American Society of Indexers  

Annual conference  
The 28th Annual Meeting of the American Society of Indexers (ASI) was held in San Diego, California, May 13-14, 1994.

The full-day meeting on Saturday, May 14 included sessions which addressed 'The Changing Landscapes of Indexing'. Morning sessions included a presentation by Joleen Blozis and George Burneston providing interesting and detailed information about 'Indexing Atlases at National Geographic'. The second session was a panel discussion presenting answers to the question 'What Editors Need and Want: Are They Getting It?' Panel members included Mary Rose Muccie, Ed Malick, Wallis Bolz, and Linda Fetters.

Barbara Quint, Editor at Searcher Magazine and owner of Quint and Associates, gave the keynote address. Quint presented reflections and suggestions from a database searcher perspective on 'Millennia Indexing: Re-Examine Assumptions and Re-Structure Functions.' Quint's sense of humor added a wonderful tone to thoughtful issues.

Afternoon sessions included talks by Deborah E. Swain on the 'Evolution of Indexing of IBM Documentation' and Nancy Mulvany on 'Embedded Indexing: The Users Speak Out.' A panel discussion, 'Can Indexing Be Taught?' closed the day's meeting. Panel members included Linda Webster, Barbara Cohen, Nancy Mulvany, James Anderson, and Susan Klement.

Preconference professional development workshops were held on Friday, May 13. An all-day workshop by Susan Klement presented 'An Introduction to Indexing.' A morning session by Jan Blakeslee provided a complete look at 'Surviving the Big One: Managing Large Indexing Projects.' Roy Tennant conducted an afternoon session on 'Traveling the Internet: What It Can Do for You.' Tennant is author of Crossing the Internet Threshold: An Instructional Handbook which was available for purchases to conference registrants.

Wilson Award  
This year's Wilson Award winner was Patricia Deminna of Santa Rose, California. Deminna's award-winning indexes (subject index and index of scripture) are found in Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture by Daniel Boyarin, published by the University of California Press as part of their Centennial Series.

Key Words  

Key Words for September/October 1993 opens with an article on specialist indexing. Kate Mertes' article, 'Anything But Cut and Dried' discusses the art and science of indexing. Mertes states that 'text analysis and terminological ingenuity' indexing tools are necessary for even the most technical indexing which has an art all its own. Examples and instances of technical indexing for legal materials are provided. Mertes suggests that actual versus intended readership is probably the most complex issue facing the specialist indexer; the index has to work for as many people as possible. Specialist materials can have a variety of considerations, including supplemental texts, professional changes, specialized vs. layperson terminology, and market expansions. The indexer has to be flexible and responsive to readership and professional issues.

Tom McFadden provides commentary on 'Book Reviewers and Indexes.' Surveying reviews in Choice, a monthly collection of book reviews published by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), McFadden found that very rarely did reviewers comment on a book's index. A review of the quality of a book's index would aid recommendations for acquisition or assessments of a book's overall value. In response to these survey results and observations. ASI's Publicity Committee has sent Index Evaluation Checklists, along with letters offering ASI members's services, to various book reviewing publications. Our professional presence is required once again!

Guest columnist, Marian P. Francois, writes an article on 'Combining Indexes with a Full-Time Job' in the 'Getting down to Business' column. Freelancing in tandem with other work can provide (1) a head start to one's full-time business, (2) financial security, and (3) professional growth. Francois discusses many considerations including advantages and disadvantages, goalsetting, establishing one's business, time management, financial planning, full-time job commitments, indexing commitments, client relationships, future options, and recommended reading.

David Heiret's article, 'Embedded Indexing at Microsoft' appears in the 'Client Watch' column.
Heiret provides an overview of his assignment to index a series of technical books documenting a portion of the new product line from Microsoft, its Windows NT, specifically the SQL (Structured Query Language) Server product line. The indexing was done onsite and online and was embedded in the document set. The biggest challenge involved in this process was indexing documents that were continuously being revised and edited.

The November/December 1993 Key Words opens with an article by Carolyn McGovern, ‘How to Evaluate Indexes’. McGovern suggests that the more difficult aspects of the index to evaluate are those that relate to the hundreds of judgment calls the indexer makes in the process of creating the index. McGovern comments on expectations and review of indexes by authors, editors, and users. Mechanics, substance, and elegance of an index are discussed.

The ‘Client Watch’ column by Lynn Moncrief is titled ‘Indexing Inferno (but with an angelic editor)’. Moncrief describes an experience indexing a book that was still in the process of being written (not edited) while inserting index fields (tags) in chapters already completed. In addition to the indexing challenges, multiple deliveries were required for this project, receiving the document to be indexed in bits and pieces and returning indexed portions, and billing was done in two stages since the project was long-term. This trend of indexing works-in-progress seems to be happening with companies that need to develop their documentation quickly for a world market.

