
<cbettridge@hotmail.com>

Secretary

Josephine Smith
<josmith@wordsmith.com.au>

Treasurer

Ursula Shaw
<u.shaw@bigpond.com>

IPed Delegate

Anne Surma
<a.surma@murdoch.edu.au>

IPed Accreditation Board Delegate

Amanda Curtin
<acurtin@highway1.com.au>

New Member Contact/ Website Coordinator

Marisa Wikramanayake
<marisa.wikramanayake@gmail.com>

Committee Representative

Jan Knight
<jknight@flyingedits.com.au>

Bookworm Editor

Mabel Kaplan
<mabelka@elink.net.au>

Proofreader

Michèle Drouart
<drouart@webace.com.au>

* * * * *

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial:
 The Gifts of the Magi 1
 President's Message 2
 Christmas with the Birds 3
 Highlights from the
 Editors' Conference
 by Amanda Curtin 3
 November Meeting
 Report by Katie Lennerts 5
 IPed Report 6

DEADLINE

for copy for the
NEXT ISSUE
of *Bookworm* is

Tuesday, 2 February, 2010

NOTE: There will be no January issue of *Bookworm* and no members' meeting in January.

* * * * *



This month's Members' Meeting – End of Year function

Christmas with the birds

Join friends and colleagues on a stroll along the Herdsman boardwalk.

Where: Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, corner Flynn and Selby Sts, Wembley
(opposite City Farmers)

When: Tuesday 15 December 2009

Time: 5.30 – 9.00 pm

Cost: \$30 members \$35 non-members/ guests

Payment: Cheque or EFT to BSB 806036, account no. 17594,

Account name: Society of Editors (WA) Inc.

Please put your name on the EFT transfer.

Forward cheque or EFT receipt to:

Treasurer (treasurer@editorswa.com)

Society of Editors (WA) Inc., PO Box 99, Subiaco WA 6904

Delicious substantial hot and cold finger food supplied by Domain Catering (with vegetarian options). Beer, wine and soft drinks included.

Book now!

A few highlights from the 4th IPEd National Editors Conference

by Amanda Curtin



The benefits of attending a national conference are, for me, often long term. I find myself remembering some useful piece of information I heard at a conference session – or, more often, from a colleague over coffee between sessions. The opportunity to be inspired by international and national keynote speakers, to see excellent presentations, to meet editors from all over Australia, to learn from them and share experiences is enormously valuable and a great pleasure.

Here are some notes from a few of the sessions I enjoyed.

Pam Hewitt, in her presentation 'Don't be depressed: editing your way out of a recession', suggested that surviving difficult economic times came down to being well established, versatile and professional. There's not much you can do about the first – you're either well established or you're not – or maybe even the second, but Pam's discussion of the third included:

- having a good CV
- nurturing professional relationships
- learning to work smarter (e.g. using macros)
- having a marketing plan
- updating your skills
- reading and researching
- attaining, or working towards attaining, accreditation.

Melanie Dankel, from Lonely Planet, presented a thoroughly engaging session on managing the author–editor relationship, reminding us that editing is a conversation. She concluded with ten commandments:*

1. Thou shalt build rapport with your author.
2. Thou shalt be clear (on guidelines, on requirements, on what you mean).
3. Thou shalt set reasonable deadlines.
4. Thou shalt acknowledge communications (applying the 24-hour rule).
5. Thou shalt be flexible and open to change (because nothing ever goes to plan).
6. Thou shalt always be polite.
7. Thou shalt maintain a sense of humour.
8. Thou shalt put yourself in the author's shoes.
9. Thou shalt provide positive and constructive feedback.
10. Thou shalt preserve the author's voice and the integrity of the author's text.

One of the liveliest sessions, for me, was Jackie Cook's 'Sub/texts: troubleshooting grammar in the electronic badlands'. Jackie talked about evolution in usage, reminding us that all it takes for an 'error' to gain a foothold in the language is consensus. Among her entertaining examples were:

- aural hygiene: the use of 'should of' instead of 'should have' because it is misheard by the 'new standard user' who is a speaker rather than a writer
- colonic regression: semicolons appearing where colons should be – or, in fact, where nothing should be!
- hyper-expressivity: the use of escalating intensifiers ('absolutely unique') and doubled absolutes ('really really cool')

While conceding that these trends place traditional grammar under greater pressure, Jackie proposed that they also 'add and create as well as elide and destroy' – although I suspect that many in the audience disagreed with her on that!

