Conferences

April to July of this year was a busy time for conferences. In April the Australian Society of Indexers held its first joint conference with the Canberra Society of Editors. Two Chinese indexers, Mr Ge Yong-qing, Managing President of the China Society of Indexers, and Mr Wei Haisheng, Director of the Library of the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau in Beijing, were able to attend, supported by a grant from the Australia–China Council. With one day of workshops and three of presentations, the conference proved a success. The presentations were on the themes of working relationships, business and technology and professional education.

The American Society of Indexers conference – *An Odyssey to the Future* – took place in Boston at the beginning of June. There was something for everyone as the two-and-a-half days of workshops covered topics that ranged from analytical subheadings through benchmarking search engines and writing successful bid proposals. The conference finished with a half-day of general presentations.

The Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada (IASC) held its one-day conference in conjunction with the Editors’ Association of Canada in June in Toronto. Traditionally, IASC conferences draw only a small group, but this year had an excellent turnout of indexers and editors interested in indexing software and editor–indexer relations.

The Association of Southern African Indexers and Bibliographers conference was focused on training, with one day for presentations and an ‘Indexing Course Think Tank’ and the second day for workshops and software demonstration. *Mastering Indexing Skills: Steps along the Way* took place in Johannesburg at the end of June.

The Society of Indexers held its conference in Sheffield, also at the end of June. Presentations included several on information retrieval, one on research into the indexes (ca. 1900–1945) of MI5 (the British intelligence service), and another by the chair of the Wheatley Medal panel. Attendance has increased over the years, the chance to network face-to-face, both informally and through a range of seminars and discussion groups, being one of the important drawing cards.

Interesting projects

The *Irish Traditional Music Index: Alan Ng’s Tunography* is a fascinating index maintained by Alan Ng of Madison, Wisconsin. It includes recordings and tune books, cross-references from alternate titles, track and tune position references and much more. It is a non-profit site located at http://alan-ng.net/irish/tunography/ and is currently in its beta-testing and development phase. The author asks that publicity be limited at this point to helpful critics (I assume this includes any of you who are music indexers) and to Midwestern musicians.

On the other side of the world, David Ambrose, an Honorary Associate Research Professor at the National University of Lesotho, is working on *The Lesotho Annotated Bibliography*. It includes keywords for generating indexes. An original volume was published in 1980 with materials up to 1977; it was then continued by means of a card index eventually containing about 3000 items. A computer database was formally created in 1996 and the slow process of transferring the card index data to the new database was started, along with the entries for new material. This is truly a labour of love – it is an unfunded spare-time project undertaken by
someone who is usually busy with a multitude of other activities. In most countries the task of creating a national bibliography is handled by the national library or a similar body.

Resources on the web

Mary Sue Stephenson at the University of British Columbia School of Library, Archival and Information Studies has created a wonderful list of links to various web articles and resources on indexing. It covers all types of indexing and is well worth checking out at: http://www.slais.ubc.ca/resources/indexing/index.htm

The Getty Research Institute has a very interesting site called Introduction to Vocabularies: A Guide to Enhancing Access to Art and Material Culture Information. It includes a tutorial on controlled vocabularies and their application, lists of readings and tools and an introduction to the Art and Architecture Thesaurus and associated authority files. It is located at: www.getty.edu/research/institute/vocabulary/introvocabs/index.html

Where to go, 2002

16–19 May: Galveston, Texas – ASI annual conference

Contributors to this column

Thank you to contributors Jenny Doke, Jill Halliday and Frances Paterson. Please contact me (at the address below) if you have news about indexing research or projects that you would like to share.

Apologies

My apologies to Bella Hass Weinberg. In my last column I indicated that she presented a paper at the Bicentennial Conference on Bibliographic Control for the New Millennium. This was my misunderstanding. In fact, she was an invited participant. Professor Weinberg contributed recommendations on semantic interoperability. The discussion group recommendations are available at http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/bibcontrol/recommendations.html

Obituary

Josephine McGovern 1924–2001

Josephine McGovern was a founder member of the Australian Society of Indexers, remaining closely involved in its work until her death on 2 April 2001. She held offices as Vice President, President, and Chair of the Panel of Assessors for Registration and, as a long-serving member of the National and Victorian committees, undertook many jobs for the Society. One role for which she is particularly remembered was as host at meetings, dinners and other events. Josephine would place herself strategically to welcome newcomers and guests. As with everything she did, this was carried out quietly with grace, charm and no fuss.

These characteristics made her the ideal travelling companion. I had the privilege of travelling to Europe with Josephine three times. The first was in 1987 when we attended a London meeting of the Society of Indexers; we were surprised to find that we were the speakers for the evening. Josephine delighted in meeting indexers from other countries and in attending several conferences of the British Society made many friends.

Josephine's death was sudden and unexpected; we had never known her to be ill. This was typical of Josephine – no fuss. But we miss her.

Josephine had a distinguished career as a librarian, being the first woman parliamentary librarian in Australia. She held a Bachelor of Arts Degree and Diploma of Education from Melbourne University.

She first travelled to Europe in 1953, arriving in time for the Coronation and then, with friends, touring Europe in an old London taxicab. From that beginning she became an ardent traveller in Australia, Europe, America, Asia and the Middle East, frequently visiting her many relations in England and Ireland. When she returned from the first trip she changed career, completing professional library qualifications through the Library Association of Australia and working at the State Library of Victoria and Swinburne University of Technology before joining the staff of the Parliamentary Library, where she became Chief Librarian in 1970. Here she began the process that turned what had been like the library of a gentleman's club into an efficient information centre.

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John E. Simkin