

# Australian Society of Indexers

Volume 28, Number 1 January/February 2004

# Newsletter

## From the President

This is the first issue of the Newsletter for 2004, and if it looks a bit different – well, it is. In the absence of our regular newsletter editor Frances Paterson, this issue was put together by the National Committee as a bare-bones ‘interim’ publication to keep members informed of current and upcoming activities.

Frances decided that after three years at the helm of the newsletter, it was time to ‘pass the baton’ and focus on her own work and interests. She has done an excellent job of sourcing and presenting content, with Michael Wyatt arranging newsletter layout and printing. Sadly for the Society, we will be losing the services of both these members. Michael is making a complete lifestyle change and with his partner will be operating a café in the Blue Mountains (if you are in Katoomba, visit them at the Parakeet Café at the end of the main street). We wish them well in this new endeavour.

Michael has been an active member of the Society for many years, as a Branch President, Branch and National Committee member, Education Committee member, teacher and most recently Membership Secretary. His contributions to the Society are many and wide-ranging, and his input will be sorely missed.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank both Frances and Michael for the work they have done and for the high level of quality and professionalism they brought to the often trying task of producing a regular monthly newsletter.

Which brings us to this newsletter. We are sorely in need of a new newsletter editor. The tasks are simple: provide monthly information of value and interest to members. The responsibilities are set out on the website under ‘Guidelines for Editor’ at <http://www.aussi.org/administration/guidelines/editor.html>. As Newsletter Editor, you will be one of the main public voices of our society (the other is the Web Manager). You will have the opportunity to be in contact with all the Branches and members from all over the country, and will be kept in the forefront

of current Society and indexing activities. You will enjoy regular correspondence with newsletter editors from overseas indexing groups, and from related societies here in Australia. You will join the ranks of such former editors as Ann Philpott (currently President of the Victorian Branch), Glenda Browne (still a regular contributor to the Newsletter) and Frances and we hope that, like them, you will continue to be active in AusSI after your stint as editor is over.

You should recently have received an ‘Expression of Interest’ form for Committee appointments, as part of your package of membership renewals /Annual General Meeting information. We would like to announce appointments to these positions (including Newsletter Editor) at the Annual General Meeting on 23 March. If you would like more details about the editorship, please return the ‘expression of interest’ form and/or contact me at [president@aussi.org](mailto:president@aussi.org).

Our Web Manager position will also be vacant, and we were pleased to see considerable interest in this post – perhaps an indication of the growing number of people who include web page development in their portfolio of skills. Emeline Haight has provided excellent web services in the face of some unexpected administrative difficulties (like our service provider changing its provisions for allowing online payments, which affected this year’s membership renewals) and we would like to thank her for the time spent in doing all the hidden background ‘stuff’ that makes a website operate.

This year the Web Manager will face new challenges, including working with the Committee to try to implement some new initiatives we would like to introduce. Re-introduction of a method of online payments; development of a workable privacy policy which will allow us to maintain an online membership list without compromising the privacy of our members; a possible site re-design;

and the upgrading of the website index are just a few of the areas Emeline and the Committee have identified as priorities for the next year.

And don’t forget, this is the time of year for thinking about active participation in your Society. Branches are having their Annual General Meetings in February and March, and the National AGM will be held in Canberra on 23 March. We encourage you to be active at either (or both) levels, and nominate for Committee positions. The Society can always use extra ideas and people to help carry them out. I think you will find that any member who has sat on one of the Committees has found it a valuable experience. I know in my case it has led to better professional links with colleagues, and some valued and long-term friendships which I wouldn’t have wanted to miss.

All the best for 2004, and I hope you will enjoy your association with the Australian Society of Indexers this year. Oh, and if you’re wondering what happened to your December issue of the Newsletter, a range of constraints made it impossible to produce. Please accept our apologies, and we hope to keep ‘on track’ this year until our new Editor takes over.

*Lynn Farkas*

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# Notice board

## **Annual General Meetings: Australian Society of Indexers (National) and Australian Society of Indexers – ACT Region Branch**

The National AGM will be held first followed by the ACT AGM and dinner. Members & guests welcome.

Date: Tuesday 23 March 2004  
Time/cost 7.00 for 7.30pm – \$30 per head  
Venue: The Brassey of Canberra,  
Belmore Gardens, Barton

The guest speaker will be Victor Crittenden, retired university librarian and proprietor of Mulini Press. He will speak on the book arts and information from his experience as a librarian, publisher, bibliographer, author and researcher of history, particularly garden history in Australia.

For further information contact:

Shirley Campbell Ph: (02) 6285 1006 (Home) or  
Email: shirley.campbell@alianet.alia.org.au

Lynn Farkas Ph: (02) 6286 4818 (Home) or  
lfarkas@webone.com.au

RSVP with payment by Monday 1 March 2004 to the Australian Society of Indexers (ACT Region Branch), GPO Box 2069, Canberra ACT 2601

## **Annual General Meeting: Australian society of Indexers – New South Wales Branch**

The Annual General Meeting and election of office bearers for the NSW Branch of the Australian Society of Indexers will be held at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 3 March 2004.

The AGM will be held at the New Hong Kong Restaurant, 44 Macleay Street, Potts Point, NSW 2011 (tel: 9356 8481).

Street parking can be difficult in this area. The Kings Cross parking station (Ward Avenue) and the Kings Cross railway station are both five minutes' walk from the restaurant. The 311 bus stops at the front door.

The AGM will be followed by a Chinese banquet, at the subsidised cost of \$32.00 per person, drinks included.

RSVP: Alan Walker Ph: 9368 0174, fax: 9358 5593,  
email: alanwalker@so54.aone.net.au

## **Annual General Meeting: Australian Society of Indexers – Victorian Branch**

The Victorian Branch of the Australian Society of Indexers warmly invites members, their partners and friends to the 2004 Annual General Meeting, which includes the AusSI Medal Report for 2003. This year we have a new format for the evening. The formal part of the evening concludes before we adjourn to dinner, thus enabling members and friends to mingle more easily with each other in the lounge

after dinner. Those who attend the AGM regularly will know how enjoyable the evening is.

