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American Society of Indexers

Conference updates, cyberspace, and more ...

The July/August 1995 issue of *Key Words* opens with an announcement, by Alexandra Nickerson of the ASI/Wilson Award winner for 1995. The most recent recipient of the award, given for excellence in book indexing, is Martin L White for his index to John Patrick Diggins' *The Promise of Pragmatism: Modernism and the Crisis of Knowledge and Authority*, published by the University of Chicago Press. The index is notable for its structure and content as well as for its format and appearance. White's index is comprehensive and concise, providing an excellent tool for readers. White's background includes a BA in mathematics and philosophy and an MA in philosophy. He has been an instructor of philosophy at the University of Connecticut and an indexer and editor for Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. Martin L White has been a freelance indexer for five years and has written indexes for scholarly monographs and trade books, most of his work being in the humanities and behavioral sciences disciplines. He is now a full time freelance indexer with areas of particular interest in African-American music, architecture, Islamic history and culture, painting, philosophy, and physics. George Lewicky, Director of Indexing Services for the H.W. Wilson Company and a former president of ASI, presented this year's award. The Wilson Company, through its sponsorship of the ASI/Wilson award, has been a supporter of quality indexing for many years.

Three conference recaps are provided by Carolyn McGovern, Elinor Lindheimer, and Anne Leach. McGovern, outgoing ASI President, provides *A Tale of Two Conferences*, with comments on the First International Conference of the Australian Society of Indexers (AusSI) held in March, and ASI's 27th annual meeting held in June. Incoming ASI President, Elinor Lindheimer, provides *Conference News and Thanks*, noting many highlights of the ASI annual meeting, held jointly with the Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada (IASC/SCAD). The next ASI annual meeting, 'Flourishing Assets: Indexers Today', is scheduled to be held in Denver, Colorado, May 16-18, 1996. Anne Leach provides a *Montréal Recap* in the 'Conference Watch' column. The joint meeting of ASI/IASC, held in Montréal, was attended by approximately 150 persons. Proceedings and tapes are available from the ASI Admin Office. (Printed proceedings are $10 for members, $15 for non-members; tapes are $20 for complete set, or $5 each for individual sessions.)

Two articles discuss indexing in today's computer information age. Christine Maxwell presents *Cyberspace: The Newest Indexing Frontier*. Maxwell presents a definition of cyberspace and discusses the ordering and accessing of systems within it, describes the WebCrawler search tool and other types of search engines, questions what to catalog and what to index in Web documents, and introduces 'The McKinley' Internet Directory. More than ever, in this cyberspace-age, the need for control and organization of information is indeed an opportunity for indexers; but as always, flexible browsing options must remain available to users. Laura Fillmore presents *Beyond the Back of the Book: Indexing in a Shrinking World*. Fillmore discusses new formats which call for new organization, and notes that indexers have the organizational, linking, and literate capabilities required in today's information market. Also, provided are suggested places for experienced indexers to seek work in the growing Internet industry.

The 'PR Action Line' column features *ASI's New Publicity Initiative* by Barbara Cohen. This article presents details of Cohen's PR plan, which will provide increased visibility for professional indexing. Focus is on expanding visibility within subject areas and professional fields; a useful calendar of upcoming conferences sponsored by professional organizations is now provided in each issue of *Key Words*.

The 'Cyberspace Watch' column features *ASI on World Wide Web* by Lynn Moncrief. At the ASI Board Meeting in Montréal, the Board of Directors accepted a proposal for an ASI Web site to be established on the Internet. This will bring ASI into cyberspace and to the attention of a potentially vast audience of book and database users.

The Hines Award Committee asked Ted Hines' widow, Lois Winkel Hines, to speak at the joint ASI/IASC meeting in Montréal. The text of her remarks, *A Ted Hines Retrospective*, is printed. Lois Hines recollects her husband's early years, his interest in sports and music, his penchant for neatness or lack thereof, his interest in computers, and his consideration of 'indexing as an analytical art.' Lois Hines also accepted the first Hines Award on behalf of the late BevAnne Ross.