The ‘Getting Down to Business’ column features a collection of views on that fascinating topic: how you should charge for your indexing services. Christine Jacobs discusses charging by the hour, Cynthia Weber by the line, and Sunday Oliver by the page. Jacobs states that she chooses an amount that is competitive, but that reflects her abilities. Weber says that charging by the line represents the work she has done. Oliver points out that charging by the page lets publishers know how much the index is going to cost ahead of time, and indexers know how much they are going to be paid. Whatever method for charging, it should provide the indexer with a reasonable wage to earn a living. When setting rates, indexers should be realistic about efficiency and scheduling.

Bella Hass Weinberg provides an indexer’s perspective on ASIS ’93 in the ‘ASIS Watch’ column. Weinberg attended the 56th Annual Meeting of the American Society for Information Science, held Oct. 23–28 in Columbus, Ohio. She discusses sessions and topics including, classification research workshop, plenary sessions, NISO annual meeting, contributed papers, thesauri special interests, computer-assisted indexing, automatic indexing, and text-retrieval trends. Audiotapes of sessions can be ordered from ASIS, 8720 Georgia Avenue, Suite 501, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3602 USA.

The ‘PR Action Line’ column features Larry Bonura on the ‘Many faces of publicity.’ Bonura discusses indexers as ASI ambassadors, portraying ourselves as professional, knowledgeable members of the society. Suggestions for doing so include reading, taking classes, teaching, networking, studying indexing, writing articles, attending meetings and conferences, and improving business skills.

Key Words is published six times a year. Membership and subscription information is available from: ASI Admin Office, PO Box 386, Port Aransas, TX 78373 USA (telephone 512 749-4052, fax 512 749-8334).

—Report by THÉRÈSA J. WOLNER, freelance indexer and librarian, Information Lost & Found, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA.
Branch made a presentation on indexing to students of information management and library studies at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, drawing on his extensive experience as an indexer to discuss indexing as a career.

The ACT Region Branch held a one-day workshop in April in Canberra on the writing of abstracts.

In June the Victorian Branch held a general meeting in Melbourne at the State Library of Victoria. Wendy Pryor spoke on the Riley Ephemera Collection, discussing how items are conserved and the card catalogue system used. Kirstie McRobert described how the library's picture collection is being transferred to electronic form on videodisk, to be available for public access. Kirstie gave details of the cataloguing and subject indexing system, and a demonstration of the videodisk.

The ACT Region Branch held a meeting in June on the topic of database indexes, with speakers Sandra Henderson of the National Library of Australia and Brenda Gerrie of Infoscan Pty Ltd.

Newsletter

Five issues of the Newsletter were published for the half-year, monthly except for a joint January/February issue (Vol. 18, nos 1-5). The Jan/Feb issue contained the Judges' Report by George Levick for the 1993 AusSI Medal, won by Max McMaster: the first person to win the award twice, having been joint winner in 1992. Also in this issue was a report by Margaret Henty of a survey carried out to identify Australian newspaper and journal indexes held in libraries throughout Australia. This was stage one of a two-stage study to determine the feasibility of integration to provide better national access and improved cost-effectiveness.

The Annual Report for 1993 by the National President Isabelle Mentha was published in the March issue, with excerpts of a paper presented by Rosemary Bunnage of Monash University Law Library at a meeting in Melbourne, detailing a project to index Victorian legislation.

The ACT Region Branch President's report by Geraldine Triffitt, presented in Canberra in February, was in the April issue. Also in this issue was Max McMaster's presentation on indexing as a career. A local place names index for Northcote, an inner suburb of Melbourne, was the topic of the first of three articles (April, May and June issues) by Paul Michell of the Northcote Public Library. Paul's other articles dealt with the indexing of the Northcote local history collection onto an Inmagic database for public access, and the preparation of an index to The History of Northcote, published in 1928.

The NSW Branch President's report by Alan Walker, presented in Sydney in March, was in the May issue.

In the June issue an article by Robin Derricourt of Cambridge University Press gave a publisher's view on what makes a good index, primarily directed towards academic authors.

—Report by Ian Odgers, Secretary of AusSI

Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada

Société canadienne pour l'analyse de documents

IASC/SCAD continues to grow. In July 1994 our numbers reached an all-time high of 150, with members from nine provinces, the United States and Jamaica. Both the composition and direction of the executive have shifted significantly this year.

