

#EclecticChair

From the eclectic chair



Gratitude for professional relationships

I recently attended the annual founders' day of the school I worked at for many years before I became a freelancer. The event is billed as a 'service of celebration and thanksgiving' for the visionaries who started the school and all those who have shaped and continue to shape the organisation. There are easily 5000 people in attendance, and so there's no option but to hold it outside. The weather somehow always plays along, and each year's service features inspiring speakers and wonderful musical items by a massed choir and orchestra of students and staff.

When I was reflecting on my visit later that evening, I thought of all the people I had bumped into – mostly former colleagues and a few parents I had come to know through my work. Some of these people I now call friends, but the many others I know only in a professional context, and so the warm and fuzzy feeling I got when I looked back on those brief interactions was quite unexpected. I realised how fortunate I was to have these 'professional acquaintance' relationships and that they are no less valuable than the closer bonds.

That led me to think about my current professional relationships. I am immensely grateful that I learnt of and joined PEG in the first place. I felt that I'd finally found 'my folk': like-minded professionals who understand the work, share the aim of improving authors' texts, and from whom I could learn a lot. I have met many wonderful people since joining PEG (albeit many only virtually so far) whom I can turn to for advice or just a chat.

I appreciate the support and passion of our industrious Exco members (the full list is included in every issue of *PEGboard* and on our website so that you always know who to contact with your specific concerns). I warmly welcome the new Exco members and thank them for their willingness to serve and make a difference. Thanks also to the outgoing members (and indeed everyone who has contributed in years gone by) who served PEG selflessly and left strong foundations for us to build on.

Thanks to all the members who engage positively with PEG and one another. A good example is attendance at our AGM in May: we set a new record at 140 members (exceeding the required quorum threefold). There are valuable conversations on the PEGforum, and people are 'playing nice' – thank you! (Please don't make me eat my words between the time of writing and publication.)

I take comfort that we do not operate in isolation: we have our affiliate organisations, both locally and internationally, which extends our community of practice. It helps to know that language practitioners the world over face some of the same challenges we do, but by sharing our knowledge, we stand a better chance of overcoming them.

In keeping with my theme of professional relationships, you have the opportunity to get to know me a little better though this issue's 'Who's Your Colleague Anyway?' Thanks, Janice, for suggesting it, and Melissa for sitting down with me, asking me some interesting questions and distilling our conversation into something publishable. I hope that you enjoy it!

Kevin Walker

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#Edit&Earn

PBEdit&Earn Quiz 2

Here's your second opportunity to earn a CPD hour – just take the 10-question quiz and submit your answers! [Click here](#). This quiz focuses on US and UK/English usage and it may help you to read John's excellent grammar article on the subject before you start. A pass is eight to 10 correct answers. Good luck!

- 1. Which is correct US English, a or b?**
 - a. Unfairly, the person that led the discussion impacted it fundamentally.
 - b. Unfairly, the person who led the discussion impacted it fundamentally.
- 2. Which is correct US English, a or b?**
 - a. The organisation manufactures an anti-ageing cream.
 - b. The organization manufactures an antiaging cream.
- 3. Which is correct US English, a or b?**
 - a. Is there likely any connection between paleontology and archeology?
 - b. Is there any probable connection between palaeontology and archaeology?
- 4. Which is correct US English, a or b?**
 - a. As of June 3 2020, the center no longer offered free onsite parking.
 - b. As at 3 June 2020, the centre no longer offered free on-site parking.
- 5. Which is correct UK/SA English, a or b?**
 - a. In fulfilment of their promise, they donated funds towards adult education.
 - b. In fulfillment of their promise, they donated funds toward adult education.
- 6. Which is correct UK/SA English, a or b?**
 - a. She added: 'We pled with him to enroll, but he refused'.
 - b. She added: 'We pleaded with him to enrol, but he refused.'
- 7. Which is correct UK/SA English, a or b?**
 - a. I thought you had learnt that word and would ensure that you spelt it correctly.
 - b. I thought you had learned that word and would ensure that you spelled it correctly.
- 8. Which is correct UK/SA English, a or b?**
 - a. Additionally, skeptics that they are, they tried to maneuver the discussion in their preferred direction.
 - b. In addition, sceptics that they are, they tried to manoeuvre the discussion in their preferred direction.
- 9. Which is correct UK/SA English, a or b?**
 - a. She is an advocate of animal rights, which is different from simply rescuing animals.
 - b. She advocates for animal rights, which is different than simply rescuing animals.
- 10. Which is correct UK/SA English, a or b?**
 - a. By contrast, the data indicates that most vehicle owners relicence their vehicles only after the due date.
 - b. In contrast, the data indicate that most vehicle owners re-license their vehicles only after the due date.

Please submit your answers to Quiz 2 by 31 August. Those who earn a CPD hour will be notified by email. The correct answers will be shared in *PEGboard* December 2026. 📧

Answers to PBEdit&Earn Quiz 1:

1b; 2a; 3a; 4b; 5a; 6b



Potentially problematic American usage creeping into South African English

John Linnegar

Among the many World Englishes that currently have an influence on South African English, American English is the most pervasive – even though our version of English has traditionally been based on British English.

Here is a simple everyday example of the creep:

Overheard at a retail checkout:

Customer: 'A very good morning to you. How are you?'

Cashier: 'I'm good, thank you. How're you doing?'

Customer: 'I'm very well, thank you.'

This everyday verbal interaction illustrates the contrasting usages of American and SA English in a nutshell: 'I'm good', under the influence of American English usage in soaps, movies and even with the electronic switchboards that many organisations in South Africa are installing – including using American rather than local voices to direct callers. 'I'm well', in contrast, is natural to mother-tongue speakers of SA English.

Now, American English is not inherently incorrect: it is simply not naturally South African, nor does it qualify as British English (of which South African English is an offspring). Therefore, such 'foreign' usages will belie a South African author's true identity, even mislead readers into thinking that the author is either American or perhaps based in the United States.

It is indubitable, though, that of all the World Englishes, American English has become the most influential on speakers and writers of English in South Africa. That is the reality; but it is not to say that local writers' writing, whether intended for publication or examination, should be littered with Americanisms, whether intentionally or – as is more likely the case – unwittingly. In the case of writers of non-fiction, they are most likely to be influenced by the American-based or -styled publications they read while researching the subject matter on which they write their op-eds, reports and articles.

What follows are lists of some of the verbal usages of American English found in the writing of non-American writers and suggestions for their equivalent SA English replacements.

Spelling

In general, American English prefers 'z' spellings to their 's' equivalents (analyze, organize); 'er' suffixes to their 're' equivalents (center, meter, specter); 'backward' and 'toward' rather than 'backwards' and 'towards'; 'o' spellings in preference to their 'ou' equivalents (color, harbor); and words such as 'archeology' and 'homeopathy' instead of their equivalents that contain ligatures such as 'ae' and 'oe' (archaeology, homoeopathy).

In addition, in American English, single-word spellings are preferred to hyphenation: 'cooperate' vs 'co-operate'; 'microorganism' vs 'micro-organism'; 'reenter' vs 're-enter'.

