



Australian Society of Indexers

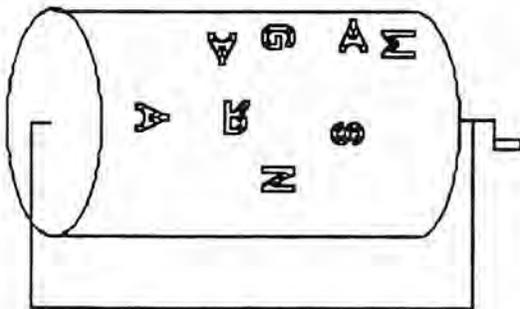
NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

Indexing is a highly-skilled activity. It requires intense concentration and a firm grasp of the English language. Indexers tend to gather much information about "quirks" of the written word. This can lead to a love of toying with the language in a way which few others would understand.

One way that people love to play with words is by rearranging them to form new meanings. This month's column is for lovers of anagrams. It is written in two versions; scrambled and unscrambled. The scrambled version appears first. It consists of shuffled phrases separated by numbers in square brackets. The bracketed numbers refer to the number of letters in each of the words of a phrase shown in the "unscrambled" version, e.g. *kiss an alarming glove* [3,7,8] can be translated to *like solving anagrams*. Just like cryptic crosswords, a little artistic licence is used with punctuation marks.



1. Scrambled: **Real idiot** [9]

O hell! [5] So much lint [4,6]
is no carer [6,2] to Dr Tina [9].
Vortices [2,6] are just scab[7,4]
nucliding [9] this urea [8] (ex
dining) [8] so we bonk [3,5].
So Paull [4,4] le Pope [6]
whore a [3,3] ma, King [6]
Steven [6]. Time rains [2,7]

my lost [6] girdle; the hat [5-7]
or cane MBE [3,2,4]. I aced
Mac![8] Ed - new end, eh?[4,6]

Set ventures [5,6]

2. Unscrambled: **Editorial**

Hello! *This column carries on tradition. It covers subject areas including thesauri, indexing, new books, plus also people who are making events. It remains mostly light-hearted; can be more academic when needed?*

Steve Sunter

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We welcome our new editor, or *quidnunc*, even if one of his first decisions was to ask the President and committee members for regular contributions. After looking up some of the words in last month's editorial you probably will not be surprised to learn that Steve won the medal for the highest personal score in the National Scrabble Championships held in Hobart over Easter (575 points; including three "bonus" words). I look forward to increasing my vocabulary during the year while enjoying Steve's erudite editorials.

Helen earned our gratitude last year for the work she did producing the expanded number of newsletters, while making them very interesting and informative. We hope you will all continue sending contributions to the editor, thus making the newsletters an important part of our indexing lives. Our best wishes to Helen for success in her new editorial work and studies this year.

There are some changes to the preliminary 1992 programme given in the February newsletter. The May meeting will now be a panel forum where any aspects of indexing will be discussed. The newspaper indexing talk will be given on July 22nd by the 1991 medal winner, our chance to learn how the ambitious programme to index *The Argus* became a prize winner. The book index course will be held in August and September. Details of these activities will be found in this and subsequent newsletters.

Isabelle Mentha



REPORT ON APRIL MEETING OF THE NSW BRANCH

The meeting of the NSW Branch of the Australian Society of Indexers was held on Thursday, April 9th in the State Library of NSW. Some 16 members attended.

The meeting opened with brief announcements regarding indexing courses available in the Library School of the University of NSW and the forthcoming International Conference of Indexers to be held in Melbourne in 1995.

Handbook proposal: Kingsley Siebel spoke about his proposed Australian handbook for indexers.

He pointed out there is a large amount of specialised knowledge in existence among indexers and that this is largely under-utilised. Information about the craft of indexing is not generally available thus there is a need for a

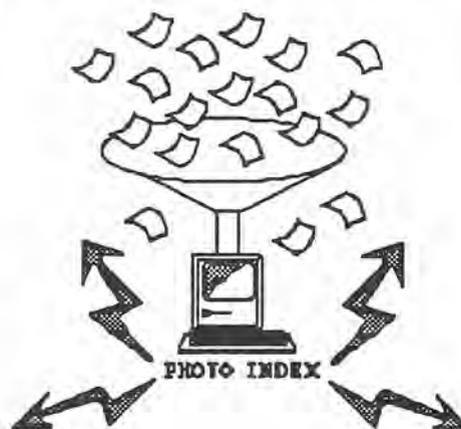
publication which can be used for reference.

A provisional questionnaire was distributed and members were asked to fill this in to gauge the attitude of the Branch to the proposal and to gain more information on what such a Handbook might contain.

Indexing photographs: The highlight of the meeting was Alan Walker's lecture on pictorial indexing. He has been involved in organising the indexing of the very large collection of historical photographs of the NSW Government Printing Office as well as the justly famous Hood Collection of Australian photographs in the State Library of NSW.

Alan spoke about the problems connected with the subject analysis of photographs, as well as the subject headings required to do justice to such specialised pictorial material. His most difficult task was the compilation of a thesaurus which had to contain headings for both concrete topics and abstract concepts.

Alan was able to demonstrate the large videodisc which is capable of accommodating some 54,000 photographic images, linked to a PC for retrieval and to a thermal printer which allows the researchers to make "reference" copies of photographs. He pointed out, however, that modern technology is now available allowing the storage of both text and image in digital form on computer disc.