Date: Tuesday, 17 February 2004

Time: 6.30pm

Venue: Graduate House, 224 Leicester Street, Carlton.

The Victorian Branch AGM will have taken place before this newsletter is distributed. A report from the Victorian Branch President, Ann Philpott, and the reports of the National and other Branch Presidents will be featured in the next issue of the Newsletter.

## **AusSI Rep Needed for British Conference**

Our British cousins, the Society of Indexers, are holding their annual Conference in Chester on 3–4 April 2004 (for details of the conference click on the 'News' icon on the Society's homepage <<http://www.indexers.org.uk/>>)

As part of our reciprocal agreements with other indexing societies worldwide, we have been offered one free registration and accommodation for a member who will represent the Australian Society of Indexers. As the AusSI rep, you will be asked to attend sessions and provide a report to the National Committee which is suitable for including in the Newsletter. You may also be asked to represent the National Committee if a meeting of the Executives of national societies takes place (if this occurs, you will be briefed on the agenda and issues).

If you are planning to be in Britain at this time and would like to represent AusSI, please contact our Secretary, Shirley Campbell at [secretary@aussi.org](mailto:secretary@aussi.org) for more details. Responses are needed by 15 March.

## **Book Indexing Courses in ACT**

The Australian Society of Indexers – ACT Region Branch will be running full day introductory and intermediate Back-of-book indexing courses conducted by Max McMaster on Monday and Tuesday 22 and 23 March, 2004

The intermediate course on Monday 22 March, from 9 am at a venue to be advised will provide practical book indexing training using a dedicated indexing software package on a pre-course supplied publication. This course is suitable for those who wish to extend their basic indexing skills. Fees \$240, of \$190 for AusSI, Society of Editors and ASTC members. Contact Geraldine Triffitt 6231 4975 or [geraldine.triffitt@alianet.alia.org.au](mailto:geraldine.triffitt@alianet.alia.org.au)

The introductory course will be held at the Australian Archives, Parkes, ACT on Tuesday 23 March from 9 am. Anyone who is interested in becoming an indexer, particularly librarians seeking an alternative career will find this a comprehensive introduction to book indexing. Fees \$220, or \$170 for AusSI, Society of Editors and ASTC members.

Contact Geraldine Triffitt 6231 4975 or  
[geraldine.triffitt@alianet.alia.org.au](mailto:geraldine.triffitt@alianet.alia.org.au)

# Dates for your Diary...

EVENT	DATE/TIME	LOCATION
Annual General Meeting: Victorian Branch	Tuesday, 17 February 2004 – 6.30pm	Graduate House, 224 Leicester Street, Carlton
Annual General Meeting: New South Wales Branch	Wednesday, 3 March 2004 – 6.30 pm	New Hong Kong Restaurant, 44 Macleay Street, Potts Point, NSW 2011 (tel: 9356 8481)
Book Indexing Courses in ACT	Monday and Tuesday 22 and 23 March, 2004	Australian Archives, Parkes, ACT
Annual General Meeting: National & ACT Branch	Tuesday, 23 March 2004 – 7.00pm	The Brassey of Canberra, Belmore Gardens, Barton
Society of Indexers Conference	3–4 April 2004	Chester, Britain

## ‘Impressions of a Conference’

*Fiona Mottram*

In September 2003 the New South Wales Branch of AusSI hosted our international conference ‘Indexing the World of Information’. The Conference covered a varied program which attracted many allied information professionals, and was a landmark for one of our Society’s members, Fiona Mottram, who was awarded the first Conference Sponsorship provided by the National Committee. This Sponsorship is designed to give people from remote areas in Australia who have never been able to attend an AusSI conference the opportunity to participate, by paying some of the costs of conference attendance. Our first recipient is an active member of the Victorian Branch (currently Branch Secretary). A condition of Sponsorship is a report on the conference, and Fiona has provided this personal as well as professional view from a “newbie’s” perspective. For those who were there, it may bring back memories. For others, we hope it acts as an introduction and overview of an interesting Conference (note: over the next few months the Newsletter will be printing some of the formal papers of the Conference).

### Friday 12th September

#### Registration & satchel

*Looks like most people don’t know anyone else either. Good, I’m not at a disadvantage & it should be easy to say ‘hello’ & meet others. The nametags have big print so you don’t have to peer at people’s chests. Well you don’t anyway; they hang on a string that dangles them at navel height. When you sit down, the nametag disappears into one’s stomach fat roll if you happen to possess one!*

*Now that’s clever marketing – all these women = chocolate eaters...and inside the conference satchel there is a ‘caramello koala’ with an advertising sticker for Glenda Browne & Jon Jermy’s business on the back. They are assuming that we’ll not rip the wrapper off so fast that we won’t see it.*

*Yep – good contents in the satchel. Apart from the choccy there is a usefully sized notebook, a pen, a highlighter and tourist maps. Not too much advertising. Well done. Better write my name on everything as we all have identical paraphernalia now.*

*The conference rooms look really nice, toilets are handy (insufficient numbers for females as usual) and there is a cute balcony with seating too. I approve.*

#### Introductory address & ‘housekeeping’ Caroline Colton

*‘If humans use the system, then humans will always be required to develop, organise and maintain the system’.*

*OK – so there will always be the opportunity for indexing work, despite technical changes.*

The conference will hopefully 'spark imagination and resolve' for those attending.

*Gee, I hope so too!*

An anonymous donor has provided for the cocktail party.

*Hmm...either they don't think its good business advertising to be associated with alcohol, or else they are simply generous and the conference funds don't stretch that far. I'll be generous and assume the latter!*

#### **Keynote address by Elizabeth Swan**

With some humour, Elizabeth took us on a journey of 40+ years where she progressed from falling off wooden library ladders to being a business manager of an indexing/information/research service.

As a business manager, **ES** kept referring to the need to be financially viable while doing good work and keeping the needs of the end user in mind. Use intelligence to modify methods & terms to fit with these requirements. Dating information is important to researchers and is often not a field included.

People are required to evaluate information and to make relevant information 'visible' and findable to users.

