From the President

Before reading any further, please check your address label on the back of this newsletter. Is there a red dot next to your address? If so, we have not yet received your membership renewal. This means you are now unfinancial, and this will be the last issue of the *ANZSI Newsletter* you will receive. If you have no red dot, you are a financial member until 30 June 2006, and we thank you for your continuing support.

We have introduced this 'red dot' system to save the time and cost of renewal reminder mailouts, borrowing the idea from the Canberra Society of Editors who find it works well for them. We hope it will act as a timely reminder to those of you who intend to renew, but haven't yet gotten around to it. Please note that this will be the *only* reminder you will receive.

> **Is there a red dot next to your address label? If so, we have not yet received your membership renewal.**

The change in our membership year means this is the first membership renewal we have undertaken since 2004. In order to check that everyone's details are correct, we generated individual renewal entries containing your current details, and asked all members to confirm or amend this information. For this reason, renewal forms are not available on the website. So if you can't find the renewal notice you were sent in June, please contact our membership secretary Joanna McLachlan <memsec@aussi.org> and she will send you a personalised replacement renewal form. And if you want to continue receiving the *ANZSI Newsletter* without interruption, please renew before the end of October.

On a completely different topic, I would like to thank our Vice President Clodagh Jones for acting as our guest editor for the last issue of the newsletter. Clodagh was too modest to include any special mention of her role in the production of the newsletter while our regular editor Peter Judge was overseas. I am sure, however, that you read the newsletter with as much interest as I did, especially the informative report from our ANZSI conference sponsorship recipient, Kathryn Mercer. It is to the credit of our small but active membership that we can continually provide enough copy to fill a newsletter with home-grown news, using home-grown talent. Thanks to all those who contributed to the last newsletter, and a continuing thanks to those who send regular columns over the months.

A special thanks also to Carol Jones, Clodagh's daughter-in-law, who helped Clodagh produce the *ANZSI Newsletter* in the face of late deadlines, unfamiliar page makeup software, and torrential rains in Tasmania which cut power and communication lines. Clodagh tells me that Carol not only used her existing skills to help in the production, but became interested enough in indexing that she will be assisting Clodagh in some upcoming indexing projects. A great collaboration, and one which we wholeheartedly appreciated.

This month I had the pleasure of addressing the Canberra Society of Editors to explain what an indexer does. A number of Canberra indexers came to the meeting, to add moral support and to help answer questions. It was a successful event which generated much interest and discussion. It is always a surprise to me that our colleagues in the information industry know so little of the 'nuts and bolts' of what indexers do. I have written up the notes of the talk I gave to the Editors, and I hope that they will appear in the next issue of the newsletter. You may find them helpful in explaining facts about indexing to your clients.

Annual report season is keeping most Canberra (and many interstate) back of book indexers busy. If you are in the throes of your millionth annual report, take heart – it will all be over soon, for at least another year. In the meantime, happy indexing.

Lynn Farkas, ANZSI President

ANZSI Annual General Meeting

The ANZSI AGM will be held on **Tuesday, 25 October 2005, at 5.30 pm** in the Friends Lounge of the National Library of Australia, Parkes, ACT. For further details please contact the Secretary, Shirley Campbell, <secretary@aussi.org>.

Victorian Branch
Welcome in the festive season with an end of year get-together

All members of ANZSI Victorian Branch, together with their partners and friends, are invited to join with the Committee at the end of another enjoyable year of workshops, excursions, interesting speakers and projects.

Where: 208 Kooyong Road, North Caulfield
When: Thursday, 8 December, from 7.00 pm.
BYO: Soft drink, beer and a plate to share for dinner
Dress: Casual
RSVP: Monday, 5 December to Jenny Restarick tel. +61 3 9528 2539

Victorian Branch
LET'S GET HISTORICAL!

A visit to the Royal Society of Victoria has been planned for **Sunday, 13 November,** from 2.00 pm.

The RSV Inc is an active and vital part of Melbourne's Heritage. Located in the heart of Melbourne, the Society's Hall at **8 LaTrobe Street** is one of our most historic buildings. Founded in 1854 this unique building with its surrounding lawns and old world charm is truly a jewel in Melbourne's crown.