In a joint 'Meet the publishers' session, Heather Cam (Managing Editor, University of NSW Press) listed the attributes she looks for in freelance editors:

- in-house experience
- university education (arts, sciences)
- command of language
- maturity
- flexibility
- sense of humour
- problem-solving ability
- good communication skills
- thoroughness
- reliability
- technical proficiency
- tact
- awareness of legal issues.

As WA's Accreditation Board delegate, the honouring of Australia's first Accredited Editors was a particular highlight for me, the culmination of many years of work by so many committed people.

The Adelaide conference was the fourth I've attended, and it was good to see several WA colleagues there. Back in 2001, when the first national editors conference was held jointly with indexers (Canberra), I was the only representative from Perth – but our numbers have been increasing steadily ever since. I hope you can join us in Sydney in 2011. ■

* *Thanks to Melanie Dankel for permission to reproduce these.*

"First the words, then
the product" - three
perspectives on self-publishing
A report on the November Members'
Meeting by *Katie Lennerts*



Our first speaker, our own **Tom Jenkins**, told of his business interactions with various self-publishing authors.

Daphne Goulding, had compiled a collection of memories and anecdotes from past residents of the farm school near Wundowie known as the Werrabee Boys' Home. The Home closed in the 1960s but following several reunions in the 1980s the idea of writing the book was born. However, the project lost momentum until, in 2007, the material was handed to the Uniting Church archives, the book collated and finally published as *The Barefoot Boys of Werrabee*. A great feat of persistence.

A very different client was Ron Cave, a 'grey nomad' whose biography Tom edited via email correspondence during the author's travels and successfully completed the entire project electronically.

Regardless of genre or target market, Tom advised that the majority of copies of any self-published book are likely to be sold at the launch. If they want to make sales, aspiring authors need to invite as many people as possible to their launch.

Our second speaker was former *Bookworm* editor **Rebecca Newman** who started her own magazine for children, *Alphabet Soup*. With no background in publishing but with a strong desire to see a quality magazine about reading in her children's hands, Rebecca decided such a magazine was needed even if she had to publish it herself on a very limited budget.

She used free open source software including Scribus and Gimp, and sourced contributions from friends, family members and professionals with low fees. She said that her greatest learning curve was in the technicalities of press production, including checking proofs at the printer and, recommended PK Print as a reliable printing company.

To the question of whether she is covering costs, Rebecca said that by selling subscriptions, her main income source, she is meeting production costs but is yet to pay herself a significant income.

Our final speaker was **Jeff Dittrich** from Success Print, a local printing company that focuses on self-publishing authors.

Jeff said that, in his time there, the company has covered all publishing topics. The typical client has a manuscript set out in Microsoft Word and while they advise clients to seek the services of an editor, their advice isn't always heeded.

The book *Additive Alert* by Julie Eady offers a positive story concerning self-publishing. After the author initially requested a starting print run of 5000 copies, which was negotiated to a more realistic 2000 copies, the book has sold more than 80000 copies and is now being distributed from the eastern states. Jeff attributes this to clever marketing – knowing your niche market and taking the story to the current affairs media.

'With fiction the story is different,' said Jeff. The best print run he'd had for a fiction book was 7 runs of 1000 copies each. Poetry averages 200 to 500 copies and Jeff agreed with Tom that the book launch is the best sales technique!

Success Print has taken on digital on-demand printing, where clients upload content and do all the layout work via the website. With specific software books can be produced quickly and cheaply – a children's picture book can take 20 minutes and cost only \$50. This easy publishing method could well cause problems for traditional tradespeople.

As a footnote, there was a short discussion about online and international marketing – revealing a few success stories for self-publishing authors selling their books via eBay. Some members understood that Amazon.com would deal with any ISBN, while others disagreed.

Jeff recommended www.bookworm.com.au, a local company which markets Australian products to the world.■

IPEd Notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors Limited
 www.iped-editors.org
 November 2009

To advance the
 profession of editing

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 the *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. To all editors and their families and friends, it extends its best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Ed Highley
 Secretary