#### **Morning tea**

*Yummy & plentiful and typical of more to come. My only complaint is that drinking chocolate isn't served. So I whip up to my well-appointed room in the hotel (more posh than anything I've ever stayed in before) & collect my own jar of drinking choc to use every break. Queuing with all those other women at the conference in a small space while we wait for a chance at the toilet provides opportunity for conversation and swapping details. Maybe I should have had my business cards laminated? The few men at the conference must miss out on this fun!*

#### **International panel**

**Jill Halliday, UK** (*Plummy voice rather like a younger version of the Queen*).

Indexing as a profession got a public boost in the UK when a female cabinet minister who'd had an affair with then Prime Minister John Major complained that she'd been missed out of the index in a biography about him. (*Moral: Sex gets people's attention anywhere.*)

Currently about 900 members. Members are after work and education. The society's web site is proving to be a very important means of contact and information. The society is doing a lot of work marketing indexing education to members and also in targeting professional conferences where specialist needs would benefit from an index. More communication is also happening by email where an active 'listserv' group discusses indexing issues. However you have to be a UK society member to participate. (*Pity about the exchange rate, eh*).

#### **Noeline Bridge, Canada**

In Canada they have an Indexing and Abstracting association. Only 135 members – but this is up from the average of 90. The association does joint conferences with both the editor's society, and with the USA indexing society.

Geographical spread of indexers in Canada is a bit lonely & isolating. Executive meetings are held by 'e-meetings'. A rather quiet listserv is also available for answering members' queries.

*I am surprised how small this society is.*

#### **Frances Lennie, USA**

Some media coverage describing 'easy jobs to do from home with good income' included indexing as a profession. This resulted in a somewhat chaotic influx into the American Society of Indexers of people who believed this! (*Loud, extended laughter from the audience.*) Membership went from 500 to 1300 members, most of whom had unrealistic expectations. Membership has now settled at around 750.

There has been some internal shake-up going on. Some believe that society efforts have favoured the interests of freelance members over other types of members. The society is now trying to get more organisations as members, rather than just individuals. For members, the society has an all-important web site. There is a 'jobs hotline' on this. Marketing the need for indexers is aimed at corporate organisations. Three-day conferences are held, with the third day devoted to a fun excursion. (*This sounds like a great idea. I mean – it would be a good opportunity for networking.*)

Indexing for beginners is a course run by the Dept of Agriculture, and only 3% of students enrolled in it actually

complete the course! (Historically the course was set up to help farmers' wives find an alternative employment.) There is a big gap between this course and the advanced indexing course run by the ASI.

**Lynn Farkas, Australia** (*Amusingly, she sounds more North American than either Noeline or Frances*)

Two major concerns for AusSI:

1. Training for indexers at all levels depends on only a handful of people.
2. Membership has been declining steadily for some years. Currently now about 173 members down from a previous steady average of 190 members. People joining & dropping out again.

However Lynn believes there is a great feeling of community in the Australian society. People who have been out of the indexing profession are coming back into it again. She also notes that 'Indexers Available' is used extremely heavily.

*Lynn is enthusiastic and the audience is quiet & attentive. (Well, with all those librarian-types in the group, what do you expect?)*

*I now feel inspired to write an article for our small – town country newspaper about being sponsored to the conference, and what indexers do etc. Yes, we can all do our bit for promoting indexing and the society.*

#### **General meeting for AusSI members**

First thing to note is that this is **not** an AGM – just a meeting to take advantage of so many members being together in one place. Non-members were welcome to sit in & listen. Only 1 Queenslander was present – a new member who doesn't know any others from her state.

Office bearers at the National level were asked to stand up so people could see them.

*It would have been much more useful if they'd stood up as their name was called so we knew who was who.*

As the sponsored attendee, I had to stand up & be gawped at too.

*Ahhh – I hadn't realised that this was the first year the sponsorship was offered. Later on, I find that it was a very useful exercise to have been pointed out to the crowd. It breaks the ice when introducing myself, gives an instant topic*

*for conversation and everyone now seems to remember my name.*

Lynn gave a progress report from the Outlook workshop. She is very keen to find ways for the society to promote itself and the profession publicly. Help is needed with improving the web site usability – and the web site's importance part of publicity is recognised.

Fewer people are applying for registration. Registration is no longer an entry point, but is rather peer acknowledgement of experience and expertise. However gaining registration may now be too slow due to the time taken in getting indexes published.

The 'Indexer' magazine will cost us more due to the exchange rate changes.

People were encouraged to ask questions and give ideas.

*(It was a bit like an auction – if you scratched your head you were thought to be asking a question.)*

State reports were given. Max McMaster from Victoria described Vic activities and the mentoring pilot project.

Caroline Colton for NSW spoke about the conference organisation, and about work being undertaken to determine the hourly rate recommended for indexers. Geraldine Triffitt on behalf of ACT described their system of meetings. She also talked about interacting with other information professional societies.

*Food seems to be a common denominator in attracting people to events!*

*It would have been beneficial to have a representative from each sub-committee and state group providing a report to the meeting, even if read out on someone's behalf.*

### **Parallel sessions Indexing names**

I decided not to go to this as I'm still at the stage where I dive into a book to see how trickier ones are done, and thought that I'd rather learn something about database indexing. However the people who attended the Indexing names talk and discussion came out laughing and cheery.

### **Using metadata: a magic bullet or death by degrees by Nelly Ivanova**

This talk seemed mostly relevant to

people in large organisations with a need to decide how and at what cost, they index material for researchers to retrieve. It also dealt with sharing indexes and information between many users for an added benefit at a lower cost. Issues involve trust, feedback, quality, software, duplication and controlled vocabularies.

Personally, I found this after lunch session tedious. The speaker used a rapid, monotone delivery plus lots of acronyms and jargon I didn't know. Lack of humour combined with a stuffy room and a full stomach, meant I struggled to find any meaning or relevance. I even got dizzy watching the cursor swirl around on the big screen! However I did get (I think) definitions for the following terms:

Identifier – location on & offline of the resource.

Interoperability – sharing between systems.

Metadata – Structured data used to describe resources/documents and the source itself. Includes title, subject/s, description and universal resource identifier.

Portals – different web sites leading to information.

I'm not totally sure about 'harvesting data' and 'reverse harvesting', but I believe it was to do with finding and removing or else finding and adding, information from/to the database. Someone did later explain this to me over dinner but I admit to being distracted by food and noise in the restaurant at the time.