At the June executive meeting we said goodbye to three faithful officers, Michèle Hudon, who had served three years as president and one as past president, and edited our Register of indexers available/Repertoire des indexeurs; Jean Wheeler, who had served IASC/SCAD in several capacities over many years, and made two bibliographic contributions: ('Indexing and abstracting: a Canadian current awareness bibliography, Part 2', IASC/SCAD Bulletin 16 (2) March 1994, 9–11, and 'Indexing: a current awareness bibliography, Part 3', The Indexer 19 (1) April 1994, 37–44); and Angela Osterreicher, who has served the society as liaison officer, treasurer and recording secretary. We will miss the talents and enthusiasm of these three.

A major new direction for the IASC/SCAD executive is west! Anne Taylor-Vaisey continues as president for one more year, coordinating an executive committee which spans the country. Eve Gardner (Edmonton, Alberta) began her term as membership secretary in July, and Noeline Bridge, also of Edmonton, is both our treasurer and editor of our new membership directory. Rick Wiebe (Langley, B.C.) continues as regional representative for Western Canada, Christine Jacobs (Montreal) for Eastern Canada, and Anne (Toronto) for Central Canada. Patrician Buchanan (Arnprior, Ontario) is the new editor of our Register, and Jin Tan (Toronto) and James Turner (Montreal) share editing
duties of the IASC/SCAD Bulletin. Chris Blackburn (Toronto) is member-at-large.

The March 1994 issue of the IASC/SCAD Bulletin was edited by Jin Tan and Anne Taylor-Vaisey, with layout by Eric Schwartz. Contents included Jean Wheeler’s bibliography, reports of regional meetings in Quebec and Alberta, several members’ accounts of indexing experiences, a directory of new members, and professional development calendar.

This year’s AGM was entitled ‘The Indexer as Entrepreneur’, and focused on indexers as freelancers. Held in Vancouver, B.C. in conjunction with the annual conference of the Canadian Library Association, it was an international success! Due largely to Rick Wiebe’s superb organizational skills, the day was informative and enjoyable for the 40 or so Canadians and Americans attending. Frances Lennie of Indexing Research (Rochester, N.Y.) discussed various methods of indexing, and demonstrated her company’s software program, CINDEX. The panel discussion, ‘Freelancers on Indexing’, moderated by Noeline Bridge, proved entertaining and stimulating. The panelists were Susan Baxter (freelance writer, Vancouver), Eve Gardner (Gardner Indexing Service, Edmonton), Julie Kawabata (freelance indexer, Portland, Oregon), Elspeth Pope (retired library school instructor and fledgling indexer, Shelton, Washington), and Neil Savage (legal indexer, Seattle, Washington).

We look forward to another international meeting with our American colleagues in June 1995, when the American Society of Indexers and IASC/SCAD will hold a joint two-day meeting in Montreal, planned to overlap with the annual conference of the Special Libraries Association.

—Report by Anne Taylor-Vaisey, IASC/SCAD President

Society of Indexers


At an Extraordinary General Meeting SI’s new Constitution was discussed and approved, with the new Regulations and transitional arrangements.

The Society set up a Research Committee led by Ken Bakewell, to assist in conducting and promoting research into indexing and related matters; Paul Nash reported the results of his survey on the costing of indexes; and full, lively Newsletters indicated generally active membership.

Local and special interest groups

Scottish Group: Chris Korycinski spoke at a meeting on automatic book indexing and Paul Nash on estimating for indexes. West Country: enjoyed a talk and guided tour of the premises of the local newspaper. Yorkshire: visited the Sheffield Academic Press. North East: Elizabeth Wallis gave a talk on training in indexing, in the unusual venue of the Souter Lighthouse, a National Trust property. North West: a group visit was made to the Merseyside Maritime Museum and its Archives Department.

The third issue of Trial Trench, the newsletter for archaeological indexers, produced by Cherry Lavell, was published, as was the fourth newsletter of the Genealogy group. Offers of help in starting a group for foreign languages were received from members with expertise in several.

—Report by Christine Shuttleworth

Indexing with a beat

Indexers have long claimed to be the authors of their works. Now we find we may be lyricists, even. At the launch of Ben Watson’s 600-page study of a rock musician, Frank Zappa, the negative dialectics of poodle play (Quartet, 1994; poodle play being ‘materialist cultural analysis that refuses to dissolve the intractable doggedness of the vulgar mind in patronising abstractions’—well, of course), the author is to invite those present to call out words for which he will search the book’s 50-page index. ‘He will then read the relevant entry to backing by Simon Fell [who has turned parts of the book into a concerto, it says here] on bass guitar”—as reported in The Observer, 22 May 1994.