The opening article in the July/August 1992 issue of *Key Words: The Newsletter of the American Society of Indexers* suggests some rules for indexing genealogical research. ‘Every-Name Indexing’ by James N. Jackson provides useful guidelines for name indexers, which can be of value to subject indexers as well. Jackson notes, ‘Regardless of the list of rules chosen, the underlying thrust should be toward using consistent methods of quickly producing a quality index that can be used productively by researchers.’ Jackson’s indexing interests include genealogical society quarterlies, county histories, and family newsletters.

‘The User-Friendly Index’ by Celeste Newbrough, feature article of ‘PR Action Line’, describes a user-friendly index as comprehensive, accurate, consistent, and the result of an extremely rigorous reading of the book. The article is adapted from an address given at the 1992 annual convention of the Textbook Authors Association. Newbrough says, “There is a truism that “you can’t judge a book by its cover”. Of course books are judged by their covers, but the intelligent browser will investigate further, will open the book and immediately flip to its last few pages: the index. In addition to being a tool for reading and research, the index is the major “interface” to the potential reader, by which a book is often judged and evaluated.” Newbrough goes on to provide a ‘fresh look at what an index is and how it is created’—a look equally useful to authors and indexers.

‘A Seminar on Indexing’ by Joseph Casey for the ‘Journal Watch’ column takes a look at a seminar on indexing books presented by past ASI president Bella Weinberg. ‘Electronic Shoebox’ features reviews of indexing software. Linda Fotters reviews MACREX Version 5.0, and notes, ‘MACREX has all the features a professional indexer needs for almost any kind of project, and more.’ Hardware requirements for MACREX are IBM PC family or compatibles with 840K memory, and two diskette drives or a diskette drive and hard disk. A hard disk drive is recommended. ‘Getting to Business’, serving the business needs of freelance indexers, features ‘Making a Will’ by Elaine P. English and Gail E. Ross, lawyers at a firm specializing in publishing and other media law that offers a legal services plan to members of the Council of Writers Organizations (CWO).

The September/October 1992 *Key Words* opens with, ‘No, You Can’t be Replaced by a Computer’ by Jessica Milstead. This considers ways in which indexers’ jobs are being affected by computers. Computer-assisted indexing is discussed, and Milstead states that this type of indexing ‘actually represent[s] an opportunity for a new kind of work for indexers’. Indexers’ jobs are not remaining static, and it is beneficial for us to learn about indexing within the database environment. Milstead’s work gives us an informative look at this environment.

The ‘Indexing Workshop’ features ‘Indexing as Entertainment’ by Frances S. Lennie. Lennie, ASI’s Treasurer, visits her homeland and the Society of Indexers (SI) Conferences in Chester. The conference, according to Lennie, ‘had all the right ingredients: interesting and diverse subjects, very good speakers, and excellent company’. The ‘Getting Down to Business’ column presents ‘Finding Friends Electronically’ by Marilyn Rowland. Having a computer, modem, telephone line, and an online service can put you in touch with bulletin boards which can be a great way for indexers to connect. Rowland discusses three electronic bulletin board services: Prodigy, The well, and INDEX-L.

The twenty-fifth annual meeting of the American Society of Indexers is announced in the November/December 1992 issue of *Key Words*. ‘Indexing, Providing Access to Information: Looking Back, Looking Ahead’ is the theme for ASI’s 25th annual meeting, to be held in Alexandria, Virginia, 20–22 May 1993. The preliminary conference program lists preconference professional development programs to be held 20 May, followed by a reception that evening.

The opening article, ‘Should ASI members be accredited?’ is a debate on the pros and cons of a critical and vexed issue for ASI. Anne Leach gives an introduction, while Hans Wellisch provides the pro side of the issue, with Nancy Mulvany providing the con.