I did like one quote from the speaker... 'Create once, use many times'.

### **Whole-of-government thesauri & high level subject thesauri: trends & issues by Sherrey Quinn**

This talk was about government initiatives in delivering information to clients via the Internet given the increasing importance of the web 'as a market place'. In fact provision of the internet at public libraries has had a big impact on people being able to access government via the web. Huge volumes of information have become available but in a chaotic manner. Consequently, there has been 'a re-discovery of interest in controlled vocabulary' in order to make government web sites more useful and to develop standards for resource description.

Sherrey spoke about the following aspects:

1. How to get the citizen's language viewpoint without oversimplification. And don't forget lots of people have trouble spelling even the terms they use themselves! In addition, people often do not understand the hierarchies within government departments.
2. People expect an instant gratification in finding information.
3. The Thesaurus of Australian Government Subjects' (TAGS) and the Australian Governments Interactive Function ...? (AGIFT). *It was interesting that in Canada, an officially bilingual country, every subject thesaurus naturally had to be in both French and English.*
4. Provision of controlled vocabularies for agencies lacking a specialised thesaurus.
5. The politics in choosing terms and not offending different sectors of the community. For example people 'refugees', 'asylum seekers' or 'illegal immigrants'? However even apparently innocent terms such as those relating to rabbits, can be a problem. To some they are a feral nuisance, while to others they are a booming new meat industry!
6. Different ways of directing people to information – using authority files, thesauri, taxonomy, classification schemes (e.g. browse trees), synonym rings and antology. (Antology as in antonyms).
7. 'On site' tours and training on how to use government web sites.

*My librarian's heart sang when Sherrey referred on several occasions to the Library of Congress Subject Headings. Familiar territory, though I hadn't realised LCSH had been going since 1895.*

### **Panel: Indexing software Cindex – Frances Lennie**

A software that literally looks like index cards on the screen. Costs US\$525. There is a listserve for users. (I think!)

*After Glenda Browne introduced Frances, she then accidentally took off with Frances' notes, to the audience's delight.*

### **SKY Index – Michael Wyatt**

Michael demonstrated 'a few of his

favourite features' such as a split screen look (similar to spreadsheets), ability to edit 'on the fly'. There is a mailing list for users and it costs much the same as Cindex does.

*Our laugh on Michael occurred when the timer indicating the end of his session buzzed before he'd even got onto the speakers' rostrum!*

#### **Macrex – Max McMaster**

Max is an excellent salesman. He did not put up visuals on the screen (I think because Macrex's MS-DOS look makes it appear old-fashioned) but instead talked about the features of the latest version 7.18B. It is compatible with all windows platforms and can be used in HTML format for web site indexing. Costs AUS\$830.

*We all laughed heaps when Max described it as 'the package to use if you want to win the Indexer's medal'!*

*Max then adjourned into the foyer where he went into more detail about Macrex. I own and use Macrex version 6.*

#### **Product reviews by exhibitors**

*I bombed out on these. I'd had enough for the day.*

#### **Cocktail party**

*This was rather fun and good for meeting people and relaxing before dinner. I enjoyed sitting out on the balcony chatting during this time. I'm not good at balancing drink & food politely while standing up in a press of people. I left before the end in order to test out the hotel's swimming pool. The pool is to be highly recommended!!!! Set in a garden on the 8th floor, it has views of city lights. I lazed in the warm water rejuvenating and watching bats and aircraft pass overhead. Please can there be another conference here!*

#### **Dinner**

*This was a great lark and I got to spend time with people I hadn't yet got to talk to, plus some I'd already got to know a bit. It involved the best Chinese food I've ever eaten, and did not resemble the 'standard' Chinese food I am used to. There was a fun trivia quiz and I was in the team that came last! Honestly, the rubbish some people fill their heads with!*

*I was surprised that only 33 or so people attended the dinner. If you can possibly afford it, I highly recommend it as a way of relating to other people at*

*the conference! Thank you very much to the Vic Branch, which sponsored my attendance at the dinner. I would not have made it without their support.*

*The only downside was that the rich food affected my digestive system in a negative way, and it took me 3 days to get back to normal. For those who wondered at my occasional dashes out of the conference rooms on the Saturday, you now know why!!!!*

### **Saturday 13th September**

#### **Indexing the future of information: Glenda Browne**

*What can I say? Well, like quite a few other people, I missed noticing that Saturday's first session started half an hour earlier than Friday's did. So unfortunately I didn't attend Glenda's talk 'cos I was still mooching about in my hotel room. People coming out were very pleased with Glenda's contribution, and buzzed with conversation. My apologies Glenda!*

#### **Parallel sessions Health thesauri**

*I chose not to attend these talks as I had already heard Mary Russell's excellent talk on the women's health thesaurus at an activity run by AusSI Vic Branch. Consequently I went to hear the other topics.*

#### **Developing an indexing product: 'Wine Diva' by Caroline Colton**

I found Caroline's talk extremely interesting. In many ways, it was a description of one person's journey to take control of her employment and economic future. She displayed adventure, independence and courage in developing an internet directory designed to encompass the entire Australian wine industry. She structured the directory to reflect the structure of the wine industry, which is based on regions. She saw success would only be achieved if the directory could pass a comprehensiveness test, as this is how she perceived other directories have failed. Consequently basic listing is free, so everyone is encouraged to list. Additional advertising or descriptions are paid for. She also gets a percentage of sales of books via the site and can sell data such as mailing lists. Not to mention a lot of free wine samples and plenty of travel fun!

Caroline was closely supported and assisted in her work by friends and relatives with skills she didn't have herself. She also did a thorough business analysis. While I may not personally want to do what Caroline has done, I think she is a good example to follow in terms of the manner in which she has operated. It can be applied in whatever direction one wishes to progress. However Wine Diva turns out, Caroline can count successes, though I really hope that she receives the economic benefits she is striving for.