And distinctions are less likely to be made between verb and noun forms: for example, 'licence', 'practice' (both noun and verb in American English) vs 'licence', 'practice' (noun) and 'license', 'practise' (verb), and 'defense' (noun in US English) vs 'defence' (noun in SA English).

Moreover, following a basic guideline that English should be spelt as it is spoken, American spellings that illustrate this include 'aging', 'dialog', 'jewelry', 'program' and 'skeptical'. ➤

American English usage	South African English usage
That <i>benefited</i> us greatly. Some questions <i>focused</i> on strategy.	That <i>benefitted</i> us greatly. Some questions <i>focused/focussed</i> on strategy.
analyze, organization, idolize, aging, analog, anemic, archeology, aluminum, artifact, backward, benefited, centered (on), color, defense, endeavor, focussed, homeopathy, jewelry, (kilo)meter, labeled, licence (v), maneuver, program, reenter, skepticism, skillful, specter, toward	analyse, organisation, idolising, ageing, analogue, anaemic, archaeology, aluminium, artefact, backwards, benefitted, centred (on), colour, defence, endeavour, focused, homoeopathy, jewellery, (kilo)metre, labelled, license (v), manoeuvre, programme, re-enter, scepticism, skilful, spectre, towards

Verbs

In American English usage, unlike in SA usage, the verb forms 'burned', 'learned' and 'spelled' are preferred to their 'burnt', 'learnt' and 'spelt' equivalents. And whereas in SA English, verbs such as 'license' and 'practise' are spelt with an 's' and their noun equivalents are spelt with a 'c', in American English, both the verb and the noun forms are spelt 'licence' and 'practice'.

Moreover, American English has a proclivity to use nouns as verbs: the noun 'impact', for instance, is used as a verb, whereas it is only a noun in SA usage (as in 'it has an impact on'). Another verb unique to American English is 'pled', the equivalent of which in SA English is 'pleaded'.

American English usage	South African English usage
He is <i>aging</i> noticeably. I should have <i>gotten</i> that right! That could <i>impact</i> us in the following ways ... She did not <i>lay</i> down as instructed. I have <i>licenced</i> my medical practice. The way translation is <i>practiced</i> . They <i>pled</i> guilty. You <i>spelled</i> that incorrectly. ICE <i>disappeared</i> that individual.	He is <i>ageing</i> noticeably. I should have <i>got</i> that right! That could <i>affect/influence</i> us .../That could <i>have an impact on</i> us ... She did not <i>lie</i> down as instructed. I have <i>licensed</i> my medical practice. The way translation is <i>practised</i> . They <i>pleaded</i> guilty. You <i>spelt</i> that incorrectly. ICE <i>caused the disappearance</i> of that individual.

Adverbs/prepositions

In a large number of contexts, there are significant differences between American and SA English usage of adverbs or prepositions. Some common instances are illustrated below. Three that are particularly apropos are 'likely', 'momentarily' and 'oftentimes'.

American English usage	South African English usage
<i>Additionally</i> , we can verify that ... They moved <i>backward</i> This should contribute <i>toward</i> ... <i>By contrast</i> <i>In light of</i> This will <i>likely</i> turn into a fiasco. We'll be with you <i>momentarily</i> . <i>Oftentimes</i> , we head off into nature.	<i>In addition</i> , we can verify that ... They moved <i>backwards</i> This should contribute <i>towards</i> ... <i>In contrast</i> , <i>By way of contrast</i> <i>In the light of</i> This will <i>probably/possibly</i> turn into a fiasco. We'll be with you <i>in a moment/in a short while</i> . We <i>often</i> head off into nature. ➤





Prepositions

As with adverbs, there are significant differences between American and SA English usage of prepositions. Some common instances are illustrated below. Three that are especially apropos are 'advocate for', 'as of' and 'different than'.

American English usage	South African English usage
Beat <i>around</i> the bush, all <i>around</i> the city	Beat <i>about</i> the bush, all <i>about</i> the city
As <i>of</i> 5 May, the inflation rate was ...	As <i>at</i> 5 May, the inflation rate was ...
I <i>visited with</i> my family last weekend.	I <i>visited</i> my family last weekend.
I <i>advocate for</i> women's rights.	I <i>advocate</i> women's rights/I am <i>an advocate of</i> women's rights.
<i>In light of</i> these developments	<i>In the light of</i> these developments
They were so kind <i>toward</i> me.	They were so kind <i>towards</i> me.
This is <i>different than</i> what we are used to.	This is <i>different from</i> what we are used to.
I <i>wrote</i> my brother about that.	I <i>wrote to</i> my brother about that.

Nouns and pronouns

Perhaps most prominent among the American noun-related usages that differ from SA equivalents are the use of 'data' as a singular noun, of 'how' instead of 'the way/the manner' and of the relative pronoun 'that' in reference to people (instead of 'who' or 'whom').

American English usage	South African English usage
The author analyses <i>how</i> translation plays a mediating role ...	The author analyses <i>the way/the manner in which</i> translation plays a mediating role ...
The <i>data is</i> presented as follows ...	The <i>data are</i> presented as follows ...
The <i>lay</i> of the land	The <i>lie</i> of the land
They stood in the <i>line</i> to vote.	They stood in the <i>queue</i> to vote.
A TV station executive <i>that</i> told them that their top priority is smooth delivery.	A TV station executive <i>who</i> told them that their top priority is smooth delivery.
You must <i>licence</i> your vehicle; we must <i>practice</i> what we preach.	Motorists must possess a valid driver's <i>licence</i> , that is, <i>license</i> themselves; that should be common <i>practice</i> ; we should <i>practise</i> what we preach.

What is important is that writers and editors must be sensitive to the English usages which the readers of their texts are able to identify with and will be comfortable with; and they should ensure that such usages meet their readers' expectations. Accordingly, they should render texts readily accessible to their intended audience, whichever English it is most familiar with. For the benefit of readers of South African publications, the choices we make as custodians of the language should be unequivocal and clear, not a mishmash. 🍃

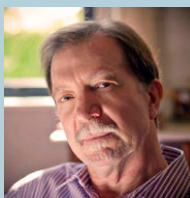
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A former teacher of English at both secondary and tertiary levels, **John** has been an avid 'improver of authors' words' for more than four decades now; he remains dedicated to making their texts read as clearly as possible (and in the process saving a reputation or two!). John is the (co-)author of several texts dealing with matters grammatical and stylistic, including, most recently, with Ken McGillivray, *Engleish, our Engleish: More common errors in South African English and how to resolve them* (MLA Publishers, 2026), *Oxford English grammar: The advanced guide* (OUP, 2015) and *grammar, punctuation and all that jazz ...* (MLA Publishers, 2019). He currently offers a personalised online English Grammar for Editors course aimed at those who need to brush up their English grammar and use of punctuation to support authors' intended meaning. Since 2000, he has been training copy editors and proofreaders for South Africa's book publishing industry and championing the professionalisation of our craft and its practitioners. To this end, he co-authored *Text editing: A handbook for students and practitioners* (UPA, Brussels, 2012) and has micro-published its translations into isiZulu and Sesotho.

Who's your colleague, anyway? Kevin Walker, Word Wrangler

Melissa Davidson

In this issue we have the privilege of featuring our fearless leader, Kevin Walker. From musical administrator to PEG's chairperson, Kevin's journey has been one of personable pragmatism, humorous nerdiness and continuous learning.