Indexing slides: The second speaker of the evening was Caroline Colton who was responsible for the indexing of the photographic slide collection of Worksafe Australia.

This office, which operates also as a research institute, has a working collection of 6,500 up-to-date slides and because the requirements of users cover a very wide spectrum, Caroline needed to design a computer system which could cope with the various needs. She had to design the worksheet as well as the necessary thesaurus.

She pointed out that the slides are widely used by industry and fulfil an important teaching function. For this reason out-of-date material has to be archived and new material constantly incorporated into the collection.

It was enlightening to be shown the two different types of picture-collections; the historical (virtually static) and the current (dynamic). An indexer must face up to the different requirements of each in order to satisfy user needs.

Peter Dobrovits

MUPHRY'S LAW

Indexing demands a sharp mind and a keen eye. Therefore, most readers will have already spotted the "typo" in the heading above. But be warned: *Muphry's Law* is a far more dangerous and insidious incarnation than its infamous parent *Murphy's Law*. After centuries of neglect, it was positively identified and described recently by a freelance editor, John Bangsund. He recorded it in *The Society of Editors Newsletter* as follows:

- Muphry's Law dictates that:
- If you write anything criticizing editing or proof-reading, there will be a fault of some kind in what you have written.
 - If an author thanks you in a book for your editing or proof-

reading, there will be mistakes in the book.

- The stronger the sentiment expressed in (a) or (b), the greater the fault;
- Any book devoted to editing or style will be internally inconsistent.

John discusses examples of Muphry's law at large in the publishing industry, including several clangers in early versions of the Bible. The version affectionately known as the *Printer Bible* (c. 1702) reproduced Psalm 119:161 as: "Printers have persecuted me without a cause". Shalt we equate *printers* to *princes*? The so-called *Wicked Bible* (1632) left out a crucial word in the seventh commandment, yielding: "Thou shalt commit adultery". Similarly, the first Irish Bible (1716) instructed readers to "...sin on more" (John 5:14).

Which brings me to a simple principle proclaimed by a little-known Irish philosopher, Paddy O'Brien, in the 19th century, i.e. O'Briens Law: Murphy was an optimist.

Have you ever seen a perfect index? Or have you been thanked profusely for your worst-ever effort? I give one example of Muphry's Law at work in the world of indexing. However, I would love to hear about other peoples experiences and anecdotes. - Ed.



Muphry Stirs an Indexer
Indeed, Muphry claimed a victim in the last edition of this newsletter. The affliction arose from section (d) above.

When giving details of the forthcoming meeting to discuss indexing styles an "internally inconsistent" meeting date was listed (i.e. *Stir an Indexer* meeting was slated to take place on Thursday, May 19th). In fact, the nineteenth of May will not fall on a Thursday until 1994. The *correct* details are:

Theme: Stir an indexer.

Format: Panel meeting.

Venue: Committee Room, 3rd Flr,
CSIRO Information Services Brch
314 Albert Street, East Melbourne

Date: Tuesday, May 19

Time: 5.30 for 6pm. Drinks and nibbles supplied. The meeting will last approx. two hours. Any further disputes may be resolved later over dinner at a nearby restaurant.

LEARNING THE ART

The AusSI (Vic) introductory book indexing course will be held in Melbourne into the spring-time. It will start on August 17 and end on Sept. 28. Sessions will be held on Monday evenings from 6pm to 8.30pm (no session Sept 7). The venue will be: Australian Society of Accountants, 170 Queen St. Cost is \$250 for the six sessions (\$225 for AusSI members). **Contact:** Max McMaster (03)418 7335

NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Dr A. Dunbar-Nobes
64 Kambalda Crescent
Fisher ACT 2611

Mr. S. Edgar
8 Allambee Crescent
Glebe TAS 7000

Mr M. Pardy
8 Rule Street
Richmond VIC 3121

NEWLY QUALIFIED

Any member who wishes to become a registered indexer must submit a published index for assessment. The Society congratulates the following

members who have passed the assessment over the last 12 months:

Simon Cauchi (June 1991)
Jean Dartnall (July 1991)
Fabian Hutchinson (Feb 1992)
Christopher Laughton (March 1992)
Grace Kathryn Moss (Jan 1992)
Jenny Restarick (Oct 1991)
Mary Anne Secker (Oct 1991)
Steve Sunter (March 1992)
Geraldine Suter (Nov 1991)

DEADLINE: Expanded JUNE Issue Contributions should reach the Editor at the address below by May 21, 1992. Contributions on 3.5" Mac disk (preferably Microsoft Word) will be especially appreciated.

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS: GPO BOX 1251L MELBOURNE, VIC 3001

President: Isabelle Mentha
(03) 418 7222

Vice Pres.: George Levick
(03) 418 7344

Secretary: Ian Odgers
(03) 418 7275

Treasurer: Joyce Korn
(03) 606 9610

Editor: Steve Sunter
(03) 418 7253

Fax: (03) 419 0459

Committee Members:

Max McMaster: (03) 418 7335

Cherryl Schauder: (03) 660 3059

Mary Long: (03) 846 0225

John Simkin: (03) 429 8817

Josephine McGovern: (03) 596 1555

NSW BRANCH PO BOX R598 ROYAL EXCHANGE SYDNEY, NSW 2000

President: Garry Cousins
(02) 955 1525

Secretary: Christine Winning
(02) 793 0793

Asst. Secretary: Alan Walker
(02) 380 5875