*Have a look at <<http://www.winediva.com.au>>*

#### **Ensuring an intranet meets staff needs by James Robertson**

Intranets seem to be a microcosm of the internet. Heaps of useful information may be there if only one can find it! Need for controlled vocabulary, trustworthy quality of content and relevance to the users in relation to organisational goals are all issues. James strongly believes in finding out what the workers at the coalface need from an intranet, rather than what management thinks they ought to need. He uses structured investigation methods – focus groups, workplace observation, process & knowledge mapping, review of existing situation, interviews and use of search engine logs – to determine what those needs are. (You don't just ask people what they want!) When the intranet meets the needs of the users, they are its greatest advocates.

Look at his web site <<http://www.steptwo.com.au>> for articles about these topics. James also recommends doing internet searches about 'information architecture' and 'knowledge management'.

James managed to make it all interesting and easy to follow, with humour thrown in.

#### **Indexing for online users 2: User centred information architecture and menu systems**

*I decided I'd had enough of online information and wanted to get a better look at ideas relating to back of book indexing. As a result I did not attend this talk or those 2 following it by Derek Jardine & Bruce Mcleod.*

#### **Two steps forwards, one step back...indexing...biographies of Elvis Presley by Susan MacDougall**

You just had to laugh through this talk as Susan cleverly divided her topic

under subheadings, many of which were titles of Elvis songs, for example 'Suspicious minds', or what I think are lyric lines from Elvis songs. She has an unabashed passion for Elvis and combined it with her indexing passion to make a study of indexing of biographies over a 30-year period. Naturally she easily justified her choice to use Elvis biographies for comparing indexes – Elvis is someone who has had more than 1000 biographies written about him. Susan also has access to friends with libraries of his biographies, in addition to her own collection, which made research easier. She even drew a parallel between Presley books and the Bible... 'they are now the subject of more serious study and you keep returning to re-read them'!

Susan found that over time, indexes have improved. This is partly because the time lapse allows more serious, scholarly biographies to be written and these are much more likely to have a quality index. However the lighter style of book is less likely to have an index, and any having indexes were usually shorter than the ideal for the book's size. All the same, she concludes that electronic advances has not diminished indexing, but that indexing societies still need to promote the importance of quality indexes.

Susan also provided a very clear handout of her talk.

### **Classified and specific indexing for legal publications by Lorraine Doyle**

Legal indexing has been a system used over several centuries. In court, a lawyer may need to look up a counter argument on the spot if an opponent introduces a new argument during the case. A quality index is required to meet that urgent, on-the-spot need. Further, law books are not books to be read, they are reference books, so are used primarily via the index.

Traditionally, legal material has been indexed under a fairly cumbersome classified system. There are few abstract concepts included. And it makes problems with cross-referencing. Legal indexing is specialised because legal terms have special meanings that must be fully understood. In Victoria, there is a 'Table of classified index headings' to use. Committee meetings are required before categories can be changed, as there is a big history in indexing legal documents – in Victoria since the 1860s. Additionally, much

indexing is done for loose-leaf services, which have supplementary indexes until they are consolidated.

Currently, there is pressure to move to a combined style of index with legal books. Modern lawyers rely on computers and CDs, so do not commit as much to memory as has been traditional. Students are trained more to direct entries. Also, the government is committed to using 'plain English'. However law is a field where debate and consistency are strong, so change is slow!

Lorraine recommends the UK indexing Society's booklet for people interested in indexing legal books. She suggests that people can start indexing legal journals to get a feel for the area with a lower level of exactness required. Legal indexing is very labour intensive and there is much less publishing pressure to limit the size of the index. 'You can index to your heart's content'.

Lorraine's talk was very interesting. There were obviously quite a few people in the audience who worked for legal publishers.

### **Unfortunate omission: editing and indexing women out of the Anzac legend by Caroline Viera Jones**

Caroline's talk really opened my eyes to the manner in which influential people can sanitise, censor and bias the reporting of history. And if the information isn't in the text, then it can't be indexed! The official history of WWI could have told in detail what it was really like on the front, in hospital lines and back home. However much of this was sacrificed due to political pressures, nationalistic beliefs & friendship between publisher and prime minister, which dictated that the work should be on a grand scale and should polish the Australian male hero image. Our Anzac legend, indeed. Hence references to 'Australian stragglers', 'clashes between surgeons and matrons on hospital ships', 'domestic history' 'mateship between nurses and soldiers' and 'female heroism' were edited out. Whole chapters about women's involvement were removed, and women were excluded from the official indexes. Three volumes about medical history during the war were published in such small numbers that copies were rare. Yet the main volumes were common in people's homes.

Caroline's talk was rivetting and I enjoyed it immensely.

### **Education & indexing talks by Anna Gifford & Steven Haby**

Again at a Vic Branch activity, I have heard Anna's clear & informative talk, so I opted not to attend these talks.

### **Principles and practice 2: Indexing by the book**

Alan Walker & Max McMaster have a practiced, easy, ad lib comedy act (*was that a question or were you just waving?*) that simultaneously manages to teach plenty and invite discussion.

Alan began by describing life as an indexing student in the 1960s, but then progressed to discuss indexing abstract ideas, things that have a phrase rather than a name, 'how specific is specific', see also & see references and natural language use. He wanted people to consider whether practices are traditional and generally accepted, or are they rules? In a particular situation, what is best for the user?

Max talked about indexing the Queensland Tertiary Assessment Courses (QTAC) Guide in a manner completely different to his previous versions. He changed from specific entry to classified entries. He also did 3 separate indexes. (An alphabetic-specific index, a classified index, and a general index for topics such as accommodation, application etc) This was on the basis that users were year 12 students who were not familiar with academic courses and found specific entry to be unfriendly. The impact of an 'unfriendly' course guide could actually affect enrolments as students couldn't find the course they were looking for!

The general discussion then turned to questions such as 'would you include the Pope in an index about soccer?' *One audience member said 'Yes I'd include it because I'm a Catholic and I don't know what might happen if I didn't!'* She then blushed heavily.

The consensus was index it, and if it becomes merely a passing mention, then delete it. But retain it if it becomes a major issue.

Are we making indexing rules that readers don't understand? Do the readers care?

Max & Alan have opposing views over the use of the ampersand (&) in indexes.

Indexing about people who rise in rank over the course of the book: Index

under the highest rank attained if you are including ranks. However ranks are not generally indexed.