Although the main collection is now managed and held by Deakin University, Burwood Campus, Mr Viv Martin, Administration Officer and Website Manager, will be guiding us through the building, its magnificent heritage library, meeting room and lecture hall and Doug McCann, Honorary Librarian (based at Burwood) has kindly agreed to come in to show us how the collection is recorded and maintained.

The Society has played an important part in forming government policy on science; surveying the natural resources of Victoria; establishing the Museum and National Parks; convening the first Australian Antarctic Exploration Committee in 1885; organizing the Burke and Wills expedition; and setting up the Victorian Institute of Marine Science.

When: Sunday, 13 November, 2.00 pm onwards
Numbers: Unlimited
RSVP: by 6 November to Jenny Restarick, tel/fax: +61 3 9528 2539
email: cliffres@connexus.net.au

Opposite this wonderful building is a delightful bar/bistro called The Owl and the Pussycat where we can share coffee, drinks, snacks etc with Viv as we continue plying him with questions.

ANZSI Computer Indexing Programs Survey

Many thanks to all those good people who have already sent me their comments on their computer indexing programs, all with good details and reasons.

But I know there must be many more indexers who use such programs, and I urge you all to send me your comments on them, no matter how brief.

Edyth Binkowski
Secretary, ACT Region Branch

ACT Region Branch President's report

Annual General Meeting

Il Piccolo Mondo Restaurant, Griffith, ACT, 6 September 2005

This report reflects the activities of the ACT Region Branch for the past 18 months, since the membership year changed from calendar year to financial year. Our last AGM was combined with the National AGM, however, we now have two committees, and Lynn Farkas and I serve on both.

This year the name and composition of the Society have changed, and the change from AusSI to ANZSI has led to a revision of the constitution of both the Society and its Branches. The ACT was a front runner in this revision, in which we were fortunate to have the editing skills of Joan Merrell, and provided a model for other Branches.

For many years we have been asked what training an indexer needs and what is available. Max McMaster has provided his introductory and intermediate courses to complement Michael Harrington's annual report course and Glenda Brown's web indexing course. We advertised both of Max's courses in 2004 and 2005, but although we had sufficient numbers in 2004, the 2005 intermediate course was cancelled, and we ran the introductory course at a loss. We also had to cancel the web indexing course for lack of

A cheery table at the AGM, with (l to r) Alison Sloper, Joan Merrell, Rob Merrell, Tracy Harwood, Susan White, Sherrey Quinn, Penny Whitten, Edyth Binkowski, and Lynn Farkas with just her smile showing.

numbers. It seems that we have insufficient potential takers in Canberra to offer these courses each year without the threat of financial loss. This is a pity because the courses have led to many creative and stimulating people joining our Society. Our thanks are due to the National Archives, the National Library of Australia, the Australian National University computing laboratories and the PC Users Group for providing venues.

Those who have completed both Max's courses often ask how they can enter the commercial indexing profession. To facilitate this, the Victorian Branch has set up a mentoring program to benefit trainee indexers and provide libraries with indexes to important books that have not been indexed before. The presidents of the New Zealand and Victorian Branches and I as the ACT president have discussed how we might set up an ANZSI-wide mentoring scheme. This is still in limbo, but meanwhile the ACT Region Branch has been working with the ACT Heritage Library to provide experience for trainee indexers. Lynn Farkas has convened a group to index two of the first newspapers in the territory – a very large undertaking, but very worthwhile and benefitting enormously from the advice of Michael Harrington.

We have also explored the possibility of trainee indexers working with more experienced indexers on commercial books. This has been mooted with Aboriginal Studies Press and favourably received.

We held a cocktail party at the Australian Archives in July 2004 to encourage networking with other branches of the knowledge industry and book industries. This was a worthwhile experiment even though numbers were down because of other commitments. It would be worth having this as a biennial event to promote indexing and to allow publishers, designers, editors and technical communicators to meet with indexers.