I recently set up a useful wildcard search in Microsoft Word and immediately sent Kevin a message to brag about my achievement. Our eclectic chair is an absolute whizz with this kind of thing and has the cleverest macros, shortcuts and workarounds to make his editing that much easier and more efficient (hence, 'Word/word wrangler').

This little anecdote says a lot about who Kevin is: curious, resourceful, always learning and exploring, and infinitely generous about sharing what he knows. Excellent qualities in an editor and a leader!

I first met Kevin two years ago, and he has impressed me ever since with his drive to always do better – in his work and in his capacity as the chairperson of PEG. Every decision and initiative starts with the question: 'How does this benefit our members and serve our profession?' He encourages contributions of any kind – ideas, suggestions, being on a committee or simply volunteering when you have the time – and makes sure you have the support you need to take something forward.

But what does he get up to when he's not chairing meetings or checking reports?

Taking the bait! From moonlighting to full-time freelancing

Like many of us, I suspect, Kevin fell into editing by way of a friend of a friend who had a paper that needed editing. At the time (around 2014), he was working as the music department administrator at St Stithians Boys' College in Johannesburg, and one of the extra jobs that found its way to him was editing the school magazine. As Kevin describes it: 'The art teacher who compiled the magazine left a few pages in the staffroom. And editors are like feral creatures – if you lay bait for us, we'll take it! I made a few scribbles and next thing I knew, I was one of the subeditors, learning InDesign and learning to edit. I even drew up a rather judgy style sheet – long before I really knew what a style sheet was.'

'... editors are like feral creatures –
if you lay bait for us, we'll take it!'

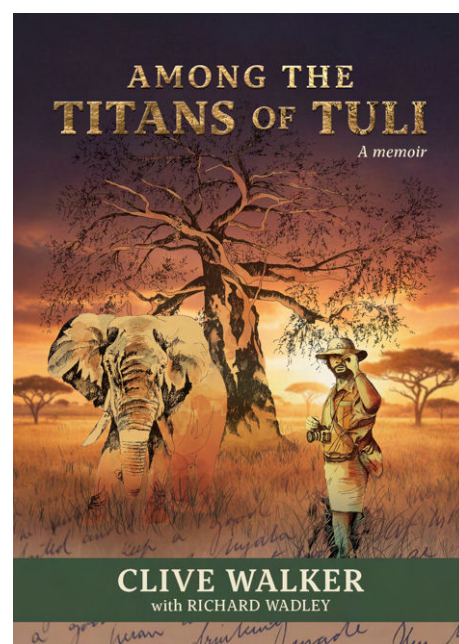
One freelance job led to another and, by 2022, it was clear that the moonlighting phase was over. Kevin decided to make the move to full-time freelancing and he hasn't looked back. Today, he works from his new home in Pretoria (having moved from Johannesburg in February this year), which he shares with his partner, Kgotatso, and two fluffy editorial assistants, Monty and Tino.

Elephant or elephants? The pragmatic descriptivist

Kevin works on a wide range of projects, from academic dissertations to full-length books, and can take a manuscript all the way from raw text to print-ready pages. A recent example is the wonderful memoir, *Among the Titans of Tuli*, by environmentalist Clive Walker (no relation). Kevin handled the editing, layout and typesetting, cover to cover. ➤



Kevin Walker



Kevin handled the editing, layout and typesetting of environmentalist Clive Walker's memoir *Among the Titans of Tuli*

He also grappled with the distinction between 'elephant' and 'elephants' (and 'lion' and 'lions' and 'giraffe' and 'giraffes' and many similar usages) when describing groups of wild animals. I remember us having this very debate over coffee and bagels, trying out various sentences and constructions to see if we could uncover a pattern that points to a rule. What I enjoyed about this conversation was not just the lovely linguistic geekiness of it but also what it revealed about Kevin's approach to language and editing. I'd call him a 'pragmatic descriptivist' – someone who knows 'the rules', keeps up with language change and doesn't force his own style choices on others.

For him, clarity, consistency and 'making it make sense'
are where editors add the most value.

For him, clarity, consistency and 'making it make sense' are where editors add the most value. A good spell-checking tool will find most typos and even grammatical errors. A good editor will find contradictions, point out ambiguous wording and draw attention to arguments that aren't clear.

Making editing less intimidating

Managing expectations when working with clients, especially students who may never have used an editor before, is something Kevin does particularly well.

He explains the different types of editing services he offers, discusses style choices upfront and even goes so far as to suggest using less-intimidating colours when tracking changes – you won't find any aggressive red strikethroughs in his documents! (I have started applying this in my own work and the results have been remarkable: people are more likely to view the text as an edited document than an overly corrected one.)

The best kind of word nerd

Like many editors, Kevin is something of a word nerd outside of work, but not the kind who reads style guides for fun! He enjoys cryptic crosswords, *New York Times* puzzles and language trivia. He also sings, can play the piano and organ ('competently, but by no means professionally,' he notes) and loves a good musical.

He shared a language-themed parody of Gilbert and Sullivan's famous 'Major-General's Song' with me a while ago, '[I Am the Very Model of a Pedant Quite Grammatical](#).' It's a wonderfully clever piece, and I feel it sums up the way I see Kevin is as a friend, a language practitioner and a leader: smart, witty, guaranteed to make you laugh, never taking anything too seriously and always seriously impressive. (I haven't quite convinced him to sing the full version at the next PEG meeting, though ...)

Editing tips from Kevin

Always think about the reader

When you're editing a text, always think about accessibility, clarity and making documents easier for real people to navigate and understand.

Manage client expectations early

Explain the editing process up front and clearly define the services you offer so your client understands what is – and is not – included in your quote.

Don't get too attached to 'rules'

Be pragmatic rather than rigid. Use your knowledge of language and style to choose what works best for the text, the audience and the client; then apply it consistently.

Learn the tools

Know the ins and outs of the software you use every day. In Word, you need a solid understanding of styles, page layout, formatting and Track Changes at the very least.

Automate repetitive tasks

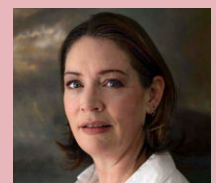
If a computer can reliably do something repetitive, let it. Use macros and automation for repetitive clean-up work, consistency checks and formatting tasks.



'Mess around until it works'

Formal training, help files, webinars and YouTube videos are excellent means of acquiring technical skills that will help in your editing practice. But you'll also learn a huge amount from creating a test document to experiment with the many tools and options available in the application you're using. Click, scroll, hover, open menus you usually ignore and learn by trial and error. This will build your skills AND your confidence. 🍀

Melissa is a full-time content editor at NTT DATA, a global technology business. An MBA graduate with more than 15 years' experience in freelance and in-house roles, she specialises in business writing, editorial governance and the use of AI to support high-quality scalable content in global marketing.



Engleish, our Engleish More common errors in South African English and how to resolve them (revised 2nd edition)

by John Linnegar and Ken McGillivray (2026)

Ricky Woods

When John Linnegar was approached by Pharos in 2009 to write the first edition of *Engleish, our Engleish*, it was touted as the 'most comprehensive guide to correct South African English usage'.