### **Plenary: Education for indexing: an international panel**

**Frances Lennie, USA** *"I don't index dental books"*

This woman is excellent.

Frances reckons that indexing is something which can have the basic elements taught, but that 'the rest follows by cultivation'. She compares indexing to painting by numbers and works of art. You can follow the rules, but there is also the requirement for a creative element that lifts the index to excellence. A good index means that you can find what is required within 30 seconds. Software does the chores of indexing. Students need to understand these principles, but no longer need to memorise them. Students need to build up their confidence in analysing what to select for the index, and must learn when to edit entries to improve the index's quality.

Qualities of a good indexer are: creative, a writer rather than a reader, active, organised, well-read, work disciplined, good at comprehension and précis work.

There is no right way to index a book. Skills used to index one type of format can be applied to other types. Differences are relatively small. Indexers should keep on track professionally: analyse their own work, go to conferences & society activities, participate in listserv discussions and peer reviews.

Realities of indexing can include: being used as a free consultant, changing deadlines, training clients and cost cutting!

**Jill Halliday, UK** *"I'm just showing you how this works, I'm not trying to teach you how to index"*

Jill demonstrated the training software now sold by the Indexing Society in the UK. There are a series of self-test units, followed by tests that are marked by examiners and that lead to accreditation. The training course has lots of highlighted anecdotes, examples and hints. It is well set out. Help is available by phone and email, plus there are 1-day workshops for students and recent graduates. This training system (available by CD-Rom & mail) illustrates a big commitment to training

and support of indexing students. This system cost 15,000 pounds and will take some time for cost recovery.

### **Lynn Farkas, Australia**

Australia only has limited face-to-face training available. Distance education in indexing is only available from overseas and is high cost. AusSI has not the resources for interactive CD-Rom & web-based education. However it may be able to tap into government resources for vocational, skills-based training. Partnerships with organisations such as museums may be a possibility. A workbook option is a possibility. (idea from the National Library's Kinetica workbook for library staff around Australia doing inter-library loans). Perhaps there should be hands-on workshops at conferences?

Self-education can be assisted by using the web to get started in looking at related information-profession fields.

If people have ideas, can they please pass them onto the education committee!

*By the end of the conference, people simply looked too tired to respond much to Lynn's plea for ideas. Lynn must have been tired too as she got tongue-tied. Instead of saying 'user pays basis', she came out 3 times in a row with 'user bays pasis'.*

*And if you want a chance at winning the door prize, you have to stay until the very end to be in the draw!*

### **Overall impressions arising from the conference that might help others.**

1. *Indexers come in all age ranges, so it's obviously never too late to start!*
2. *As one of the relatively younger attendees (and I'm 42!), I could be in a position to get a lot more work in future, as at least half of those at the conference will theoretically be in semi-retirement or retirement within the next 10 years. Sorry if I have offended anyone here.*
3. *Be confident and keep at it. Don't let self-doubts hinder you. Plug away at getting opportunities for work. They will happen in time. Don't be intimidated by all those indexers with more experience – there are plenty around with even less than you have too.*
4. *Get the experience now if you can – in the future, there will be*

*opportunities for teaching indexing work. Already there are too few people teaching indexing skills.*

5. *There will always be a need for indexers as the human element in making information links. Be prepared to be flexible and adventurous in following work opportunities.*
6. *Indexers come from a variety of backgrounds. Don't feel left out if you haven't yet met anyone with a similar background. Besides, you can always turn it to an advantage if you are unique!*
7. *Feel good about a your passion for patterns, order, meticulousness, hierarchy and pedantry. You are neither freaky nor alone nor uncreative. But never mind if such passions don't translate into areas such as your wardrobe organisation or housekeeping skills.*
8. *If you really don't understand database indexing stuff, you certainly are not the only one. However it does seem mostly like it's the same old ideas parading under different jargon terms, so you could probably do it ok anyway. If it really leaves you cold don't panic. People seem to have enough work to keep them going without being a database whiz.*
9. *Given our population size, Australia seems to be doing pretty well for indexers.*
10. *Going to a conference does heaps for your indexing passion. It makes you itch to get back home and get stuck into work with some new perspectives and enthusiasms. It also gives you some contacts in what is a relatively isolated profession.*
11. *If you have something interesting you can give a paper on at a conference, give it a go. Many of the speakers were nervous beforehand and apparently felt lacking; yet their performances were terrific! If you are a bit behind in presentation technology, there is obviously a club you can join.*
12. *Good speakers tie in comments heard from previous speakers with their own talk. This makes links and adds relevance for the audience.*
13. *If you could be eligible for the sponsorship next conference, jump in and try for it. The conference is valuable, fun and confirming.*

14. If you want to ask a question at a conference, it is standard practice to get up from your seat while you ask.

15. Writing a post-conference report, even if only for yourself, is very useful for establishing what you learnt into your head!

16. Be glad you are Victorian. Vic Branch runs excellent activities, which was reflected in the papers given at the conference – Mary Russell, Anna Gifford & Max McMaster's contributions. If you can't get to conferences, then make it a priority to attend Vic Branch activities. Cumulatively over the year, it's a bit like a conference and has the same high standard.

17. The conference has given me a sense of direction and a feeling that

although I travelled to it alone, I am going home in company.

#### Comments about the conference organisation

1. There was no table devoted to promoting AusSI. Quite a few conference attendees were not AusSI members, yet they were not wooed to join us. The registration table has a confusion of items on it, so could not be said to be advertising AusSI. I did not see any membership forms being flaunted. We should have had a stand that hit people in the eye when they arrived. It was AusSI's conference and we talk about promoting the Society, but where was the action at a prime opportunity???? I would have liked to be able to direct non-members to a promotional

stand as in conversation I encouraged some to join. More about AusSI needed in the conference satchels too. I was shocked at this lack of publicity.

2. Most people I spoke to wanted more talks relating to back of book indexing.

3. I would be great to have had a behind-the-scenes tour of somewhere close & related, such as the Powerhouse museum.

4. That idea of a workshop/s at the conference sounded like a good idea.

5. Basically I loved the conference and the venue. It was well organised and ran to time. I came away inspired and addicted to attending more!