We face the common problem of all societies – how to attract members to functions. This is particularly true in Canberra, firstly because people have so many competing interests and secondly don't want to face a cold Canberra winter night and scrape the ice off the windscreen. However we have had some interesting meetings and we are very grateful to the Friends of the National Library for allowing us to use their Lounge. In August last year we 'consulted a higher authority' by asking for indexing tips and answers to specific questions from a range of experienced indexers both in Australia and overseas.

This year we had a panel discussion on 'A day in the life of a back-of-book indexer'. Michael Harrington, Barry Howarth and Jean Norman answered questions on how they became indexers, their work methods and business management; Lynn Farkas in the chair drew parallels with database indexing. This was further taken up in the 'Day in the life of a database indexer' panel in September.

The ANZSI Conference 'Indexing: Engage, Enlighten, Enrich' was well attended by ACT members (15 out of 70 participants). Again we gave a small donation towards expenses for those members paying their own way. Papers were given by Eleanor Whelan, Tessa Wooldridge and Lynn Farkas; other ACT members chaired meetings. It was a very well-run and stimulating conference in a beautiful setting. As usual we arranged a follow-up session for those who did not attend the conference, and for conference participants to find out what happened in parallel sessions.

We also have a postmortem annual report indexing session every year – an informal gathering of those involved in annual reports, to talk about problems, whinge about deadlines, and generally wind down after a pressured time.

Our annual Christmas barbecue at Lennox Gardens was enjoyed by all. It was a lovely family occasion. We invite everyone to come again this year and enjoy the eggs, bacon, sausages, fruit plate, champagne, etc.

From the literature and other thoughts

Libri Journal

Libri Journal is available online at <www.librijournal.org>. The Table of Contents and Abstract are available immediately, while the PDF full-text version is available free one year after publication. The journal has a strong African and non-Western focus, with articles in the March 2005 table of contents on Polish academic library websites, continuing education in Chinese university libraries, and printed information needs of small-scale organic farmers in KwaZulu-Natal.

While most of the content is not directly relevant to indexing, occasional articles provide context to the current publishing environment. For example, the September 2003 issue has an editorial by Edward J. Valauskas (chief editor of *First Monday*, a free online journal) on Internet publishing, and an article by Ann Okerson on inexpensive scholarly journal publication, including the open access movement.

Blue Pencil, September 2005

On pp. 1–7: Australian editors have traditionally had state-based organisations, with national collaboration on issues such as standards development for the last few years. With moves towards a national accreditation scheme, they are now discussing the best way to create a viable national organisation. This includes choice of structure (e.g. incorporation) and the balance of power between the state organisations and the national organisation. ANZSI has developed in the opposite way, with a national organisation sprouting state-based branches as needed. I think we have had, perhaps, the easiest route.

On p. 9: under the heading 'Strong freelancers market?', the editor notes reports from Sydney-based freelancers of a 'flurry of work' lately. Some of this 'flurry' has come our way, and Jon and I have passed on more work in the past two months than we had in the previous year or two. The main rush seems to have passed now. It is hard to understand indexing work flows, as they seem to differ for different people. Years ago I was a TAFE teacher, free to index full-time in the TAFE holidays, yet my indexing work seemed to dry up in December. I commented on this to another indexer, who said that Christmas was his busiest time, as educational publishers were approaching publication deadlines then.

Copyright – did you break the law this week?

In researching an article on copyright for *Online Currents*, I have discovered a lot of passionate opinions on the topic, and also a startling revelation in the legislation. The *Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Act 2000* has introduced a new technology-neutral right of communication to the public. It provides copyright owners of material on the Internet exclusive rights to reproduce their material (e.g. print it or save it to disk) and to communicate their material to the public – see <www.copyright.com.au/info%20sheets/CR20_copyright%20and%20the%20internet.pdf>. This means you could infringe copyright if you:

- print material from a website;
- cut and paste material from another site onto your own website;
- save material from a website onto your own hard disk;
- make Internet material available to others via email or an intranet.

While I am, in general, a supporter of copyright, I am sorry that the legislation didn't distinguish between things done for personal use of freely provided material (i.e. print and save) and sharing of material (i.e. putting someone else's material on your own website, or forwarding it to others). This new law will turn most serious Internet users into weekly lawbreakers.

