Around the world

Christie Theron

Thank you

This being my first contribution to this column I would like to thank my predecessor, Christine Jacobs, for all her assistance and hints, as well as all the contributors and, not least, the editorial board of *The Indexer*, who entrusted me with this task. I hope to continue very much on the same lines as Christine and I would like to request all the readers of *The Indexer* to send me interesting stories, news, etc., related to indexing and the indexing fraternity. Not only news from indexing societies around the world, but also more general news of new indexing and bibliographical projects and the completion of projects, newsletters, trends in indexing, electronic and web indexes and the education of indexers are more than welcome.

Society news

Reading through the contributions received from the various societies one cannot help but be impressed by the range of activities undertaken. Indexers and their societies really make their mark as dynamic and hard-working people.

**Society of Indexers (SI)**

The Society of Indexers has recently published a new indexing manual for the medical sciences (Blake et al., 2002) and last November some members enjoyed a Gala Presentation Day organized by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals to award the Wheatley Medal (among other reference awards). There has also been welcome media coverage. Hazel Bell (author of SI’s *Indexing biographies*) was interviewed on BBC radio, and in an article in *Eve* magazine (February 2003), indexing was strangely listed as one of the ‘best paid part-time jobs in Britain’! The result was a flood of inquiries to the SI office.

Congratulations to the winner of the Wheatley Medal, Dale H. Hoiberg, for the index to *Encyclopaedia Britannica 2002 revision*. Special words of congratulation also to SI members Jill Halliday for her index to the *Oxford textbook of orthopaedics and trauma* (Oxford University Press), which was highly commended, and Ann Hudson for her index to the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, vols 149–53, which was commended.

SI are actively planning their next conference (27–29 June 2003) at Strathclyde University in Glasgow. Some of us will be fortunate enough to be able to attend and we wish SI success with its organization and presentation. I hope it will be as big a success as Cheltenham last year.

**Association of Southern African Indexers and Bibliographers (ASAIB)**

ASAIB held their AGM on 28 November 2002, with guest speaker Cynthia Kemp, who edited and oversaw a new publication on *South African botanical art: peeling back the petals*, edited and introduced by Marian Arnold. This is an overview of South African botanical artists, with contributions from eminent botanists on the form and function of flowers. It has a very good index, compiled by Leonie Twentyman-Jones of Cape Town. Copies were on sale at a special price and one was raffled and won by our chairperson, Marlene Burger (vote-rigging or match fixing?).

At the AGM we also took leave of two long-serving members of the committee, namely Betty Pienaar, our able treasurer, and Beth Strachan, our equally able and efficient secretary. It is a serious blow to a committee to lose the incumbents of two such critical portfolios. We wish to thank them for their contributions.

The annual conference of ASAIB for 2003 is being organized by the Cape Branch from 14 to 15 April at the University of Cape Town Campus in lovely Cape Town. This event is eagerly awaited and a report on it will appear in the October issue.

Next year ASAIB will be ten years old and we are planning a gala conference, amongst a host of other activities. The date will be announced on our website, www.asaib.org.za and all members of indexing societies will be invited to visit and attend. We promise you the Big Five* and lots of sunshine.

ASAIB is awarding a prize this year for the best index published between 2000 and 2002. Last year an award was made for the best bibliography. (We alternate the awards since we are also a society of bibliographers.)

Training courses in computerized back-of-the-book indexing were presented last year in Pretoria. A number of courses are planned for 2003, the first being in Cape Town. We are also in the process of establishing a branch in Durban/Kwazulu-Natal. A meeting to test the water will be held in Durban on 15 April.

Madely du Preez and Elna Schoeman are busy updating our Guide to our list of practising indexers, which will be produced in printed form as well as on our website.

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*Lion, hippopotamus, leopard, elephant and rhinoceros.*

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Australian Society of Indexers (AusSI)

The Australian Society of Indexers seems to be heading towards a very busy year. From 12 to 13 September 2003 they will be hosting an international congress on ‘Indexing the World of Information’ in Sydney.

The conference programme features papers and panels giving an international perspective on indexing names, indexing standards and the teaching of indexing. Also featured are papers and panels that examine how the traditional skills of indexing, thesaurus construction, classification and database management are integrating with the information architecture and content management of the online world.

This is a conference that will definitely be worth attending and we wish them success.

Website indexing by Glenda Browne and Jonathan Jeremy was published in Korean late last year. It was used in a library and information studies course in Korea and was chosen by Lee Young-Ja as her retirement publication to be given to students at her retirement ceremony. The beautiful Korean script has little bits of English popping up in the references and examples.

John Simkin was made an Honorary Life Member of AusSI in June 2002, having joined the Society at its inaugural meeting in 1976. The compiler or editor of a number of subject guides, including the Subject guide to Australian children’s books in print during the 1990s, John has also contributed numerous articles over the years to the AusSI Newsletter and The Indexer. He continues in the role of Chairperson of the Judging Panel for the AusSI Indexers’ Medal.

New indexing newsletter i-TORQUE

Nancy Mulvany of Bayside Book Indexing successfully launched a new online indexing newsletter, I-Torque, in January 2003. Covering not only indexing, she describes its purpose as follows.

Indexers are not the only audience for i-TORQUE. Independent writers and editors of all types of non-fiction will find useful information in each issue. Software that helps independent contractors run an efficient business will be discussed. Legal issues that every contractor faces sooner or later will be unravelled. Last, but not least, the ‘Back Page’ will always be fun! Today it is not enough to monitor book publishers. The Internet and the Web have added broad new resources and challenges for the information delivery professions. Where does one turn on the Web for reliable information? What’s going on with e-books? Why are contracts full of professional liability insurance requirements? What do I need to know about XML? What is POD?