# From the Literature

Glenda Browne

#### The Quilt Index

The Quilt Index <<http://www.quiltindex.org>> aims to be a comprehensive index to American quilts. It is built on four state quilt documentation and digitisation projects. Nine hundred quilts can be searched by pattern name, quilter's name, location made, date, and collection or documentation project. Pattern names include 'baby blocks', 'ocean waves', and 'wedding ring'. (This information came from the Scout Report v.9 n.42 <<http://www.scout.wisc.edu>>.

#### < <http://www.judywebster.gil.com.au/methods.html> >

Lynn Farkas's conference handout listing websites for professional development led me to Judy Webster's site, which specialises in information on genealogy. It includes a section on 'Indexing Rules and Methods' with hints specifically for genealogical indexers.

#### Infotoday Newsbreaks

In 'OCLC project opens WorldCat records to Google' <<http://www.infotoday.com/newsbreaks/nb031027-2.shtml>>, Barbara Quint reports on an OCLC/Google project to extract a two million record subset of the most popular and widely held books on WorldCat (cooperative library catalogue) and make them available through Google. Searches on Google will retrieve the records and link through OCLC to library holdings. One issue still to be resolved is the

likelihood that the library holdings will not rank highly as they are 'thin' records with few keywords to contribute to linguistic frequency rankings.

Quint also notes that Google executives are talking with investment banks about a possible float of Google. One option being considered is holding an online auction of shares. I can imagine quite a lot of 'mum and dad investors' (or should that be 'nerdy young adult investors?') would be quite pleased to put in a bid.

#### Journal of China Society of Indexers v.1 n.1 2003

The table of contents of the *Journal of China Society of Indexers* lists the following topics:

- Inaugural statement on the first issue
- Modern index is database
- Make a good job of index and become Chinese technical pioneers
- Widely used and brilliantly Prospective image index
- Outlook for automatic classification technique
- Statistic language model used in text information retrieval
- Information quality and information retrieval teaching
- Index in ancient China
- A decade review of the China Society of Indexers
- Creation and development of index organisations throughout the world.

Although I can't read the content, this list suggests wide-ranging interests from the historic (which would be quite interesting to read!) to the latest automated systems. The final article discusses each indexing society in turn, including the Japan Indexers Association (now defunct).

This issue also contains one short piece in English – the introduction to the Chinese translation of *Citation Indexing* by Eugene Garfield (well-known to librarians as a driving force behind citation indexing). His book was first published in 1979, and he agreed to a request by the Chinese to translate it as he says the basic principles have remained the same, and continuing education of users is crucial for the best use of citation indexes. His book is also freely available on the web at <<http://www.eugenegarfield.org>> (scroll to bottom of webpage).

### **Offpress, October 2003**

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'Repurposing texts' (pp1–2) is a report by Maree Kimberley on a conference session by Cathy Gray and Alison White on repurposing and multi-purposing. They defined repurposing as a linear process in which text is published in different media using different publishing tools. Multipurposing, on the other hand, involves using a single publishing system to produce a variety of outputs. It is also known as single sourcing. Tools used include Adobe FrameMaker with add-on software such as Omni Systems Mif2Go. They also discussed two multi-purposing projects including a project for the Australian Film Commission which involved a 500-page website, PDF documents and a 330-page, two-colour book. Challenges are 'chunking' the text and developing writing styles that work for all the media.

'Confessions of an internet self-publisher' (pp5–6) is a report by Beverley Campbell on Jean Hollis Weber's self-publishing approach. Jean started in internet publishing when she moved to Airlie Beach. Because technical writing and editing books have a niche market (although I would guess bigger than website indexing) she felt that conventional publication would not be cost-effective.

Jean self-publishes on the internet because: 'she doesn't have to deal with a large amount of stock; it acts as its own marketing tool...; it is easy, done remotely and at a low cost.' The ability to accept credit card payments online is essential. PayPal and Multicards services, which process credit card payments, are cost effective to set up, and offer a choice of charging plans.

Jean sells her books on a shareware model – users can download the book free, and are asked to pay (a relatively small amount) if they use the book. Jean also uses a company called Lightning Source which handles e-books and books printed on-demand, and has a relationship with an American distributor, which means the books they handle can get onto the Amazon website.

### **Offpress November 2003**

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In 'What's the charge?' (pp1–2), John Kerr uses his experience as a professional historian and editor to propose a basis for recommended rates for editing. Using a basic rate of \$36,350 for a base-level graduate editor, and adding extra for superannuation, expenses and non-work time he came up with an hourly rate of \$36.20, rising to \$45 for urgent projects. For a consulting editor the basic hourly rate was \$45.30, for an experienced consulting editor, \$56.60 and for a senior

consulting editor, \$70.80. He offers these suggestions as a starting point for discussion, acknowledging that many people might find them too low, or the differentials too wide, etc.

And where do indexers fit in? Our recommended rate sits just below that of consulting editor (but, I believe, is due for revision). I think we may have a narrower band of pay rates, without so much on the low side (I hope), but without the highs, as indexers don't often rise into supervisory-type positions.

### **IASC/SCAD Bulletin v.26 n.2 Summer 2003**

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This issue includes reports from the Vancouver conference, held in 2003. Sessions included 'Writing your own paycheck' (ie, getting a consistent cashflow), 'How to develop a style guide', 'Judging excellence in indexes', 'Starting your indexing business', 'Layers of meaning in the scholarly world', 'Beyond indexing software...' and 'The Archivaria Project'. Pre-conference workshops were held on basic indexing and making the most of CINDEX for Windows.

There is also a review of 'Indexing the Medical Sciences' by Doreen Blake and others (SI Occasional paper No. 3, 2002, about 75p.) which states 'This book provides an excellent entrée into the art of medical indexing'.

The 'Profile' is of indexer Mary Newberry, who offers the enticing fact that the people referred to as 'the Canadians' in the 1999 Norman Jewison movie 'The Hurricane' were roughly based on the 'group of people who became my family'. If you've seen the movie you might know who she means.