In responding to a question about the need for a second and revised edition, John admits:

'On re-reading the first edition, I noticed several lacunae that were not that evident when I published that first book, gaps that have emerged during 16 years:

- word usage and misuse I have identified as patterns in texts from around the world that I've been exposed to (now included in the common confusables section);
- the increasing usage/influence of American English in South African texts; and
- widespread problems with the use of the good old comma.'

He adds:

'Quite a few innovations in this edition were also stimulated by the research we did when writing *Writing and Editing Academic Texts*. In short, this edition brings the problems evident in the current everyday usage of South African writers to the attention of its readers – a number of which were not as apparent to me then as they are now.'

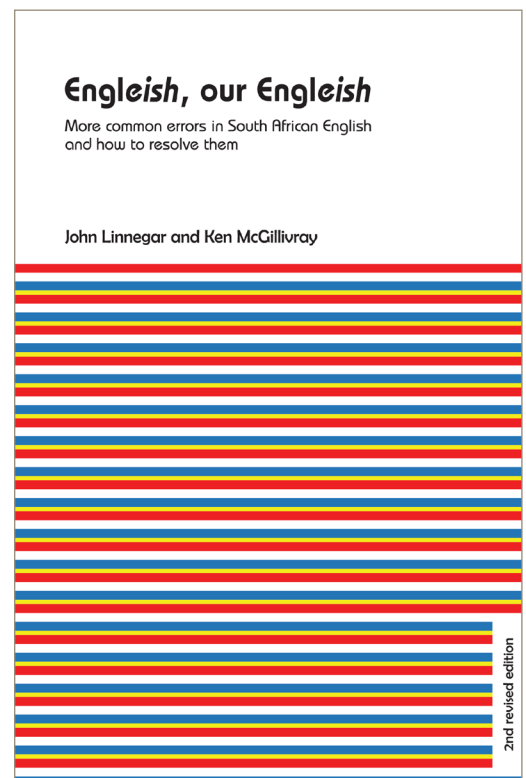
Sporting the now readily identifiable stripes of the MLA (McGillivray Linnegar Associates) Publishers imprint, this collaboration between John and Ken brings to the language practitioners' market everything that was in the first edition plus so much more.

The book is structured broadly into two sections: Grammar, and Common confusables. Part 1: Grammar takes a thorough look at the languages that influence South African English: Afrikaans, American English and our own indigenous languages. Numerous instances are given of incorrect usage and of how they can be fixed.

Among other examples, from Afrikaans comes an issue with subject-verb agreement or concord, as can be seen in the use of *Hy is* by die skool (He is at school) but also *Hulle is* by die skool (They are at school). Other problems occur because Afrikaans requires commas between clauses whereas English does not. Translating prepositions directly can also be very tricky, leading to unidiomatic English usage, eg *He lives by us* (translated literally from *Hy bly by ons*).

More recently, the effect of American English has been pervasive, initially because of our exposure to American film, but more recently to print as well. This influence can be seen particularly in spelling, with words like *analyze*, *color* and *defense* in place of the British or South African *analyse*, *colour* and *defence*. The American use of verbs (*gotten* and *impact* rather than *got* and *affect*) and adverbs (*additionally*, rather than *in addition*) have become commonplace, as has the use of prepositions – for instance, *I advocate for women's rights*, rather than *I advocate women's rights*/I am an *advocate of women's rights*.

Instances of English influenced by our speakers of indigenous African languages include the use of the present continuous tense, eg *He is having* a house in Gqeberha, rather than *He has* a house in Gqeberha, and the fact that some African languages do not distinguish between male and female pronouns. This can lead to constructions like *Johannes, she is sick*. ➤



Officialese is also dealt with briefly in Part 1, eg *concretise* and *conversationalise*, together with the growing use of nounisms or nominalisations such as *facadification*. The authors caution writers and editors alike to opt for Plain Language alternatives in an attempt to ensure that the intended audience is able to understand what has been written.

In a chapter titled 'Falling into a comma', this often misunderstood and certainly misused punctuation mark comes under careful scrutiny. A broad introduction seeks to clarify 'What is a comma and what is its origin?' My favourite of the descriptions they have enlisted comes from Lynn Truss, the well-known author of *Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*, who refers to the comma as '... a kind of scary grammatical sheepdog ... endlessly organising words into sensible groups and making them stay put ...'.

What follows is comprehensive: starting with the three main types of comma (listing, gapping and bracketing), the chapter expands on them by covering a wide range of their uses (such as connecting, pausing and indicating the passage of time) before moving on to incorrect uses of the comma (including comma splices, in adjective strings and their overuse).

Further chapters conclude Part 1. The ongoing use of the third-person singular *he/she* in place of a gender-neutral pronoun has been regarded by writers as cumbersome. So, official acceptance of the third-person plural *they/them* has resulted in far more reader-friendly writing. The authors discuss this and some ramifications in the chapter titled 'Gender blender'.

A few last chapters cover the issues of the subjunctive mood, infinitives, dangling participles, the misuse of past participles, and possessive pronoun use before a gerund.

Part 2: Common confusables is an alphabetised ready-reference selection of commonly confused words. Whether you are uncertain about *affect/effect*, *less/fewer* or *owing to/due to*, this is a source that should always be near at hand for you to consult.

A glossary of word classes and other terms concludes this text, together with examples of their usage.

This review has merely touched on the wealth of material contained in the revised edition of *Engleish, our Engleish*. The combined experience and expertise of John Linnegar and Ken McGillivray spans more than 60 years in English grammar, copy editing, proofreading and publishing, making them the ideal mentors for any speaker, writer or editor of South African English as we strive to understand both the mechanics of this language and the influences that affect it. 🌱

Ricky, now retired, was a high school English teacher for close on 40 years. She has spent the past 15 of them focusing more deliberately on upskilling for her post-retirement career. This entailed numerous webinars, John's online grammar course, editing courses run by UP and UCT, and a PEG mentorship. She works largely in academic editing but she has branched into editing school textbooks, non-fiction and even a little fiction. She qualified as an Accredited Text Editor (English) in 2021 and has been a member of the Accreditation Test examining team since 2023.



#DoingDiversity

Doing diversity: Editing in the age of AI and DEI

Alexis Grewan

In the digital age, resources permitting, we can access professional development across the globe, learn from a diverse range of colleagues and, in turn, share that. Fellow PEG member Ursula Arends and I were fortunate to attend EFACon 2026, the online conference of the [Editorial Freelancers Association](#), held on 25–27 June. We'll reflect on more of our experiences in due course but wanted specifically to capture what we learnt in two presentations that touched on artificial intelligence (AI): how to think about writing in the age of AI, on the one hand, and AI and DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion), on the other.

On writing in the age of AI

Presenter John Warner emphasised the truth that it is only humans who write. We'd do well to remember that as editors. Writing of all types is a by-product of real-life experiences, emotions, values and beliefs. It is complex and it is meaningful. Large language models (LLMs) that generate text do not have life experiences – they cannot create meaning or respond from a place of understanding. LLMs (a type of generative AI) work on patterns and predictable outcomes; they access content that already exists, and the content generated lacks depth and meaning. ➡



What does this mean for our role as language practitioners?