A National Information Standards Organization (NISO) press release announces that it is seeking comments regarding the first American National Standard on alphanumerical arrangement: *Alphabetical Arrangement of Letters and the Sorting of Numerals and Other Symbols*. For additional information on NISO telephone (301) 654-2512, fax (301) 654-1721, or e-mail nisohq@cni.org.

Indexes and the business of indexing . . .

An Index Reviewed: The Librarian's Legal Companion opens the September/October 1995 issue of *Key Words*. Bella Hass Weinberg reviews the two indexes found in this information science source book. The indexes, an index of cases and a general subject index, are found to be convoluted and make an otherwise readable and informative book useless as a quick reference source. Weinberg provides comparisons and suggestions for writing quality library/information science and legal indexes.

The 'Technology Watch' column features a report, by Ellen Jakes Kelm, of a talk by Dr. Richard Tong, *Text Categorization: Computer-Based Indexing of Electronic Documents*. The talk was presented at the 12th annual ASI Golden Gate Chapter Midwinter Conference (in California).

Tong states that the value of information increases as it becomes more accessible and more relevant. Text categorization is an interpretive process in which information providers add value to data by assigning codes to documents to reflect content. Tong suggests that indexers are critical to the process of adding value to data by turning it into usable information.

The 'Standards Watch' column presents *New Rules for Thesauri* by Linda Rudell-Betts. Rudell-Betts, an experienced lexicographer, reviews ANSI-NISO Z39.19-1993: *Guidelines for the Construction, Format, and Management of Monolingual Thesauri*. Standards provide practitioners an agreed-upon set of rules which, when applied correctly and consistently, allow users to utilize varying resources knowing that structure and intent are similar among them all. Indexers should be aware of and believe in standards against which thesauri can be measured; Z39.19-1993 is a must-have informative document.

In the 'Usability Watch' column, *Reference Librarians Have Their Say:* the text of a panel discussion at the 1994 Midwinter Conference of the ASI Golden Gate Chapter, librarians, as intensive users of indexes, talk about the good and the bad. Panel moderator was Shirley J. Manley, panelists were Pat Guy, Jo Bell Whitlatch, and Elyse Eisner.

The Business of Being in Business Part II, by Susan Rotondo, addresses how to attain effectiveness and efficiency in freelance businesses. Emphasis on organizational skills allows freelancers to manage time, space, and materials. Rotondo provides many useful pointers for organizing, managing, and enjoying a successful business venture.

Even in this cyber-age, some people are still making the big switch from shuffled index cards to shimmering electronic screens, as Olive Holmes discusses in the 'Electronic Shoebox' column. In *Cards to Keyboard: Indexing by Computer*, Holmes describes her transition from 'old--fashioned' indexing methods to computer literacy.

Quandaries and queries, marketing, and usability . . .

The opening article for the November/December 1995 issue of *Key Words is On Sorting Index Headings* by Michael Brackney. Various sorting methods are discussed including Chicago Manual of Style, word-by-word vs. letter-by-letter, and gathering same names. Brackney is interested in starting a dialogue focused on discovering and implementing what sorting methods work best for readers.

Three 'Conference Watch' columns focus on NFAIS, ASIS, and STC meetings. Dena N Sher presents *Marketing Information Services on the Internet*, a report on a National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services (NFAIS) seminar held in September 1995 in Philadelphia, covering a variety of ways the Internet can be used to market information services. Sher provides a great deal of useful information including an introduction to the Internet and reasons for the incredible explosion of user interest, advantages to marketing on the Internet and components useful for such marketing, the several ways to connect to the Internet, the formatting of marketing messages and how these messages are found on the Internet, and a reading list of current books about the Internet. Enid L Zafran provides a review of the *ASIS Annual Meeting 1995*, held October 9-12 in Chicago. The 58th annual meeting of the American Society for Information Science (ASIS) presented a session entitled, *Automatic Indexing of a Large Document Collection*. Zafran found this program to be valuable and practical. Pilar Wyman reports on useful sessions about usability studies held during the Society for Technical Communication's (STC) 42nd annual conference, April 23-26, 1995 in Washington DC. Wyman found that technical writers are eager to learn more about indexes and indexing, and her usability studies prove that readers desire better indexing of technical documentation.

