Copyright Issues

Copyright issues are important to indexers because we are usually hired to create indexes and, depending upon the legislation in a particular country, this can mean that the ownership of our works falls to the person or company paying for the index. We often have little control over alterations or re-publications of our indexes.

All countries that have signed the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works recognize that moral rights to works exist. However, there is considerable variation between countries in the degree of recognition and protection afforded to creators. Australia has recently passed an amendment to its Copyright Act that stipulates that creators have moral rights that are independent of copyright ownership. Unlike copyright, moral rights cannot be sold. The original purpose of the law was to protect such people as artists and writers who sometimes find their works copied, altered, or in some manner installed or published inappropriately. As applied to indexers, the law could protect:

1. the right of integrity, which is the right of the creators not to have their works altered in a manner that is prejudicial to their reputations;
2. the right of attribution, which is the right to be identified as a creator of a work; and
3. the right to not have creatorship falsely attributed.

The impact of the legislation has yet to be seen, but the possible application does seem promising.

Society news

As usual, a wide variety of topics were addressed by the various indexing conferences and activities around the world.

The Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada (IASC/SCAD) hosted a well-attended conference in conjunction with the Editors’ Association of Canada. Topics included indexing for the user, moving image databases, and the need for professional indexing skills on the web. The IASC/SCAD newsletter has ‘gone electronic’: current web issues are delivered via email to members, and previous-year back issues will eventually be available to the general public on the IASC/SCAD website.

The Society of Indexers (SI) held its conference in July in Cheltenham. A wide range of topics was covered, from practical workshop sessions, through the work of archivists to stress management and a physiotherapist’s advice on looking after ourselves at work. It was hoped that a Chinese delegation would come, but they were, unfortunately, forced to cancel at the last minute. During the conference, the international representatives met to discuss issues of mutual interest, and to plan the agenda for the next formal international meeting, which will undertake the triennial review of the International Agreement at the AusSI conference in 2003 in Sydney.

The world of publishing is changing rapidly in response to new technologies. In response, SI has formed a small ‘Future Group’ to look at the movements and trends in publishing. The aim is to ensure that indexers’ interests are well represented in the various new developments, and that the systems being designed are such that the organization of information can be done easily and effectively. Also on the subject of technological change, SI’s training course is now available on CD-ROM, with a lively interface and self-assessment tests spread throughout the text. The new edition is also available in printed format, but it is expected that the CD-ROM version will be found much more convenient, especially for international mailings. Michèle Clarke, who has subsequently become the new Chair of SI, represented the Society at the ASI conference in Galveston.

The American Society of Indexers (ASI) held its annual conference in Galveston in May. As usual, it was well-attended and served as a great networking focus. ASI’s newest Special Interest Group, the Sports-Fitness Indexing SIG, has launched its website at http://sportsfitnessindexing.org The group has an email discussion list and is planning to create marketing materials and an online directory. Remember – SIGs welcome members from all the sibling societies.

The Society for Technical Communication (STC) has an active interest in indexing, and promotes it through various activities. In May, its India Chapter held an indexing education/learning session in Bangalore, India. The annual conference in Nashville, Tennessee, included several indexing workshops and presentations.

Contemporary Africa Database

This database is an initiative of The Africa Centre in London, England. Funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, its focus is to provide information on African people, organizations and history. It has three sections: Expert Africa (a Who’s Who of prominent Africans since 1950); Institution Africa (a directory of governmental, non-governmental and significant business organisations); and Chronology Africa (a chronology of important events and commemorations). For information on how you can contribute to this database, see http://www.africaexpert.org/

Research awards in art history

Did you know that the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) has a number of research awards that include comprehensive indexing works and bibliographies within their purview? These include the H.W. Wilson Foun-
Obituary Research Award, and the Worldwide Books Publications Award. For more information on the awards, check out the website at www.arlisna.org/index_953.html

Recent publications

Where to go, 2003
18–21 May: Dallas, Texas – STC 50th anniversary conference
19–22 June: Vancouver, Canada – ASI–IASC/SCAD combined annual conferences
27–29 June: Glasgow, Scotland – SI annual conference
12–13 September: Sydney, Australia – AusSI international indexing conference

Contributors to this column
Thank you to contributors Jill Halliday and Lori Lathrop. This is my last ‘Around the World’ column. It’s been fun, but as it should be, given its name, the column is on the move. This time it is travelling from Canada to South Africa, where Christie Theron has graciously volunteered to take over the job. Please send him any news at therojc@unisa.ac.za

Christine Jacobs is Chair, Information and Library Technologies Department, John Abbott College, PO Box 2000, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, QC, Canada H9X 3LP. Tel: +1 (514) 457 6610, loc. 470; fax: +1 (514) 457 4730; email: cmjacobs@johnabbott.qc.ca

Obituary
Shirley Kessel 1926–2002

I am sure that many readers will be saddened to hear of the death of Shirley Kessel on 28 March 2002, after a short illness at her home in Chevy Chase, Maryland, just outside Washington, DC. A freelance indexer for over 13 years, and for much of that time a member of the Society of Indexers, she achieved Registered status in 1993. She was an enthusiastic member of the SI, attending several conferences and maintaining a close interest in all its activities. She was a dedicated indexer with a considerable range of publishing contacts among her specialisms, which included economics, law, philosophy, political science and history. Indeed, in spite of her illness, she continued to index until three weeks before her death.

Shirley took her first degree in 1948 at Mount Holyoke College and embarked on a career in child welfare before obtaining a scholarship to go to the School of Social Work at the University of Chicago, where she met her future husband, then a student in the Graduate School of Business and later a professor. After her daughter Cathy went to university, she entered Graduate Library School at Chicago, obtaining her MA in 1976. From here Shirley took up a succession of indexing and cataloguing posts in a number of organizations, which included the American Petroleum Institute and the Himmelfarb Medical Library at George Washington University, and from 1979 to 1985 she was head research librarian at the American Mining Congress in Washington, DC. A research post then followed at Columbia University before she became established in independent research and writing in topics such as fiscal policy, corporate finance, international trade and supranational institutions. Indexing seemed to be the next natural step in a career progression that had enabled her to build up an extensive network of contacts in her specialist field.

I first met Shirley at the SI’s Chester Conference in the early 1990s and we soon formed a firm friendship. The SI conferences presented an ideal opportunity for her to travel within the UK to visit friends and contacts, especially in Somerset, to which she traced her ancestry. While attending the Bristol conference she managed to fit in a short visit to my daughter’s farm at lambing time. She entered into the spirit of the occasion by bottle-feeding some of the lambs and discussing farming issues until late into the night! She stayed with my wife Janet and me both in Norfolk and in Scotland and we in turn paid a return visit to her home just outside Washington, DC. Much of our communication was conducted by email on a weekly (and sometimes daily) basis and it was fascinating to have Shirley’s perspective on subjects as diverse as the (serious) business of indexing to economics and politics, military history and the US Civil War, and (less serious), the weather, plants in the garden, the cats, and travel plans. I was struck by the enormous range of her interests, which included Scottish history and culture – one of the highlights of her visit to Edinburgh with us was a pilgrimage to the grave of Adam Smith. We shared the horror, almost hour by hour, of the events of 11 September 2001, and once again the insights gained from across the Atlantic deepened my understanding of the significance of that dreadful day.

My wife used the word ‘vitality’ to sum up Shirley’s energy, commitment and enthusiasm. Her passing has left a great gap in our lives, and above all for her daughter Cathy. I am sure that her many friends in the UK and the USA will share in our sense of loss.

Peter Gunn, King’s Lynn, Norfolk