- We have skills and knowledge that we bring to written texts.
- We create necessary and important connections with authors, their texts and their targeted audiences through understanding intention, depth and nuance.
- We can use forms of AI in our work, but should be mindful not to let AI, in pursuit of speed and efficiency in our work, compromise the quality and importance of the connections that we build.
- We can help authors to establish or retain ownership of what they create, rather than maintaining their dependence on AI-generated copy that is clean but shallow.

The closing point made by this presenter was this: don't hide your expertise.

On AI and DEI

From understanding what using AI can do to the depth and authenticity of texts, and our role in facilitating or challenging that, we moved to a presentation on understanding the risks of AI-generated texts to editorial ethics and standards. Tiffany Vakilian spoke about DEI as an aspect of our work that should be considered all the time. Conversations about DEI, and AI for that matter, keep evolving and should be engaged in continuously, even if they trigger different things for different people (both negative and positive).

Tiffany spoke specifically about the context of working with AI-generated text and the editor's role in monitoring ethical editorial standards. Four key points were discussed:

- AI is known to amplify biases.
- AI flattens cultural nuance.
- AI misrepresents communities.
- AI produces outdated terminology.

As editors, we should never substitute AI for human editorial judgement. We can use our knowledge of the distinction between what is uncomfortable and what is harmful in texts to edit carefully and respectfully. If our goal as language practitioners is about clearer communication, stronger understanding and greater human connection, then we should keep asking these five questions when confronted with AI-generated (and human-generated) texts that could be harmful:

- Is this accurate?
- Is this fair?
- Is this clear?
- Is it contextualised?
- Is this responsible?

While we don't want to over-edit and risk censorship or under-edit and risk enabling bias and misinformation, we need to strike a balance by knowing what to fix, what to query and, after querying, what to leave alone. Remember, uncomfortable content is not necessarily harmful – it is the role of the editor to establish accuracy and clarity.

These two topics were enough to confirm that AI is not as big a threat as many of us seem to believe.

These two topics were enough to confirm that AI is not as big a threat as many of us seem to believe. As shared by Tiffany Vakilian and John Warner, our humanness is needed more now than ever before. And we have an obligation to expand *that* awareness and advocate *that* aspect of our work among colleagues, authors and audiences. 🌱



Clean copy, on time, makes sense. Alexis is ethical, vigilant, disciplined and reliable. She is a collaborator bent on playing a role in keeping things moving for all in our field (freelancing and copy-editing). She is particularly excited about her initiative CREDIT (editing to make things better). You can read more about this at alexisgrewan.co.za.

Wat bring Kaaps narrie tafel toe?

Chevān Van Rooij

#KaapsIsReal

Kaaps kommie empty handedie. It kō oekie net men 'n lys woore, 'n paa spelvorms of 'n klompi expressions wat wag om explain te wōti. Kaaps bring history, sprekes, klank, grammar, ways van meanings maak wat al lank al exist – offit nou altyt welcome was in klaskames, boeke, wooreboeke of intellectual spaces of nie.

En as haa nie plek aani tafel issie, was Kaaps nog nooit helplessie. Kaaps set sy eie tafel op. It invite mense om te sit, te lyste, te stry, te lag, te onthou en om te lee. Dis een riede hoeko die recent wêk oo Kaaps saak maak. 'n Wooreboek en 'n grammar guide, byvoobeelt, maaki vi Kaaps mee real as wattit wassie. Speakers het hai reets gedoen. Wat hierri publications wel doen is, hulle maakit moeilike vi annes om te pretend dat Kaaps gin structure, gin intellectual liewe of gin plek in serious taalwêk hetti.

'n Kleine woot wyssit dydelik: *mos*

Mos is *mos* easy om te recognise, ma nie altyt easy om te translate ie. In siekere circles, noem hulle *mos* 'n discourse particle; in annes 'n pragmatic marker. Som noemit oek 'n modal particle. Al wat belangrik is vi ōs, is dat *mos* nie nieuwe descriptive content add aan 'n proposition of sin nie – soes, byvoobeelt, 'n naamwoot sal doenie. 'n Mens kannie na *mos* innie wêrelt pointtie, issie 'n objecttie. Nog once, wanne *mos* inne sentence gebryk wōt, vianne dit hoe hai sentence gereceive wōt. *Mos* sê nie virri listener wat gesê wōtie (soes in wattie semantic meaning van 'n sentence issie), dit sê hoe die speaker expek dattie proposition gereceive moet wōt.

Consider die sentence: '*Ōs wil mos nou agteoo sit.*' In my thesis translate ek die sentence as: 'We want, as you know, to sit backwards these days.' *Mos*, soes ōs reets boe gesêrrit, addie nieuwe semantic meaning ie. *Mos* mēk ie information as shared knowledge. In essence, sê *mos* hieso: die issie nieuwe information ie, ōs wiettit reets, ma it maak nou saak innie conversation.

Hai issie most general function van *mos* innie data wat ek gestudy et. Ma *mos* se shared knowledge function kō in twie flavours in: 'local shared knowledge' soes innie voobeelt boe, knowledge wat tussenni immediate speaker en hearer behoort. En soms issit wyer, iets wat as mee 'general knowledge' gereceive is. Byvoobeelt: '*n Mens moen mos gelt kan maak*' ('A person should, as is common knowledge, be able to earn money'). Hieso wōtti proposition as mee socially recognisable opgeniem.

Ma *mos* wyssi net na dit wat kla bekend issie. It kan oek 'n speaker help om 'n reason te gie. Vat byvoobeelt: '*Dis mos 'n honest living,*' wat ekke in my wêk translate as 'This is an honest living'. In hirri konteks praati speaker oo hout vikoep asse way om gelt te maak. Die utterance men *mos* doen mee as ommi speaker se opinion te gie; it function asse reason vi prior discourse. Hieso kan mens oek sê die sentence men *mos* in antwoot 'n moontlike waarom-vraag: *Waarom hout vikoep? Waarom wōt hierri tiepe wêk as acceptable gesien? Mos* help ommi riede as sufficient te mēk.

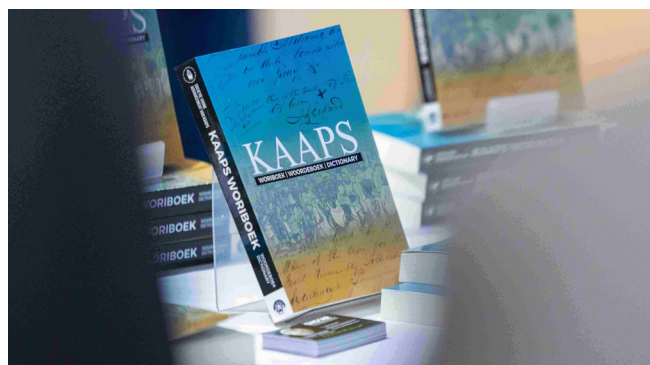
Haa isse 'n nogge use van *mos* in Kaaps wat prominent is. Die specific use van *mos* vistēk 'n proposition; it mēkkie speaker se commitment to what is being said. For example: '*Die glas is mos skoon*' ('This glass is definitely clean'). Hieso convey *mos* ie 'n shared knowledge meaning ie. Instead, it mēk certainty of emphasis. In anne woore, die speaker stellie proposition as iets wat established is. Die function van *mos* wōt oek dydelik gesien wanne *mos* annie end vanne sentence staan, soes in: '*Sy't 'n massive impact gemaak mos*' ('She definitely made a massive impact.')