— *Theresa J Wohner, St Paul, Minnesota*

Australian Society of Indexers

Activities

Members of AusSI NSW Branch met in Sydney on 13 July to hear member Johnathan Jermey speak about and demonstrate the Internet. This was followed by a general discussion on indexing and the Internet. The NSW Branch also held a joint meeting with the Society of Editors (NSW) on 1 August on the topic of negotiating a brief.

An informal meeting was held in Adelaide, SA on 14 September at which local members agreed to work towards forming a South Australian Branch of the Society.

At a meeting on 26 September in Canberra, members of ACT Region Branch heard interesting talks on projects undertaken by Canberra indexers Marjorie Gilby, Beryl Strusz and Robert Withycombe. The ACT region Branch met again in Canberra on 22 November to discuss future directions for the Branch.

The Victorian Branch held a Christmas function on 6 December at a restaurant in Melbourne.

Newsletter

Five issues of the Newsletter were published for the half-year, monthly except for a combined November/December issue.

The **July issue** included an article on La Trobe University Library's LASER service which provides information searches both locally and via the Internet. This issue also included a further article on the Internet by Dwight Walker describing Telnet, a basic tool for connecting to a remote computer. Garry Cousins' regular CINDEX column covered the setting of single column width.

Criteria for the 1995 AusSI Medal award were published in the **August issue**. The award was organised this year by NSW Branch in Sydney. Lists of members in each of those States (and New Zealand) were published in this issue, giving addresses and phone numbers, with the aim of encouraging

members of those States with no official Branches to form local groups, or simply to make contact. Dwight Walker's continuing Internet column examined FTP (file transfer protocol), and Garry Cousins' CINDEX column covered the setting of double column width. Garry Cousins also reported on a meeting of NSW Branch members in Sydney on 13 July, at which Johnathan Jermey described and demonstrated the Internet. An edited version of a policy statement by the National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services (USA) *Primary/Secondary Publishers: A Complementary Relationship* was also included in this issue.

To celebrate the centennial of the International Federation for Information and Documentation (FID), leaflets describing the aims of the organisation and an overview of its history were enclosed with the **September issue**. In this issue Dwight Walker's Internet column discussed the use of *Archie* for finding files. A report of outcomes from the National/Victorian Branch Committee meeting of 9 August included the setting up of a permanent World Wide Web page for AusSI, setting of a recommended rate for database indexing at SAu35 per hour, and a proposal for a national conference possibly to be held in Canberra in 1997. Garry Cousins' CINDEX column this time discussed using the 'patterns' feature.

In the **October issue**, Kingsley Siebel reviewed the 1995 'TaxPack', and concluded that its "index needs to be much more detailed if it is to be of better use to all taxpayers. Let's hope that 'TaxPack 1996' will be done by a professional indexer". In this issue Lynn Farkas, in a letter to the editor, presented her views on the Society's setting of a recommended

rate for database indexing, Dwight Walker's Internet column discussed the newsreader *Free Agent*, for browsing Usenet newsgroups; and Garry Cousins CINDEX column considered working with multiple indexes. Also in this issue, Max McMaster reviewed the SI monograph *Indexing the Medical and Biological Sciences*.

The **November/December** issue announced the publication by AusSI of *Indexers — Partners in Publishing: Proceedings from the First International Conference*, held in Marysville, Victoria on March 31 to April 2, 1995. (Copies are available from AusSI.) An announcement was also made that AusSI subscription and renewal rates for 1996 would be held at current rates. A letter to the editor by George Levick, on behalf of the National Committee, gave a response to Lynn Farkas' letter in the October issue on the topic of a recommended rate for database indexing. A reply by Lynn Farkas followed. Also in this issue was a report from the ACT Region Branch on a meeting held in Canberra on 26 September, at which three Canberra indexers spoke on indexing projects they had undertaken. Dwight Walker's Internet column gave details of a prize to be awarded for creating an index to World Wide Web documents. This article was the first of three, giving information on how to go about the process of creating the index in HTML (Hypertext Markup Language). Garry Cousin's CINDEX column in this issue dealt with sorting identical page numbers in different typefaces.