‘Standards Watch’ presents ‘Index Standard Debated’ by Pat Kuhr, a report of a panel discussion on the revised NISO Standard on Indexes. ‘ASIS ’92: An Indexer’s Perspective’ by Bella Hass Weinberg reports on the indexing content of the 55th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Information Science (ASIS). ‘Indexing Beyond Words’ by Matthew Spence provides a preview of the ASI Golden Gate Chapter Mid-Winter Conference, focusing on indexing needs in the 21st century.

The ‘Electronic Shoebox’ features a review by Nancy Mulvany of DeScribe Version 3.0. Mulvany notes that DeScribe has ‘the infrastructure for a very powerful..."
Australian Society of Indexers

Activities

National/Victorian Branch

On 22 July, the Victorian Branch held a general meeting at which Geraldine Suter, winner of the 1991 Indexers Medal, gave a talk on the complexities of newspaper indexing. Geraldine received her award for the index to the Melbourne newspaper *The Argus* for the year 1860. The Victorian Branch ran a very successful repeat of its 1991 course on back-of-book indexing on six Monday evenings beginning 17 August. All 20 available places for the course were rapidly filled. Max McMaster, Victorian Branch committee member and former President, gave a talk entitled 'What to consider when doing an index' to students in the Graduate Scientific and Technical Writing course at Rusden College on 31 August.

New South Wales Branch

On September 16 the NSW Branch held its AGM at which one new person (Mary Turner) was elected to the Committee:

Presidents: Alan Walker; Secretary: Michael Wyatt; Treasurer: Kingsley Siebel; Committee: Christine Winning, Lorraine Doyle, Garry Cousins, Mary Turner.

At this meeting Kingsley Siebel reported on his attendance at the SI Conference in Chester, and there was a discussion on practical problems and current trends in indexing.

A general meeting was held on 24 October which was devoted to Mackrex.

ACT Region Branch

A meeting was held in Canberra, ACT on 22 October to establish an ACT Region Branch of AusSI. There was good support, with some 30 people attending, and as a result the formation of the Branch should be formalized shortly.

On 14 November a very well attended workshop on indexing was held in Canberra, with 48 participants.

AusSI Newsletter

Five issues of the newsletter were published, each month except for a joint Nov/Dec issue (Vol. 16, nos 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). Steve Sunter continued his competent editorship with issues lightly leavened with cartoons and graphics.

In the July issue (no. 6) an article by John Scarce of the Melbourne Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages was published which dealt with the Victorian Pioneers Index. John described how registry data for the period 1837–1888 was transferred into a computerized database format. With the assistance of volunteers some 1.74 million entries were consolidated into a single index, which is now available on CD-ROM—a genealogist’s dream come true.

Jennifer Pritchard gave an informative background to the indexing of *The Argus* newspaper in an article in the August issue (no. 7), and included a report on a talk by Geraldine Suter on this topic, given on 22 July.

In the September issue (no. 8) Kingsley Siebel reported on the 1992 SI Conference in Chester which he attended with two other AusSI members (Josephine McGovern and John Simkin).

The NSW Branch President’s annual report by Garry Cousins was published in the October issue (no. 9). In this issue was an obituary to Peter Dawe, a founding member of AusSI by Clyde Garrow, also a founding member of the Society. Peter’s sudden death on 2 September 1992 was mourned by us all.

A competition for a name for the AusSI newsletter was launched in the Nov/Dec issue (no. 10) the winning prize being a free subscription for 1993.

In this issue Geraldine Triffitt reported on a meeting held in Canberra on 22 October to inaugurate an ACT Region Branch, at which Brenda Gerrie of Infoscan Pty Ltd spoke of ‘The delights and pitfalls of setting up an indexing-related business’. Max McMaster reviewed the indexing software package *In>Sort*. Jennifer Pritchard reviewed Hazel Bell’s *Indexing biographies and other stories of human lives*, and concluded: ‘As an interested bystander rather than a practising indexer, I enjoy reading Hazel Bell’s articles in *The Indexer* and learning how she thinks. *Indexing biographies* is valuable in showing how her thinking is done and suggesting ways for indexers to find their own solutions. It is a particular pleasure to read.’
Australian Society of Indexers Medal 1992