Glenda Browne

Make your book deserve its index: a word to authors and editors

As an indexer, I find that editors and authors are always keen to tell me how to produce a good index, directly or through style guides. I thought it was about time that the positions were reversed, and an indexer – that is, me – used the experience gained in my position to instruct authors and editors in how to produce a book worth indexing in the first place. Here are my suggestions:

Call things by the same name throughout

If you have a reference to *A la recherché du temps perdu* on page 3, don't call it *In Search of Lost Time* on page 27, *Remembrance of Things Past* on page 89, *Temps Perdu* on page 166 and 'The Swann's Way Series' on pages 188-202. Get all the co-authors to agree on what the damn thing will be called, then stick to it. That way your users have a reasonable chance of being able to find references to it in the index. Likewise with *the Robson Report*, *the White Paper*, and *the Senate Enquiry;* or *Lord Whatsis, Mr. Whoosis, the General Secretary* and *Babs's husband*. If these are all references to the same bloke then call him 'Fred Smith' and be done with it.

Don't lump two topics under one heading

If your book is about military aircraft, don't have a section called 'The Spitfire and the Zero' unless you spend more space talking about what they have in common than you do describing their separate features. An indexer pressed for time will hit the first page of the section, look to see where it ends, and make two entries: 'Spitfire' and 'Zero', both covering all the pages in the section. This may get corrected later on, when the indexer realises that this is actually two sections masquerading as one, or it may not.

Don't make a subheading the same as a heading above it

Picture a hapless indexer who, having found and entered a heading for 'The B-1 Bomber', encounters a subheading within this section for 'The Boeing B-1'. She is faced with a difficult decision: does she ignore the subheading, enter it as a subentry under the main heading that already covers the same pages, enter a new and different page range under 'Boeing', or

backtrack and remove the main heading on the assumption that this smaller section is the only part 'really' about the plane? Ask yourself: if the main section is already about something, how can a subsection be any *more* about it?

Don't repeat the same material in different sections

Often in technical writing the indexer finds himself with a strange sense of déjà vu. 'Haven't I indexed all this already?' And the answer is often 'yes you have, but in a different section'. Word-processing allows great slabs of text to be lifted out and copied into different locations without changing a word. Is the procedure in case of fire alarms the same as the procedure in case of bomb threats? Then just copy and paste the whole thing across.

The indexer who catches this can do one of two things: index the first occurrence only, and assume that no-one will want to look it up more than once; or repeat the page numbers for every copy under the same headings:

> assembly points 21, 42, 63, 84…

Neither of these is ideal. A user who remembers finding something about assembly points on page 42 will be justifiably cross at not seeing it in the index; on the other hand, a user who looks up page 42 hoping to find something different to what is on page 21 is going to be upset too.

Meanwhile the indexer who doesn't catch on to this may find themselves with a mish-mash of slightly different references which all talk about the same thing – not a good result either.

Why not just refer from one section to another – or take the offending sections out and put them in an appendix which can be referred to from every chapter? Why waste paper saying the same thing several times over?

Finally…say something!

The most frustrating thing an indexer can do is to try and find something to index in pages of waffle. Excruciatingly prolonged discussions of abstract factors in choosing between alternatives which have not been described or explained; things which could have been said in a paragraph inflated to chapter length by buzzwords; pages given over to explaining the authors' political stances at length before a single fact is given or assertion made. Sometimes one comes to the matter of the book at last; sometimes there is no matter, and the indexer is worse off than an Israelite, having to make bricks with neither straw nor clay. One of these days I will be provoked into sending in a blank index, with the covering note: 'This index covers all of the meaningful concepts described in this book.' In the meantime authors and editors should try to explain things and engage the reader rather than simply dribbling words on to paper. Who knows – they may engage the indexer too…

Jon Jermey

News from New Zealand

Max McMaster ran another successful series of indexing courses in Hamilton and Auckland around the end of August, with about 35 participants. He included newspaper and historical/genealogical indexing in these sessions.