Vi editors, translators en language practitioners maakit saak. Om Kaaps responsibly te edit, kan mensie woore soes *mos* treat as iets wat jy soema net kan ytlossie, of net as 'non-standard' versions van iets annes nie. 'n Kleine woot kan die relation tussenni speaker en listener dra. It kan wys of 'n proposition, byvoobeelt, shared, of emphasised wōt. Vat jy it te vinnag yt, dan lykie sentence miskien nog complete, ma sy social meaning is heelwat ytgedun.

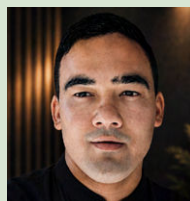
Soe, wat bring Kaaps narrie tafel toe?

It bring mee as net vocabulary. It bring 'n grammar van relation: ways om te wys wat speakers saam wiet, wat hulle wil hē annes moet accept, en wat hulle as obvious treat. It bring taalkennis yt communities wat nog altyt men structure gepraat et, selfs toe institutions nie men care gelyste et ie.

Kaaps was *mos* altyt hie. En toe daa nie 'n seat reg wassie, het Kaaps in elk geval sy eie tafel gebou. Wil jy ko sit? 🍷



The *Kaaps Dictionary*, launched earlier this year (<https://www.uwc.ac.za/news-and-announcements/news/kaaps-dictionary-launch-at-uw>)



Chevān is a PhD candidate and Associate Lecturer in Linguistics at the University of the Western Cape. His doctoral thesis, *Mapping mos in Kaaps: Towards a model of syntactic distribution and pragmatic functions*, is currently under examination. He serves as Secretary of the Society for the Advancement of Kaaps. His research centres on Kaaps syntax and pragmatics, which also extends to semiotics and forensic linguistics. At UWC, he teaches Research, Business Communication and Design Features of Language. He is also the writer and one of the producers of the short film *Èrens innie Toekoms*.

#AI:FriendOrFoe?

Beyond the uncooperative projector: Generative AI for editors

Cassidy Roberts



The second branch meeting of 2026 for Western Cape PEGgers was held on Saturday, 9 May, and commenced with the regional AGM.

The WC regional committee was unanimously re-elected and two newly voted-in members were welcomed: Lavelle Nomdo (member at large) and Cassidy Roberts ('scribe extraordinaire'). Members received a report on the branch affairs of the preceding financial year and an update on the work-in-progress library at WA Rossouw Primêre Skool in Montagu, driven by PEG Western Cape member Claire du Toit. Members were asked to consider donating books for Grades 2–9 learners to get stuck into. Many thanks to those who have already donated!

The meat and potatoes of the branch meeting, savoured by a near-full house, was 'Beyond the hype: generative AI for editors', a presentation by WC PEG veteran Renee Moodie and new member Anne Taylor. Renee and Anne – editors, writers and colleagues at Safe Hands (SA) – made the ambitious switch from print to digital journalism in 1999 and have been educating themselves on relevant technology ever since. Despite the minor setback of an uncooperative digital projector, they provided an engaging and balanced overview of generative AI current models, the associated risks and how to mitigate them, along with the practicality of generative AI for editors. A pre-emptive survey of attendees indicated that the majority of members were 'curious but cautious' about generative AI and seeking advice on how to incorporate it sensibly into their workflows.

As explained by Renee and Anne, AI has existed in popular services for some time now, for example: integrated spelling- and grammar-checking features in word processors, facial recognition software on mobile devices and if-then algorithms used by websites to push related media or products based on user activity. Generative AI, as the lay world knows it (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, etc), debuted in 2022 and has rocketed to corporate, academic and household relevance due to its marketing as a productivity tool.

Renee stressed the importance of identifying the different categories of AI correctly. The terms *artificial intelligence* and *generative AI* have become conflated in recent years; AI, when used by tech grifters and laypeople, now refers almost exclusively to generative AI and has thus overtaken the previous pop culture definition of artificial intelligence (think robotics, *Star Trek* and incorrectly selecting bicycles in blurry CAPTCHA tests). Generative AI refers specifically to AI models that have been trained to generate content, such as text, images and videos, based on existing (scanned, scraped or input) data.

The risks and benefits of generative AI for editors were described as follows:

- Risks: a lack of or misrepresented privacy policies; the flagrant theft of copyrighted materials and intellectual property; dangerous environmental emissions by AI data centres; an over-reliance on AI, leading to poor output.
- Benefits: optimised research; consistency when editing or proofreading; summarising or outlining hefty documents.

The environmental impact of AI data centres is alarming, although, as Renee pointed out, this is unfortunately not a new problem for the technology sector.

In the age of generative AI and the increasing push to 'automate' research, writing and editing, our presenters maintained that human judgement cannot be replaced by a machine. Although editing as a field is changing – as it changed when we digitalised manuscripts and again when we introduced features like spellcheck and track changes – the role of the editor remains and will remain consistent: to improve the structure, flow and comprehension of texts.

To conclude, Renee and Anne encouraged us to be curious but cautious regarding all forms of AI. Although editors should use all available tools to improve productivity, we should fact-check the products of generative AI, exercise caution when handling sensitive data, maintain transparency with employers or clients and minimise its unnecessary use.

Thank you to Renee and Anne for their illuminating presentation. 🌱



Renee Moodie (left) and Anne Taylor presenting on generative AI in editing



Members fill in the presenters' questionnaire about problematic AI usage



Cassidy is an English editor (professionally) and writer (obsessively). She cut her nitpicking teeth editing the fiction of peers in writing communities and began her

professional career in 2024 as a freelance editor. Her editing passion is fiction, though she is happiest whenever she is shepherding lost and shivering punctuation into its rightful place.

#UnderstandingLibel

Words that wound: Understanding libel as editors

Graham Alston



On 4 May 2026, a group of KZN PEG members met online for an informative session titled 'Libel 101 for editors', which was an introduction to defamation law in South Africa. The meeting comprised explanatory slides and Q&A and was presented by our own legal eagle, Ashwini Singh.

Ashwini, a KwaZulu-Natal PEG member and multidisciplinary academic and author, is more than qualified to educate us on legal matters. With a Master of Laws in Medical Law, a Postgraduate Diploma in Forensic Investigation and Criminal Justice and a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Science, she is an ad hoc lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's School of Law and an examiner at Milpark Education's School of Commerce.

What I learnt

Do libel cases in the news catch our attention as editors? Ashwini gently challenged that assumption, guiding us through the subject in a clear and well-organised way. She grounded her presentation in a current example from social media. The IOL News headline of 6 May 2026 – 'Musa Khawula faces contempt of court for refusing to retract defamation against Malema' – illustrates just how real and present the risk of libel action is in media work. From there, Ashwini walked us through the essentials.

The South African legal framework

South African law has three main branches: common law, statutory law, and customary law. Common law draws on case law, precedents, and judgments. Overarching all three is the 1996 Constitution, under which defamation and libel are primarily governed. Chapter 2, Section 10 guarantees the right to dignity, which includes the right to reputation. The landmark *Khumalo v Holomisa* case confirmed that reputation does indeed fall under the constitutional right to dignity.