This year for the first time, two indexers were declared joint winners of the award. The Medal Panel decided that the entries of the two leading contenders were of equal merit and both worthy of Medal status. The two winners were Max McMaster and Margery Price: Max for his index to *Infectious diseases in pregnancy and the newborn infant* (by G. L. Gilbert, 1991; Harwood Academic Publishers, Chur, Switzerland), and Margery for hers to *The Law Handbook 1992* (compiled and published by Fitzroy Legal Service, Melbourne, 1992). The judges also highly commended Josephine Cardale’s index to *Insects of Australia* (by CSIRO Division of Entomology, 1991; Melbourne University Press). The medals were awarded at a dinner on 13 October, and certificates presented to the publishers of the winning indexes.

Report by IAN ODGERS Secretary of AusSI.

Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada

In 1992 the Canadian Society of Indexers became fifteen years old. To mark the occasion, it produced a special issue of its *Bulletin* (14 (4) June 1992) to ‘bring back the past, describe the present, and lead into the future’.

It brought back the past with a 17-page index to the 15 years of the *Bulletin*, seeing its ‘contents and evolution as a good reflection of the Society’, and with a list of the 15 AGMs with their topics and speakers. The present was represented by distributing with the bulletin the current list of IASC members: the hundred-odd ‘indexers, instructors and consultants who maintain a strong interest in the cause of indexing and abstracting in Canada’; and details of the members and duties of the executive committee that manages IASC affairs. The future was catered for with a 4-page ‘Needs and wishes’ survey form to be filled in and returned.

Society of Indexers

Meetings

The 1992 programme of SI members’ meetings combined instruction, pleasure and, not least, variety. As these London meetings are not always as well attended as they deserve, it is worth reminding members that all are welcome, although it is appreciated that many have a long way to travel. One answer to that may lie in the Local and Special Interest Groups.

On 21 May David Parker, Curator of the Dickens House Museum, took a party of SI members on a thoroughly enjoyable guided tour of the museum, in Doughty Street, London WC1, a former home of the author and his family. Dickens House has a fine collection of memorabilia and publications, and offers an information service and facilities for research.

‘Finance: the Society and your money’, chaired by Elizabeth Wallis in June, turned up all sorts of enlightening facts about the financial running of the Society. The then Treasurer, Barbara Britton, provided a breakdown of how the annual subscription is spent, and the new Membership Secretary, David Tyler, explained the logistics of handling subscriptions. Expenditure on and income from the Society’s publications were discussed and other Society expenses clarified. Members there made good use of the opportunity to inquire, complain, suggest and applaud, and were perhaps surprised to find how much they had enjoyed the evening.

October’s meeting was an Open Forum on ‘The future of the Society’, a follow-up to the workshop held in June 1991. On both occasions discussion was led by Ian Crane and Claire Troughton, but whereas the earlier meeting had been confined to officers and Council members, this was thrown open to members at large. As before, the theme was long-term planning for the Society, and the framework was summarized as ‘SWOTC’—strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and constraints—in the context of the growth in SI’s size and scope and the need for increased involvement by members in its activities. The past, present and future of SI were explored and analysed, with lively and heartfelt debate on priorities and strategies in administration, marketing and training.

‘Copyright and the Indexer’, the theme of the November meeting, is reported elsewhere in this journal. The AGM was held in September. All motions were carried; the basic subscription was raised to £25 from 1 April 1993, with corresponding adjustments for overseas, joint and institutional members. Barbara Britton, resigning as Treasurer, gave a characteristically humorous yet thoughtful address on her twelve crowded years in the office.

In October SI and the Library Association jointly held the Wheatley Presentation Dinner, covered elsewhere in this journal.