The fourth speakers meeting for 2005 was held in September in Auckland. It featured a discussion by Peter Nash on the New Zealand Society of Genealogists (of which he is the Executive Officer), with special emphasis on their publications and areas of interest for indexers.

The New Zealand Branch had their first Annual General Meeting at the beginning of October. A new committee was elected and the Branch constitution approved.

The Freelance Register is in the final proofing stages and will soon be sent to all New Zealand publishers. Anyone who would like their entry in the 2005/06 issue should contact me urgently at <tordis@paradise.net.nz>.

New Zealand is very busy with indexing work at the moment – all the freelancer indexers over here are rushed off their feet.

Our first mentoring project has got under way, despite my busy schedule which included moving back to the North Island! I have now returned to sunny Kapiti, north of Wellington.

Tordis Flath
Acting President, NZ Branch

After the positives, what are the negatives? Cancelled courses, particularly those led by trainers from outside Canberra, are always a concern. We would like more people attending our functions. We would like more ideas!! What do our members want? We have not been so involved with other professional groups this year, although Lynn Farkas spoke to the Canberra Editors meeting in September and a number of our members attended. We were all set to participate in the Annual Report Seminar, but this year it did not take place.

The most important point I have left to last. This has been a wonderful committee. I would particularly like to thank Edyth Binkowski, who has the responsibility of recording the meetings, being contact person, arranging functions, and does it all so willingly. She also provides the Newsletter with excellent articles about our doings. We are grateful for her hospitality, as a venue for meetings. Sandra Henderson has been a tower of strength as Treasurer and took my place as President while I was away.

People go away, have commitments on meeting nights and so on, but they are always willing, like Susan White, to do whatever they can for the committee. I have mentioned Joan Merrell's editing abilities. Like Joan, Lynn Farkas has an incisive mind, turning vague ideas into practical events, always ready to go the extra mile and, despite her busy life, providing us with food and drink and a table for our meetings. Thanks to everyone. What's more, they have all agreed to stand for another year on the committee!

Geraldine Triffitt
President, ACT Region Branch

A day in the life of a database indexer

The ACT Region Branch meeting in September featured a panel of three database indexers, Prue Deacon, Colleen Mock and Penny Whitten, all with very different backgrounds. Lynn Farkas chaired the meeting, asking them about their work and approaches to different tasks.

Database indexing covers many forms, journal indexing, manuscripts, online websites, ongoing indexing services, often in electronic format. Indexers use a thesaurus, often compile an abstract, a bibliographical description and generate key words. Often more than one person works on a database, so consistency is important. There are parallels with back-of-back indexing, though the latter use the author's words rather than a thesaurus.

Starting out

Colleen Mock is a partner in Biblioanalysis with Rae Lorenz, both working on indexing and administration. They had worked together in the Bureau of Mineral Resources, and worked well as partners, discussing problems and training staff. Much of the work is routine and repetitive, but there are always issues to solve. They have no shortage of contacts or contracts.

Prue Deacon came to indexing through cataloguing PRECIS items at the National Library; she always thought subject cataloguing was most important, and is now manager of HealthIncite, in the Department of Health. Her job is to make sure the database work is consistent, so she checks all records, and gets to know the indexers and their strengths. The thesaurus used is updated every 2-3 years, so the database, about 12,000 records, is updated as well. This is not always done, even when two databases are merged. The issue may be who is to pay for retrospective indexing, as the clients may not be prepared to do so.

Penny Whitten followed her mother into database indexing, taking over her job at Streamline, a science database.

Working hours

Penny works on two databases, each with regular constraints, as well as abstracting and editing, and is always conscious of timelines and deadlines, trying to finish jobs early. She works well early in the day, and makes time for exercise. She usually works at home, but has borrowing rights at CSIRO and also works at the National Library.

Colleen likes to work in big chunks, so assigns projects by the day. She has to collect the material and if it is bulky, will work on the spot.

Checking work

Colleen and Rae check each other's work, as well as that of their staff. Much of Prue's time is checking others' work. Penny thinks it is a good idea for someone else to check one's work, as they pick up mistakes more easily. She will index a stack of work, store it and check it at a later date.