What is defamation?

Defamation or libel is a civil delict – a civil wrong – with the burden of proof based on the balance of probabilities, unlike criminal law, which requires proof beyond a reasonable doubt. Civil claims may be brought under the *actio iniuriarum*, which protects personality rights such as dignity and reputation. The elements of defamation are:

- **A false statement** – proven false on the balance of probabilities
- **Harm** – the statement must damage the subject's reputation
- **Reference and publication** – it must identify the person and be communicated to a third party, whether verbally or in writing.

The consequences can include financial compensation, an interdict (injunction), an apology or a retraction.

Available defences

- **Truth and public interest** – a true statement made in the public interest does not constitute defamation.
- **Privilege** – statements made under oath in judicial proceedings are protected; perjury is treated as a separate offence.

Advice for editors

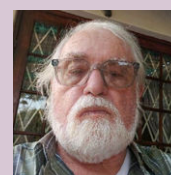
My main takeaways are:

- Include an indemnity clause stating that the work remains that of the author in your editing certificate for every project.
- We need to alert our clients to any potential libel by proactively flagging any content that may be defamatory or potentially harmful to someone's reputation.
- Document everything. Use Track Changes in Word documents to record edits. Keep records of all email and WhatsApp correspondence related to editorial decisions.
- Verify facts and sources by ensuring all statements are accurate and can be substantiated.
- Confirm that statements do not unjustly harm a person's reputation and that content does not wrongly refer to individuals or groups.
- Consult legal counsel if needed.

Ashwini's presentation was both engaging and practical. The list above offers editors a useful guide to safeguarding their work in the fast-paced world of media editing. 🌱



Ashwini Singh



Graham is a retired English lecturer and long-time member of PEG. He has served as a representative for the PEG KZN region on the National Executive since the Covid pandemic. He is a member of the KZN PEG planning committee. His interests are reading, writing and serving in his local church.

#EditorsViews

‘From manuscript to marketplace’ across publishing sectors: A panel discussion

Linda Fick



The most recent meeting of the Gauteng region on 22 April 2026 was an online panel discussion entitled ‘From manuscript to market: An editor’s view of publishing’, in which several Gauteng members from different publishing sectors and roles shared their perspectives.

The panel, expertly facilitated by Stephanie Brough, illuminated the often-invisible journey a manuscript takes before it reaches a reader’s hands, with panellists presenting a behind-the-scenes look at how scholarly, traditional and self-published works are sourced, assessed, shaped and brought to market.

Anne Denniston set the stage for the discussions by opening with a career retrospective stretching back to 1974, when she earned a higher diploma in librarianship and toured a print shop as part of her training. Her decades at the South African National Council for the Blind, and later as a freelancer, gave her a front-row seat to publishing’s shift from manual desktop layout to today’s digital workflows.

Waldo Grové and Linda Fick then outlined the scholarly journal publishing process, emphasising the central role of peer review. Nicolette Gardiner explained the differences between traditional publishing and self-publishing, comparing the costs, timelines, roles and responsibilities. Robyn Veary, developmental editor and self-published author, described the developmental editing process and how it differs from traditional and academic editing, highlighting the challenge of managing authors’ expectations and acting as their guide.

Barry Gilder spoke as someone who has experienced the process from both the editor’s and the author’s perspective, having published memoirs and novels through the traditional publishing route.

Despite the many differences between publishing routes, there are also commonalities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, artificial intelligence (AI) ran as a thread through nearly every segment of the discussion. The panellists were candid that AI tools can assist meaningfully with brainstorming, drafting and detecting plagiarism, but they also flagged real risks: hallucinated citations, confidentiality breaches when manuscripts are fed into AI systems and the difficulty of detecting AI-generated text reliably.

The panel closed on a note of shared responsibility. Across every sector represented, it was clear that editors function as quiet custodians of quality and clarity, even as their roles shift to meet the demands of academic rigour, commercial publishing timelines or the author-driven world of self-publishing. For authors navigating any of these paths, the panel’s message was consistent: understand your contract, protect your rights and never underestimate the value of a skilled editor.

Overall, the panel offered rich insights into the collaborative and dynamic world of editing and publishing, underscoring the crucial behind-the-scenes work that supports authors and broadens readership. 🌱

Disclosure: NoteGPT was used to create a summarised transcript of the panel discussion for reference.

Gauteng 2026 Wednesday, 22 April 18:00 - 20:00 Online

From manuscript to market: An editor's view of publishing

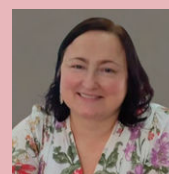
Workflows
Academic publishing
AI in the publishing sector
Hybrid publishing
Budgets
Published authors
Traditional publishing
Timelines
Digital
Self-publishing
Analogue

Join us for a panel discussion with:

- experienced Gauteng members
- across publishing sectors
- in a range of roles

RSVP: See link in email

Professional EDITORS' Guild 30+ Est 1993
Pioneering excellence in editing



Linda works in the Scholarly Publishing Unit of the Academy of Science of South Africa and is the Managing Editor of the *South African Journal of Science*.

She joined the journal's editorial team in 2009 and has been a member of the Professional Editors' Guild since 2010. She holds a PhD in Physiology from the University of the Witwatersrand and a Certificate in Editing from the University of Pretoria. She has a strong interest in advancing African science to a global audience, in making science accessible through accessible language and in building writing capacity in emerging researchers.

#ParticipationRocks

Celebrating the value of participation

Kate Davies



Learning and participation have been at the heart of PEG Eastern Cape activities this quarter.

Learning sessions

We held two workshops on MS Word formatting, focusing on paragraph styles, heading levels, numbering, tables of contents and adding and applying templates. A lot was covered, but members can refresh their memories by accessing the slides and recordings that are available in the PEG EC Resources Library on Google Drive.

In April, I led an interactive workshop on style sheets. The session focussed on the importance of the editor's style sheet, covering why they should be used, how to create them and what they should include. The session elicited several observations on the different ways to create and use style sheets, highlighting the fact that there is no single correct approach and that editors should use a system that works for them and the genre they are working in.

Nikki Watkins gave a motivating talk on how to find and keep work, exploring various avenues from academic editing to Amazon publishing. She showed members how to use platforms such as Upwork and Fiverr and provided ideas for accessing fiction-editing opportunities and working with self-publishing authors. She also encouraged upskilling through online channels like Udemmy.

PEG EC Newsletter

On 1 May, the first edition of the PEG EC Newsletter was mailed to members. Consisting of a mix of technical tips and tricks, industry news, some light-hearted introductions to PEG EC members and more, it was well received by members. The newsletter will be compiled and issued at the beginning of every second month.

Eastern Cape regional AGM

At our AGM on 2 May, the incumbent office-bearers were re-elected and various working groups were formed. The learning sessions working group is now busy devising an enticing programme of online activities while the AT Support team has arranged several small-group workshops for members who intend to write the accreditation test.

PEG EC 2025 Participation Award

During the regional AGM, we awarded the inaugural PEG EC Participation Award to Simone Wray. This award recognises a member of the PEG EC group who actively engages with the activities of the group by contributing their time or expertise or simply by participating regularly in PEG EC events and activities. The award acknowledges the value of members who contribute to the life of the group in whatever way they can.