Chester conference

The 1992 SI conference held at Chester College 17–19 July was organized by Connie Tyler and members of the North West group. We hope to publish some of the papers given. Two delegates came from the USA, three from
Australia and two from Ireland, and everyone seems to have found the programme of talks and workshops rewarding and stimulating, while enthusiastic advantage was taken of the pre-breakfast swimming facilities. After the official programme there were useful sessions for MACREX and CINDEX users.

**People and projects**

Council has set up a subcommittee to consider revising the SI Constitution. Members’ ideas are cordially invited.

We were sorry to lose Valerie Chandler as Programme Organizer, after many years of running successful meetings. Anne McCarthy was appointed co-ordinator for Local and Special Interest Groups. The concept of such groups received much impetus this year; a sub-committee was set up to look into their possibilities, and welcomes any ideas and suggestions about their setting up and running.

**Local groups**

**Scottish group:** In May Elizabeth Wallis spoke on ‘Current issues in indexing’; a training workshop was held in September, both in Edinburgh. There was a visit to the Scottish Poetry Library in November. A joint meeting on fees has been arranged with the Society of Freelance Editors and Proofreaders’ Scottish Group for February 1993.

**North West group:** Organized the Chester Conference, and a ‘mini-symposium’, ‘All you’ve ever wanted to know about publishing and copy-editing’, in Manchester in October. The group conducted a questionnaire on meetings.

**Irish group:** Membership is growing, and contact from all who are indexers or interested in indexing, both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland, will be welcomed.

**Publications**

Long, lively quarterly newsletters were published under the able and imaginative editorship of Judy Batchelor.

**London address**

SI now has a London address and telephone number (for leaving messages): 38 Rochester Road, London NW1 9JJ. Tel.: 071-916 7809.

Report by Christine Shuttleworth, freelance indexer, member of SI Council and of The Indexer’s Editorial Board.

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**BITNET/INTERNET conference**

INDEX-L is a new electronic discussion group created to promote good indexing practice. The group (a.k.a. ‘list’) provides a forum for aspiring and professional indexers to share information and ideas relating to the intellectual, philosophical, and technical aspects of index preparation. Topics for discussion can include various types of index structures such as indexes for books, periodicals, online text, databases, or hypermedia. Participants may include but not be limited to: members of indexers’ societies; librarians and library school faculty and students; information access professionals; hypertext and database developers; and authors indexing their own works.

To join, send the following message to listserv@bingvmb.bitnet:

Subscribe INDEX-L June Doe (your real first and last name, not your electronic address).

After you subscribe (or join—there is no fee), additional information will be sent to you.

Charlotte Skuster will serve as moderator—to tend to technical problems, not to direct the course of the conversations. The participants determine the topic and scope of discussion. Every person who joins INDEX-L can send a message to the host computer that then re-distributes it to every other subscriber. Any member can reply to the message and the reply will be distributed to every one else in the group. The electronic conversation continues as long as anyone is interested in the discussion; then a new issue is raised and the process begins anew.

Please be aware that internet policy prohibits advertising. While position-available listings are permissible, positions-wanted, services offered, or product advertising are not permitted.

Further information from Charlotte Skuster, Binghamton University Science Library, Box 6012, Binghamton, NY 13902-6012; E-mail: skuster@bingvmb.

**Indexers in China**

We are delighted to hear of the establishment of the China Society of Indexers (CSI) in December 1991. This body now has over 300 members, and held its first annual meeting and forum on indexing on 28–30 November 1992 in Shanghai, with the theme, ‘The past, present and future of indexing: research on indexing theory’.

CSI aims to promote theoretical research on indexing and disseminate knowledge of it; to offer training in index compilation and improve its quality; to accept commissions from publishers, enterprises or institutions for indexes on various subjects; and to translate works on indexing from other countries.

We wish them well, and are grateful for the news to:

Yang Guishan, China Institute of Publishing Science, 7 A Xi Rong Xian Hu Tong, Xi Cheng District, Beijing 100031, China.

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