I-TORQUE will be published 10 times a year. It will be delivered as a password-protected PDF via email. Right now the issues are running 300–400 Kb in size. More information is available at http://www.i-torque.us.

Judging by the first two numbers, this is full of very relevant information for full-time (and part-time) indexers, news about interesting websites, a question-and-answer section and, yes, the ‘back page’ is fun. Subscription to the newsletter can really be recommended (trial subscription: 3 issues for US$9.00; annual subscription (10 issues) US$60.00 for orders processed through PayPal).

New online database of full text electronic journals

The eagerness of South African publishers to make their journals available online in full text is in line with global trends. There has been a dramatic rise in the numbers of electronic journals that are available online in full text, in response to growing demand among the international library and research communities, explains Pierre Malan, director of Sabinet Online’s Academic and Library Business Unit. Sabinet Online Limited has launched SA ePublications (http://journals.sabinet.co.za), the most comprehensive, searchable collection of full-text electronic South African scientific and scholarly journals.

Of some 350 publications identified for possible inclusion, 40 are already available online and by December 2003 the total should be 100. Sabinet Online offers the hosting service to journal publishers free of charge. It includes value-added features such as a fully indexed database complemented by abstracts and a sophisticated search engine. Bundled subscriptions across all titles in the SA ePublications portal are being made available to local and international institutions. This will soon be complemented by the sale of articles on a per-article basis to ad hoc website users via a secure e-commerce site.

Adding further value to the service, SA ePublications is integrated with SA Citations, which includes abstracts of a selection of periodicals published in South Africa, important scientific and technical journals, as well as some general and popular magazines – all published in South Africa over the past 15 years.

Sabinet Online Ltd was established as a joint project between the library and information sectors and the South African government and has established a reputation for providing access to high-quality, value-added, online information. See www.sabinet.co.za and the October 2002 issue of The Indexer (pp. 80–2) for further information.

Fact and fiction


The Bookforum online review included the following:

... my nagging mental image of Hazel K. Bell as a unique creature, the egghead spawn of John Cleese and a Cotswolds
The librarian, is probably unfair. At any rate, this little volume illumi-
nates, like no other I have ever read, the lonely zeal of the profes-
sional indexer.

The seven parts of Hazel’s history of indexing societies (to 1995) that have appeared in The Indexer between 1997 and 2000 are now accessible online on her website: http://
aidanbell.com/html/hkbell, where a sample list of her publications is also available.

Scholarly publications need indexes

Following an article by David Henige in the July 2002 issue of the Journal of Scholarly Publication, ‘Indexing: a user’s perspective’, which suggested that authors should index their own books, indexers on both sides of the Atlantic were quick to rise to the defence of our profession. Nancy Mulvany (who didn’t index her own book – see Table 1 on p. 125 of this issue of The Indexer), was first off the mark with a letter in the October issue of JSP, while the January 2003 issue carried letters on behalf of both SI (Michèle Clarke and Christine Shuttleworth) and ASI (Carol Roberts). [See pp. 164–6 of this issue of The Indexer.]

Recent publications
Blake, Doreen, Clarke, Michèle, McCarthy, Anne and Morrison, June (2002) Indexing the medical sciences, 2nd edn. Sheffield:

Society of Indexers (Occasional Publications No. 3). [see p. 148 for details of how to obtain this.]

Where to go, 2003
14–15 April: Cape Town, South Africa – ASAIB annual conference
19–22 June: Vancouver, Canada – Joint ASI and IASC/SCAD annual conference
27–29 June: Glasgow, Scotland – A Scots Quaire (SI annual conference)
12–13 September: Sydney, Australia – Indexing the World of Information (AusSI international congress)

Contributors to this column

Thank you to contributors Hazel Bell, Jill Halliday, Frances Paterson, Nancy Mulvany and Madely du Preez for all your hard work.

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The Indexer thirty years ago

Hazel K. Bell

The April 1973 issue of The Indexer, Volume 8, No. 3, had 64 pages, with a main theme of international expansion. L. M. Harrod, in his Editorial, wrote of the increasing international circulation of the journal, its being exhibited at overseas conferences, and the increasing number of contributions from overseas.

Another topic considered in this issue was one that remains much discussed today: payment for indexing. Harrod commented:

Whether the cost of compiling indexes should be paid for by the author of the book concerned, or be a publication charge to be met by the publisher, is something that is often discussed when indexers meet together. It is probably a talking point amongst authors too.... This is a matter which members of the Council of the Society are very concerned with – as they are with actual remuneration.

Little change there in thirty years, then.

Brenda Hall provided a nine-page article on ‘A computer-generated index technique’, its second paragraph beginning:

It may help to understand progress in computer-generated indexing techniques if the usual process in making an index by the manual method is broken down into its components.

A. Text to be indexed
B. Trained indexer
C. Material from A abstracted by B on to cards, making as many separate entries under different headings as are necessary to cover each concept
D. Product of C arranged alphabetically by B
E. Product of D edited by B
F. Product of E typed into copy for printer

After describing the ‘advantages of an articulated subject index’ with ‘the selection of headings and modifying phrases, the manipulation of language and word order ... and the arrangement of common material in a logical system ... all undertaken intuitively by the experienced indexer’, Hall claims: ‘It is only recently that it has been discovered that indexes of this kind have a logical basis which can be expressed in mathematical terms and so be simulated by computer program.’ The remaining eight pages describe ‘a novel computer technique for the production of articulated subject indexes’, used to index the Cartographic Journal. The article concludes:

Successful operation will continue to depend on the exercise of indexing expertise to bring the end product closer to the standard set by the linguistically polished and conceptually accurate