Conference reports: The August Indexer

The Second International Conference of the Australian Society of Indexers (AusSI), sponsored by Indexing Research of Rochester, New York, was held in Hobart, Tasmania from 27 to 29 of August 1999. Fifty-three people attended, including delegates from Britain, America and New Zealand.

Papers covered a range of subjects including website, database, bibliographic, book and journal indexing as well as the publishing world, metadata, and children’s use of indexes. There were many contributors and parallel sessions were arranged to allow all papers offered to be presented.

Throughout the conference there were half-hour demonstrations of indexing systems: DB Textworks, HTML Indexer, Macrex, SkyIndex, and Cindex; the last presented by Frances Lennie, representing our major sponsor.

The keynote speaker, Robyn Colman from Quill Australia Pty Ltd, emphasised the importance of indexers providing easy access for the users of information; accessibility of information and the usability of the index are of paramount importance. Indexers need to advertise their skills to those who provide the information in whatever form it is presented. Robyn’s issues were raised again by speakers throughout the conference. Glenda Browne (freelance indexer, Blaxland, NSW) discussed the need for indexers to network, and promote their skills; she provided valuable practical advice to those of us who are freelance, as did Alexandra Nickerson (Indexing Services, Cincinnati, OH, USA) who spoke on medical indexing. Frances Lennie (USA) provided useful information on revisions to existing indexes, web-mounted or in print, using indexing software. Two Victorian freelance indexers also addressed practical issues: Max McMaster spoke on journal indexing and Ann Philpott on the editing process.

Practical guidance for children using indexes was discussed by Anne Bentley (Moonee Ponds, Vic). An indexing outreach program, developed by indexers associated with Editorial Services in Annapolis, Maryland, USA, was described by Nedalina Dineva, on video. This program is geared towards educating middle-school students in the proper use and function of indexes. Janet Hillman (Mimosa Publications, Vic) spoke on the importance of indexes in the marketing of primary school products.

Our librarian delegates dazzled us with up-to-date information on new technologies. Maggie Exon from Curtin University in Perth, WA discussed the concepts of metadata (the word of the moment) and the need for human-centred indexing to provide efficient recall and retrieval of indexing materials on the web. Lloyd Sokvitne (Senior Librarian, State Library, Hobart, Tasmania) summarised current Tasmania Online experiences; this website received the Australian Society of Indexers Web Indexing Prize for 1998. Penny Braybrook (RMIT Publishing, Melbourne Vic) discussed Australian bibliographic database indexing. Two Australian databases were described in detail: Australian Tourism Index by Jane Odgers, and Australian Education Index by Margaret Findlay.

Lynn Farkas reported on two projects conducted by members of the ACT Branch which were funded by grants from the Australian Society of Indexers. One project culminated in the production of a brochure, a Guide to Indexing Services, which was duly launched; the other, a publication in draft stage, a Report and... (Continued on page 85)
Noticeboard

Victorian Branch activities
The importance of indexes in the marketing of primary school products

At the recent AusSI Conference in Hobart, Janet Hillman of Mimosa Publications in Hawthorn, Vic. spoke to the above topic.

Besides being a very enthusiastic and stimulating speaker, Janet brought along a wide sample of 'back of the book' indexes and complete works of some of the educational resource material that her company sells to teachers and schools in both Australia and overseas.

The Vic Branch of the Society is delighted that she has agreed to repeat her talk for the benefit of all those school and children's librarians, publishers, indexers and interested educationalists, writers and parents who missed out on being at the Hobart conference. Mimosa Publishing is well aware of the demands of the primary school curriculums for both Victoria and New South Wales and Janet's talk includes coverage of issues concerning these demands.

A meeting will be held at ACER, 19 Prospect Hill Rd., Camberwell on November 4th. ACER is just up the hill from Burke Rd. and within easy walking distance of Camberwell station or Burke Rd. trams. Car parking is available behind the shopping centre opposite ACER.

Usually our meetings end at approx. 8 pm followed by dinner at a nearby restaurant where we hope our guest speaker will join us. There is no admission charge for our meetings and we invite you to join us from 6 pm for drinks and nibbles before starting the evening's talk at 6.30 pm.