### **IASC/SCAD Bulletin, v.26 n.3 Autumn 2003**

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This issue includes an analysis by Toomas Karmo of the indexes to six books on Linux (pp4–7). He evaluated them according to the 'S test' (selection), the 'C test' (copyediting) and three tests of scatter (eg, seeing whether locators were grouped or separated at terms such as 'e-mail', 'email' and 'mail'). He concluded that one was good, two had a mixture of 'virtues and vices' and three were more bad than good. He suggests that with a bit more time the indexers would have been able to clarify concepts better.

### **Australian IT, December 4 2003**

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James Riley notes <<http://www.australianit.news.com.au>> that 'the information industry has largely welcomed new Labor leader Mark Latham as a formidable policy maker with an interest in and understanding of IT and telecommunications. Mr Latham has long talked of a commitment to "life-long education" and a strengthened education sector. He has also written extensively on the association between education and IT, and the growing impact of IT on the economy'.

### **Australian Author v.35 n.2 August 2003**

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The Australian Society of Authors celebrated its 40th birthday this year ('Fabulous Forty' by Chip Rolley, pp20–24). The Society has been a strong political force, with a very hands-on bunch of supporters. For example, the Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) was financed in part by personal loans from ASA members, and the ASA Benevolent Fund was established with a donation of \$5000 from Nancy Keeting.

The ASA nearly didn't get off the ground, with Frank Hardy savagely attacking the idea, until Dymphna Cusak told Hardy

to 'more or less shut up'. Achievements have included fairer contracts, Public Lending Right (PLR) and moral rights for authors (this one affects indexers as well, as do most of their achievements to some extent).

Frank Moorhouse sued the University of NSW for copyright infringement on their premises, leading to much better promotion of copyright issues by librarians. In many ways the ASA and librarians seem to be viewed as natural enemies, which is a shame, as they work in so many ways for the same goals. The problem stems from the fact that libraries want to give content away for the good of their customers, and authors want content to be paid for so they can make a living. Some authors manage to encourage greater sales by giving their work away, but I think this option is only open to a minority of writers.

Electronic Lending Right is very important to some authors, with the top payment to an author in the first year being \$60,000. ASA has amalgamated with the Society of Book Illustrators, and was a key player in the founding of the Australian Coalition for Cultural Diversity, which is lobbying to maintain Australian cultural rights in free trade negotiations.

#### **nfais online newsletter v.44 issue 8–9 September-October 2002**

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As well as a lot of news and product information, this issue contains two articles by Edward Stevenson on content management. The first (pp1, 7) examines the integration of a number of systems to provide for the varied needs of CQ Press. Content includes books, which are composed in Quark XPress, converted into XML, structured according to the CQ Press book DTD, and stored in a content management system in a MS-SQL Server database. A web-based interface allows users to load XML documents, assign metadata, and publish the documents to a number of websites. They also have databases for bibliographic information, images, and Supreme Court case content.

The second article gives an introduction to content management, with a very good description of a content management system (CMS). He says a CMS should be able to:

- Capture content in media-neutral formats such as XML and databases
- Allow consistent assignment and management of metadata (topical, lifecycle, structural) to facilitate search and retrieval
- Control content access, versioning, workflow tracking and product delivery
- Increase efficiency/reduce human errors through consistent processes and automation where feasible

#### **Sidelights, issue 3 Autumn 2003**

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The SI website can now be reached at <<http://www.indexers.org.uk>>, although the old URL still works. This issue notes useful print and web-based reference works in the areas of sociology and social welfare. 'Society news' has photos of council members – I always find it interesting to put faces to names.

SI has awarded the Bernard Levin Award for services to the Society of Indexers to Doreen Blake, a former President and Wheatley Award winner; the Betty Moys Prize for a newly accredited indexer to Mary Jane Steer; and the Carey Award for services to indexing and the Society of Indexers to Janet

Shuter, who has been involved with international standards for indexing, and has been the editor of *The Indexer*.

The report on the conference 'A Scots Quair' held in Glasgow in June 2003 notes a range of sessions including 'Precision tools in a fussy world: from indexing to the semantic web'; a panel discussion on 'What I expect of an index'; 'Documenting images for online access'; 'Internet resources'; and 'Digital maps and Geographical Information Systems'. Workshop sessions included the Alexander Technique, which sounds useful (at Cheltenham we had a very well-received session by a physiotherapist); Working relationships with editors; Taming Windows and Word; Setting up a freelance business; and Chemical names.

#### **Pick, Fred L. and Knight, Norman G. The pocket history of freemasonry. London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1953.**

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Jon found this book in a second hand shop, and bought it as the second author is also the author of *Indexing, the art of*. (I confirmed this on the Internet, in a biography of Bro. Smyth, an indexer <<http://www.grandlodge-england.org/news/smyth-osm.html>>, which noted that Brothers Reginald Hewitt and Norman Knight were founders of the Society of Indexers. I wonder whether freemasonry and indexing appeal to similar people, or perhaps they just influenced each other to join one or the other society.) The book has been a success, with the 8th edition published in 1991 with Frederick Smyth as the third author <<http://www.getcited.org>>, Knight having died in 1978.

The index in my copy has one page uncut – obviously the reader had never felt the need to slit the pages to use the index. The index has a few features not often seen these days. The initial letter of the first entry starting with each letter is given in bold font – this is a space saving way of emphasising the start of each new letter group. One strange feature is the use of a long dash to indicate a repeat of the word above, presumably to save space as it is not done when the word that is repeated is shorter than the dash (for example, 'for' below). For example:

Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers  
\_\_\_ Masonic Benevolent Annuity Fund  
\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Institution  
\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Hospital  
\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Institution for Boys  
\_\_\_ \_\_\_ for Girls  
\_\_\_ Military Lodge

Cross-references are rarely used. There are some *See* references (for example, 'Apprentices, Entered, *see* Entered Apprentices') and some *See also under* references (for example, 'Grand lodges in U.S.A., *see also under names of States*'). There is, however, no connection between the entry 'Wales, Prince of (George IV), G.M.' and the entry 'George IV, King', even though there are different page numbers at each entry. The font size is rather small (a similar instance being referred to on Index-L as '5-point Myopic'). Another interesting feature is the use of a space after an opening quote and before a closing quote (for example, " *History* "). I have also encountered this recently in a book published in 1923 by a family member, which I have scanned for posterity. If any index historian is interested in this book I'm happy to pass it on.

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