— Ian Odgers, Secretary, AusSI National/Victorian Branch

Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada
Société canadienne pour l'analyse de documents

It has been a quiet few months for IASC. Despite the best of intentions, it has taken us a while to start ironing out the bugs in our new executive procedures. With any luck we should be able to be reasonably functional in the new year!

We are still receiving many requests for information from would-be indexers. The recession is having its effect, and many people are looking at freelance indexing as a possible alternative to salaried employment/unemployment.

Our big news for this quarter is the launch of the IASC Web site. James Turner has been working on this since the summer, and just before Christmas was able to announce that it was up and running. We plan to launch it officially at the end of January. It is a bilingual site (French and English), and we will be adding such items as our *Register of Indexers Available* as

time goes on. At the moment it can be found at:
http://tornade.ere.umontreal.ca/~turner/iasc/home.html.
James is serving as webmaster for the time being, and would be pleased to receive any comments or suggestions at turner@ere.umontreal.ca.

Chris Blackburn has bravely taken on the coordination of our annual conference/AGM. This year it will be in Toronto, near the end of May. It will certainly be more modest than last year's combined ASI/IASC conference, but we hope to provide members with an interesting program and a good chance to network. Details should be available around the end of February.

— Christine Jacobs, Montreal

Society of Indexers

The last six months of 1995 saw the Society going through a period of change and self-assessment, marked by what politicians call frank exchanges of views and robust debate in the columns of its publications, illustrating the wide range of opinions held by members on such subjects as professional status and the value of training.

London meetings

In November, Sally Hine and Andy Frazer spoke on computerization of the index to the BBC Sound Library.

Publications

From the January 1996 issue the Newsletter's name was changed to *SIdelights*, the winning title resulting from a members' competition — pronounce it any way you like.

Doug Redfern's series, retitled 'Computaware', dealt with types of CD-ROM, the Internet, and computer viruses among other topics; the 'Notes and Queries' section discussed the use of continuous page references when illustrations intervene; indexing Irish names beginning with O'; and other practical problems.

Several members having expressed concern on the subject, former chairman Ian Crane explained the constitutional procedure for electing officers which meant that he inadvertently became ineligible to stand for a further term at the 1995 AGM; there were further comments from new chairman Ken Bakewell and others. The validity to publishers of Registration and Accreditation of members was the subject of lively discussion. Other members' letters included a plea from Anne McCarthy that 'we should enjoy our diversity rather than allow a rift to develop in the ranks', while Cherry Lavell appealed for someone to produce an index for the Newsletter; there were comments on indexing fiction and on the demand for an inexpensive indexing handbook. An eighth draft of the Code of Conduct was published. Summaries of the proceedings of Council meetings now appear in *SIdelights*.

People and projects

In the Queen's Birthday Honours, Professor David Crystal, former SI President, was awarded the OBE for services to the English language and to linguistics. His book, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*, was recently published.

Special interest and local groups

Archaeology: planning a workshop at the 1996 Conference in Bristol. Children's indexing: instead of the formation of a group, interested members planned to produce a leaflet for circulation to publishers and an Occasional Paper.

West Country: visited the Navy's Hydrographic Offices and held a varied discussion, led by Elizabeth Wallis. Scottish group: met in Edinburgh for a talk by Gary Hall on problems of very large indexes and a discussion on Society matters. North-West: held a meeting on electronic publishing and MACREX short cuts. North-East: held two meetings including a Christmas lunch shared with local members of the Society of Freelance Editors and Proofreaders.

Christine Shuttleworth, London