RSVP to Jenny Restarick tel. 03 9528 2539 (AH) or 03 9545 2178 (BH) or via email to jenny.restarick@enquiries.csiro.au

NSW Branch activities
Ask an Indexer report

12 keen souls met at the NSW Writers' Centre on Saturday 25 September to exchange ideas and information on issues relating to the "art" of indexing. The session took the style of a panel comprising Alan Walker, Pamela Johnstone, Michael Wyatt, Glenda Browne and myself - all coming to indexing from different backgrounds and different working setups.

The morning was very ably and enthusiastically facilitated by Madeleine Davis covering areas from back of book indexing to the burgeoning new field of web indexing. As topics for discussion had already been received the session rolled on extremely productively, covering the following issues:

How to become an indexer, with the panel giving individual histories as to how this can occur and what courses are available both in Australia and overseas.

Mentoring Freelancing, estimating, negotiating deadlines and interaction between publishers and editors.

Indexing software - Michael Wyatt and Glenda Browne were very helpful in assisting with this information.

What constitutes indexable terms and the intellectual input in the process of indexing (dealing with such issues as hanging prepositions and whether you need to be a subject specialist).

And last but by no means least the issue of web and database indexing. Roger Andrew raised the query as to whether to use an indexer, a cataloguer and/or a database person to organise information for a risk management project and Glenda Browne spoke about the decisions having to be made regarding repeat entries in her project with NRMA Online Help.

The morning was highly successful and as a panel member I found the programme stimulating and informative and I suspect that all those that attended went away with something new from the world of indexing and organising information.

By Lorraine Doyle

Dates for your diary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>4 Nov</td>
<td>Vic branch: Primary school index</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Tues in month</td>
<td>Soc. Editors (NSW) meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Dec</td>
<td>NSW Christmas lunch</td>
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Obituary

Death notices for Clyde Garrow appeared in *The Age* (Melbourne) on 28 September 1999. Clyde was an early President and office-bearer of AusSI in the 1970s, when he was in the Information Division of CSIRO. He will be remembered for his contribution to the establishment of the Society in Australia.

New members

A warm welcome to the following new members:

- Pauline Reeve, Vic
- Ian Johnston, ACT
- Gayle Jenes, Vic
- Jean Norman, ACT
- June Smith, NSW

GST seminars

All freelancers should attend one of the ATO New Tax System Seminars which have been advertised in the press. Indexers are classified under 'All Other Businesses'. Apparently editors have been told to attend 'Business and Professional Services'.

If you have a copy of the ad, and know which seminar you want to go to, you can register by ringing 1300 138 990. There is also a business tax infoline on 13 24 78, and you can register via the internet at http://www.taxreform.ato.gov.au.

The Katoomba ones are being held at Mountain Heritage Country House Retreat where we had our FutureProof Indexer conference.

AusSI Website Indexing Awards

The 1999 AusSI Website Indexing Awards will be opening soon. More details in the next Newsletter. Please contact webmaster@aussi.org for information.

NSW Branch Christmas lunch

Following tradition, the NSW Branch Christmas lunch will be held at the Duxton Hotel, Milson's Point at 12.30 on Wednesday 1 December.

Cost is $25 for a hot and cold buffet and a glass of champagne. RSVP to Madeleine Davis by Friday 26 November on (02) 9514 3176 (w), (02) 4787 6277 (h) fax (02) 4787 6069, email: redbliff@hermes.net.au.

WiP meeting: Your Website – Design, Marketing and Maintenance

WiP will be holding a seminar entitled 'Your Website – Design, Marketing and Maintenance' on 20th October at 6.30pm. The venue is Don Lorenzo's, 386 Paramatta Road, Stanmore. Cost: $20 members, $25 non-members. Enquiries to Jennifer Richards, tel: (02) 9954 1438.

From the editor

We changed email addresses last year, but kept our old one as a back up. It is now defunct, so please send all emails for Jon and me to our new AusSI aliases (see page 89) or to diagonal@hermes.net.au.