Payment

Penny is paid by the hour, and so is Prue, as a public servant. Colleen is paid by item.

Feedback and input

How do you get feedback from clients and users? Colleen and Rae had a job where they got no feedback, because the clients had been changing the records to suit themselves. If you have the practice where one indexer checks another's work, you get feedback straight away. Penny says MAIS has automatic feedback and checking, and she knows that AANRO is heavily used by CSIRO scientists. Penny can suggest identifiers, can select items for AANRO, and some for MAIS. She assigns work for other indexers, and always gives a good weighting of material they like.

Training and guidelines

Who pays for the training to learn to index a database? Penny was paid to learn online with AANRO, a CSIRO database. Colleen and Rae train their staff at their own expense. Prue's staff learn at government expense.

Each database has its own guidelines, in the case of MAIS, a meticulously detailed manual.

Subject specialisation

The panel felt that this was not as important as indexing skills, and comes with practice, though they said it was essential in scientific subjects. Penny commented that she relied on material indexed by others if it was a subject she was not familiar with. She also said the main thing was to know enough to read about the subject and have an interest in it. Also the database can teach you about the subject. Rae said that she had trained subject specialists in indexing skills.

Standard reference tools

Everyone agreed on thesauruses, dictionaries and authority files. Penny added Geoscience Australia place names, maps, even Google searching. Sandra mentioned MeSH (medical subject headings) and medical dictionaries. Colleen added the *Style Manual*, e.g. for how to refer to legislation.

The future of database indexing

With the Internet taking over from some databases, how long will online indexing services last? Will everything be computerised? This will depend on how natural language is developed for computers. Some databases have closed down, and there is a view that libraries may not be necessary. Will some catalogues become hybrids of cataloguing and indexing? Colleen thinks that there must be ways that we can become more efficient using electronic means, and Penny commented that AANRO gets online records online very quickly.

We are all dependent on getting material from secondary sources. This will not change, but methods could be improved. Books, for example, take time to process. We need more links to publishers. In the same way, back-of-book indexers could be incorporated into the publishing process much earlier, such as the Cambridge XML system. More and more publications are only available online. It is important for us to maintain our networks to keep our work flowing.

These were the final remarks in this interesting and instructive discussion. Lynn closed the meeting with warm thanks to the panel for their contributions.

Edyth Binkowski
Secretary, ACT Region Branch

New South Wales Branch

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting and election of office bearers for the NSW Branch of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers (ANZSI) will be held at **6.30 pm on Thursday 20 October at 2005,** at the **Golden Cinnamon** restaurant, 767-769 George Street in the city – a stone's throw from Central Railway Station, just past Railway Square bus stop, on the corner of George and Valentine Street. The restaurant is upstairs above Cafe Kasturi, which is at street level and which is also the entrance to Golden Cinnamon. Parking is available in the streets behind the restaurant at the Carlton Crest Hotel (entry from Thomas Street) or Paddy's Market Carpark (entry from Quay Street).

The AGM will be followed by an Indonesian banquet, at a cost of $30.00 per person. ANZSI NSW will provide wines and soft drinks.

RSVP: Madeleine Davis by Friday 14 October 2005 (tel: +61 2 9514 3176; fax: +61 2 9514 3168; mobile 0417 040 598; email <mdavis@austlii.edu.au>).

Elections Nomination Form

We, the undersigned members of the New South Wales Branch of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers, nominate the person named for the office indicated for the year following the Annual General Meeting for 2005:

Name of person nominated:...

Office (please tick): – President, NSW Branch – Vice-President, NSW Branch – Honorary Secretary, NSW Branch - Honorary Treasurer, NSW Branch – Committee Member, NSW Branch

Signature of proposer: ....   Signature of seconder: ....

Signature of nominee: ....

Nominations must reach the following address by Friday 14 October 2005:
The Secretary Australian Society of Indexers NSW Branch, PO Box 342, Blackheath NSW 2785
or by fax at: +61 2 9514 3168

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