During the 2025/26 period, Simone attended almost every learning session we presented and, despite preferring to stay out of the limelight, was always actively engaged, contributing to discussions and asking questions. She has been an invaluable member of the learning sessions working group, always available to act as a sounding board or to offer an opinion. She contributed ideas for both topics and speakers and assisted with the logistics of the schedule. She also helped with the in-person meeting in Boknes and stepped in at the last minute to proofread the first edition of the PEG EC newsletter.

Simone's path to editing has been an interesting one. She trained as a nurse and midwife before working in administrative roles across a range of industries. After spending 20 years as an accountant in the engineering and construction sector, she left East London to settle in the small coastal hamlet of Boknes, where she completed a copy-editing course and embarked on a new career. Today, she works as an academic editor and transcriber while providing part-time bookkeeping services to a small business. When she is not working, Simone enjoys pottering in the garden, swimming in the ocean, reading, making cheese and volunteering both at her local library and as a medical first responder. She shares her home with three dogs and a semi-feral cat.

We were lucky to be able to present Simone with her award formally at an in-person get-together at Maureen Quin's Sculpture Garden in Alexandria (see Carol's report). Heading into 'dissertation season', we look forward to some respite from the routine of work through the fascinating talks and workshops scheduled for the coming months. 🐾



Kate has been a full-time freelance editor in Boknesstrand since 2021 and achieved ATE status in 2025. She serves as the regional chair of PEG Eastern Cape.

When she isn't in front of her computer, she enjoys fishing with her husband and cheese and wine with her daughter. Stephen King is by far her favourite author.

#QuinSculpture

A visit to a sculpture garden in Alexandria

Carol Leff



A small group of Eastern Cape PEG members gathered at noon on Saturday, 16 May 2026, at **Maureen Quin's Sculpture Garden** in Alexandria. Since we had all travelled from different directions (Kleinemonde, Port Alfred, Cannon Rocks, Makhandla and Gqeberha), the little farming town of Alexandria was a sensible central point in the middle of nowhere for us to meet. The Quin Sculpture Garden is easy to find as it is clearly signposted along Voortrekker Street where the R72 passes through the town.

After ringing the doorbell beneath a bougainvillea archway, we were greeted by Maureen's daughter, Dorothy du Plessis, an artist in her own right (it's true that the apple never falls far from the tree).

Entering the Quin Garden is akin to walking into another world. Tall ancient trees provide a protective canopy over an array of creatures that inhabit Maureen's sanctuary of luscious plants and small ponds. I say 'creatures' because Maureen's sculptures are exactly that – creations that are alive. The garden pulses with other life as well, such as the very old but active beehive in one of the trees near Nelson Mandela's likeness in bronze. Birds chirp in the foliage, cheerful company for the sculpted mythic figures and animal shapes among the shrubbery and the winding stone paths. The sculptures inhabit the landscape as though they have been there all along, revealing the talent of this unique artist.

A table had been laid out for the eight of us on the lawn in front of the monumental head of 'The Rearing Arab Stallion', the celebrated 2007 commission that was erected in the hall of the Gold Souk in the Dubai Mall near the Burj Khalifa in Dubai. As we were about to learn, the stallion's pale plaster cast in the Quin Garden, now weathered by years outdoors, offers a glimpse into the complex process that precedes the creation of the final bronze.

We had each brought something to share for lunch, which we added to the table beneath the powerful horse's gaze. While we waited for the rest of our party to arrive, Dorothy invited us to stroll through the gardens and told us that Maureen would join us soon.

We walked along hadeda-dropping pathways (yes, they nest in one of the big, old trees above) and admired the wildlife and figure studies that peeked out from behind the greenery. The entanglement of art and nature is evident everywhere.

Once everyone had arrived and was seated, we were welcomed enthusiastically by Kate Davies, PEG Eastern Cape's Regional representative. While general congratulatory cheer followed in recognition of Maureen Quin's recent honorary doctorate from Rhodes University, the renowned sculptor was humble as she greeted us and launched into a captivating talk about her art.

Maureen spoke freely and with passion when she explained the complex process of creating a bronze sculpture. We sat, riveted, ➤



Charlotte by Maureen Quin (Photo from Maureen Quin's website: www.quin-art.co.za)



PEG EC lunch at the Quin Sculpture Garden (Photo: Kate Davies)



Back row: Simone Wray, Kate Davies, Nikki Watkins and Ursula Barnard; Front row: Carol Leff, Elly Grossman, Maureen Quin and Paul Mason (Photo: Dorothy du Plessis)

as she detailed the three-dimensionality of sculpture, the angles, the composition. 'The minute you go beyond realism,' she said, 'then you can play.' She added that she enjoys hearing about the different interpretations of her sculptures and humorously told us that some people believed that the reclining female torso in the nearby pond was a crocodile! We all laughed when she related the story of a visitor whose child ran out of the studio to tell his mom that all he saw there were "*n hele klomp kaal vrouens*".

After Maureen's talk, we settled into enjoying our feast. There were ants on the chairs. There were mozzies biting my ankles. The garden was certainly abuzz with life. It was a pure delight to eat al fresco beneath blue skies, as our gathering had been postponed by a week due to unusually stormy weather and heavy downpours. That Saturday was a perfectly still and sunny autumn day and we enjoyed one another's company face-to-face instead of via a Zoom screen.

Editing is what had brought us all together and, over lunch, we talked about what we were (or were not) working on and the advantages of further learning opportunities provided by our belonging to PEG.

The value of PEG was further emphasised after lunch when Kate's divine single-portion PEG *melkert* desserts made their Oscar appearance. Yes! The PEG logo was cinnamon-sprinkled on top of delicious *melkerts*! (and I am using exclamation marks here because Kate's desserts deserve them *without edits*!)

Finishing off the lunch on another high note, the PEG Eastern Cape Participation Award was presented by Kate to Simone Wray, followed by applause and praise. Truly well deserved, Simone.

The gathering of this handful of PEG members in a small town many may not even have heard of, in the garden of a world-renowned sculptor, was something special indeed. Thanks are due to our local representative, Kate, for bringing us together.

I would also like to acknowledge the graciousness of our Alexandria hosts, Maureen Quin and Dorothy du Plessis. The fact that Maureen continues to work at the age of 92 is astounding and she still has ideas for more sculptures to come. Indeed, the day after our visit, she was to travel with Dorothy to a foundry in Cape Town, where she would no doubt be found hands-on in the subsequent steps of the creative process on another sculpture. 🌿

For more information on the Quin Sculpture Garden, see <https://quin-art.co.za/quin-sculpture-garden/>



Carol Leff and Paul Mason in the sculpture garden (Photo: Kate Davies)



Carol has a PhD in Literary Studies, is a freelance editor, poet and self-taught artist. She is the author of *The Afropolitan Flâneur in Literature* (Cambridge Scholars, 2022) and a collection of poetry titled *Flashes* (Aerial, 2009). Carol joined PEG in 2023 and has the grand ambition of sitting PEG's accreditation test one day when she grows up. For now, she is still learning. Since retiring from Rhodes University where she served as a publications manager until 2024, Carol continues to play with words.