I regularly buy Saturday’s *Sydney Morning Herald* and skim the job section to keep up-to-date with opportunities in indexing and other fields of interest. I look up the I's (indexing, Internet, information), the L's (librarian), the P's (publishing) and the W's (web). It is rare to see a ad for an indexer, however there was one on 25 Sept. CitySearch, (a Fairfax online city guide) is looking for a sub-editor/indexer. Part of the job is to maintain 'the integrity of CitySearch’s database, by ensuring that all new information is indexed accurately before publication.' The deadline was 1 October, but you can look at the site at citysearch.com.au.

I second all the reports praising the Hobart conference. Well-organised, stimulating and friendly – what more could we ask?

Glenda Browne
International agreement

The societies which originally belonged to the affiliation agreement with the Society of Indexers have, during the last year, renegotiated an agreement which reflects the current relationships between the societies. This includes the societies from Great Britain and Ireland, United States of America, Canada, Australia and Southern Africa. The agreement marks the development of international relationships between the societies, and the support and exchange of ideas that the societies can offer to each other.

The China Society of Indexers has expressed its interest in joining the agreement, and will make its formal acceptance at the conference of the society in October 1999. The societies which have negotiated the agreement warmly welcome the China Society.


All mention of Societies refers to Societies listed in Schedule A.

1 This agreement between the Societies promotes the aims and objectives of the Societies and their members, and supersedes all previous affiliation agreements between the societies.

2 The members of each society shall enjoy the right to attend meetings and conferences of the other societies at the member rate, but shall not have reciprocal rights to vote or hold office. Services specific to a society, such as certification, publications, and registers of indexers, are not included in the reciprocal rights.

3 Societies shall refrain from actively seeking members in areas covered by other societies, but each society may accept membership applications from individuals outside their own area.

4 Each society agrees to nominate an international delegate to represent its interests on matters of international import and to act as liaison with the other societies.

5 Each society shall circulate an agreed number of copies of its newsletter to the other societies.

6 The [British] Society of Indexers shall publish The Indexer on behalf of all the societies. It shall remain the property of the [British] Society of Indexers.

7 The appointment of the editor(s) of The Indexer shall remain the responsibility of the [British] Society of Indexers.

8 The editor(s) of The Indexer shall maintain the right to accept or reject contributions from whatever source, at their discretion.

9 Each Society shall make The Indexer available to its members according to its own rules and procedures.

10 The price of The Indexer for the members of the Societies shall be at a reduced rate as established by agreement of all the Societies.

11 This agreement may be amended at any time by common consent. Review of the agreement will take place every third year, commencing in the year 2000. Any Society may withdraw from the agreement on giving 12 months notice to the other Societies.

This agreement shall come into effect on its approval by the respective Societies, according to their constitutional procedures.

Schedule A

- American Society of Indexers
- Association of Southern African Indexers and Bibliographers
- Australian Society of Indexers
- Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada / Societe canadienne pour l'analyse de documents
- Society of Indexers (referred to as [British] Society of Indexers)

Alan Walker, President of AusSI, presented a paper on indexing school magazines and archives. Alan also chaired the session on Indexing Around the World.

John Simkin (freelance indexer and bibliographer, Richmond Vic) described the recent Society of Indexers conference-with-a-difference (Canterbury, 16-18 July): there were distinct Chaucerian themes. Contributions from Britain, the USA, and New Zealand were given by Liz Cook, Frances Lennie and Simon Cauchi respectively. Alan Walker reported on indexing societies in southern Africa and China — Chinese indexes are in columns and there is conventional order of characters.

A number of speakers presented entertaining papers on unusual topics. David Ream (Leverage Technologies, Cleveland, OH, USA) described the creation of a website index to a ten-book mystery series in the USA — the Milan Jakovich novels by Les Roberts. Simon Cauchi (freelance indexer and editor, New Zealand) argued with great humour about the need for an exclusion policy for 'passing mentions' — who is OUT and who is IN. Prue Deacon (Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, Canberra, ACT) discussed the problem of broad queries and narrow queries: can information systems cater for both? Geraldine Triffitt (AIATSIS, ACT) spoke of political problems of choosing indexing terms acceptable to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people for databases and book indexes.

