



Australian Society of Indexers

NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

Welcome back to indexing... well perhaps some of you haven't been away from it at all, but it has been some time since AusSI's last communiqué. The first item on our 1992 agenda is the Annual General Meeting and Dinner, to be held on 26 February in Melbourne (see notice and enclosed RSVP form).

The National Committee got together recently to map out the coming year's events, and have produced a Tentative Programme for 1992, which is printed herein. This will give members some idea of proposed courses and meetings. We hope that some of you who have not been able to make it to past AusSI events will sample some of this year's offerings. We look forward to meeting some of our newer members too.

Are there any aspiring Newsletter Editors out there? I must relinquish the position, sadly, as I will be working longer hours this year in addition to studying. Anyone feeling a twinge of interest is welcome to phone me with queries — also, there is no reason why the job could not be shared.

The work of preparing the Newsletter has been varied and interesting, and I have had invaluable support and assistance from other committee members. I would like to thank them, as well as members who have contributed as correspondents to the Newsletter.

Helen Kinniburgh

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS
& SUBSCRIPTIONS WERE
DUE ON 1 JANUARY...**

...but if you haven't yet paid, please try to do so soon. A form was enclosed with the Nov/Dec issue.
Rates are: \$30 Melb/Sydney membership; \$25 Distant membership; \$22 subscription to *The Indexer* (optional).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND DINNER

All members are invited to attend the Australian Society of Indexers AGM and Dinner in Melbourne on Wednesday, 26 February 1992. The short 'business' part of the evening will see the election of office bearers for 1992 and presentation of the Annual Report and Financial Statement for 1991.

Time: 6.30 for 7.00pm
Venue: Spring Park Tea Rooms, 3 Spring Road, Malvern
Cost: \$25 per person, including three-course dinner and all drinks.

Please return the enclosed RSVP form with payment. Enquiries to the Secretary, Ian Odgers on 418 7275.

TENTATIVE PROGRAM 1992 *

26 February (definite):
Annual General Meeting

May: Saturday or evening seminar on newspaper indexing

May: Commencement of six-week book indexing course — possibly Monday evenings from 4 or 11 May

August: General Meeting with speaker on legal indexing

October: Australian Society of Indexers Medal Dinner

Other events may be held. A three-day indexing course at the Univ. of Canberra has been suggested.

* (NSW Branch events will be announced separately)

THE LEAST ACCURATE INDEX

So often indexes are nothing more than dull signposts to a book's contents. In 1981 however, the index in the *Gardener's World Vegetable Book* transcended mere utilitarianism and was hailed as a work of art in its own right, because it bore no resemblance to the book's contents whatsoever.

Page 25, for example, is not devoted to Avoncrisp lettuce at all, but to helpful hints on planting tubers with a trowel. Furthermore, page 52 is not remotely connected with chickenweed, being obsessed with the altogether more absorbing topic of cures for cabbage root fly.

The index is particularly fond of page 16 and sends readers there on no less than fifteen occasions, seeking aubergines, broad beans, two strains of beetroot (Avonearly and Boltardy), cloches, courgettes, cucumber, deep bed method, lettuce, uses of the Melbourne frame, marrow, melon, early peas, peppers, sweet corn and bush tomatoes. It is, in fact, solely concerned with the humble cabbage.

Of the 177 entries listed a magnificent 166 give bold directions to the wrong pages.

From *The Return of Heroic Failures* by Stephen Pile (Penguin, 1988)

NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Mr C Laughton
3 Holroyd Court
BALACLAVA VIC 3183

Ms H Nsair
7 Calderwood Street
BULLEEN VIC 3105

Ms C Page
2/26 Francis Street
MERMAID BEACH QLD 4218

Miss C Van Nooten
73 The Boulevard
HAWTHORN VIC 3122

Mrs J Wood
Law Institute of Victoria
470 Bourke Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

AGPS STYLE MANUAL— Editor invites suggestions for fifth edition

At Style Council '91 recently held at Melbourne University, Graham Grayston, editor of the current (fourth) edition of the *AGPS Style Manual*, described some of the changes he intends for the fifth edition, due for publication in 1993.

Following lively debate with an army of writers and editors, Mr Grayston invited constructive suggestions and criticisms to be sent to him and his in-house editorial committee.

So if you think anything can be improved for the next edition of this standard reference work, please write to:

Mr Graham Grayston
Editor — Style Manual
Australian Government
Publishing Service
GPO Box 84
CANBERRA ACT 2601

(Reprinted from *Hearsay* — the newsletter of the Society of Business Communicators Dec/Jan issue)

Footnote: AusSI Vice-president George Levick is responsible for the chapter on indexing in the *AGPS Style Manual*.

A TALE OF WOE WITH A HAPPY ENDING

The Golden Rules must be obeyed: first read the entire text then check the pagination. I would like to add another: think carefully when accepting work from friends.

A good friend, a biological scientist and international medal award winner asked me to compile three indexes for a book he was writing, an anthropological scientific text of some 250 pages. The book was to be published by a Commonwealth department and had been edited by an experienced editor, also a friend and recently described as 'the best editor in Australia'. Between author and editor I expected a fault-free camera-ready copy, so I accepted the task.

I was given three chapters and from these I estimated the cost but was beginning to feel uncomfortable when told that the last few chapters were to be completed. I offered to quote for the complete task but gave the author the option of payment on an hourly basis. He

accepted the latter, his mistake, I accepted the book based on three chapters, my mistake.

Both author and editor were convinced that the job could proceed on the chapters I had already received, their joint opinion outweighed my professional judgement. I had a contents list and a good idea of the form of the book. The work seemed straight forward and indeed it would have been if I had obeyed the Golden Rules.

The first chapters produced problems, some figures and tables were missing and those present were incorrect. There were many inconsistencies and I found myself spending valuable time editing and checking. Eventually I presented the author with a list of problems and an interim invoice, the hours were clocking up and I wanted to be paid for my fault-finding task. I put the book to one side having given up the notion of finishing by Christmas.

The rest of the chapters except the last one were received some months later and revealed even more mistakes. These were not only typographical, but editorial as whole paragraphs were missing or mis-aligned and even worse, pages were missing and a chapter began on an even instead of an odd page. By this time friendships were beginning to waver and there were mutterings of my paying too much attention to minutiae. I presented a further invoice and covering letter refusing to continue until a fault free copy was supplied and went to Europe for two months.

On my return I hoped that the problems would have been sorted out. They were not. The last two chapters had the same pagination and in an effort to finish I did not notice at first, it was three in the morning and I was tired.

The last chapter was repaginated and I did finish the index. Working closely with the editor I checked the complete text, the figures and tables, beginnings and endings of paragraphs and pages. The author (no doubt still muttering) had gone to the USA and the editor was extremely embarrassed and somewhat quiet about professional competence. I was thanked for my work and a mistake was discovered in the index. I would like to think it was a 'typo' but who ever can spell quarantine? (quarantine).

The happy ending is that the money received will pay for a new computer, one with a hard disk allowing me to use the MACREX 5 program. But I made a professional error in accepting the work and in believing in the infallibility of author and editor. The Golden Rules must be obeyed.

Clodagh Jones

[Clodagh also writes: 'After reading the "Thank you to correspondents" column in the Nov-Dec issue I felt I should offer an item if only to represent all two of us in Tasmania! I look forward to the occasion when the Society will be able to offer a week-end indexing seminar in Victoria so that I can justify crossing Bass Strait and so meet other members of the Society. Indexing is indeed a lonely occupation and I would welcome a chance to meet other indexers to share experiences and interest.']

A BOOK WITHOUT AN INDEX IS LIKE...

...a maze without a map; ...the Gordian Knot without Alexander; ...a voyage without a compass; ...a pyramid without a passage; ...statistics without mathematics; ...the Lost World without Conan Doyle; and ...being in Bligh's longboat, but the sextant doesn't work, nor does the compass, and it's cloudy all the time, and Timor is 2000 miles away somewhere over there.

[Congratulations to Anna Beth McCormack, who, with all those answers to our Holiday Competition, wins free membership for 1992.]

DEADLINE: MARCH ISSUE
Contributions should reach the Editor at the address below by 25 Feb 1992. Contributions on 3.5" Mac disk (Microsoft Word) will be appreciated.

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