Tasmania was well represented. Robyn Mathison from Hobart reported on a group of enterprising women who have published books with some success and against all odds. Tony Large (freelance indexer, Ulverstone) amused us with the problems of indexing his own book. John Collins (St Helens) spoke passionately on the topic: Is there an Australian publishing industry?

A conference dinner was held during which Roy Harden Jones (Hobart, Tasmania) spoke light-heartedly of indexes worthy of note. Alan Walker presented the 1998 AusSI Web Indexing Prize to Lloyd Sokvitne and Max McMaster presented a certificate to Clodagh Jones whose index to The Journal of Annie Baxter Dawbin was highly commended in the 1998 AusSI Medal competition. It was a very Tasmanian affair.

The sun shone most of the time, and Hobart was looking pretty for our interstate and overseas visitors. We took over part of Hadleys of Hobart Hotel.

There were welcoming and warming fires and comfortable accommodation. The Tasmania Shop provided a table selling Tasmanian-made gifts. T-shirts explaining that 'Life is easier with an Index' were on sale.

The Australian Society of Indexers thanks all those whose contribution helped to make the conference run smoothly and with success.

Clodagh Jones

ACT Report

ACT and Region Branch President Lyn Parkas talks about the conference: The whole conference was considered to be very good; the numbers provided an intimate atmosphere and the venue added to the general feel of the event.

In particular all the papers were very good and general comment confirmed that view. The keynote speaker, who is not an indexer, provided a brilliant overview of the ways for the profession to go. The Hypothetical prepared by Anne Philpott was excellent and an invigorating experience for all.

Geraldine Triffitt’s excellent paper on cross-cultural work was considered very timely for our part of the world and was received with great enthusiasm.

Socially, members of the Conference could often be found at the Salamanca Markets and the ACT group ‘hosted’ an informal session at Dr Mobbs.

From Barbara Malpass Edwards

Victorian report

Close to 60 registrants and speakers converged on Hadley’s Hotel in Hobart to participate in a very stimulating and enjoyable long weekend. The Organising Committee was delighted to welcome delegates from the UK, US and NZ together with members of AusSI from all over Australia. We were especially pleased to meet up with so many Tasmanians interested in indexing and publishing.

Our special thanks go to Clodagh Jones, acting as ‘on the spot ambassadress’, making sure that all arrangements went along smoothly and introducing some new members to the Society. She, and her fellow Tasmanians, made sure that we all took home not only a very favourable impression of Hobart’s restaurants, but also some souvenirs, purchased either from the hotel lobby showcase, the Salamanca Place market or the gift-laden stall brought into the hotel for us by the proprietors of the Tasmania Shop.

Each day’s program was full of interesting speakers covering topics such as Indexing from an international
Indexers Medal 1999

The Australian Society of Indexers is again offering its annual Medal for the most outstanding index to a book or periodical compiled in Australia or New Zealand.

The Medal will be presented to the indexer responsible for the best index submitted, if it is of sufficient quality, and the publisher of the winning index will be presented with a certificate. The presentations will take place at a Society dinner.

To be eligible for the award, the index must be in print and must have been first published after 1996. It must have been compiled in Australia or New Zealand even though the text to which it refers may have originated elsewhere.

For the award, indexes are judged at the level of outstanding professional achievement, thus sufficient material is required, both in quality and quantity, for appraisal. The index should be substantial in size, the subject matter should be complex, and the language, form and structure of the index should demonstrate the indexer's expertise, as well as serving the needs of the text and the reader.

Publishers, indexers and all interested persons are invited to nominate indexes which meet the above criteria, and which they regard as worthy of consideration. Indexers are encouraged to nominate their own works.

Please send recommendations, with bibliographic details, and if possible together with a copy of the book/periodical (which will be returned), to:

The Secretary
Australian Society of Indexers
PO Box 1251
Melbourne Vic 3001
Australia
as soon as possible, but no later than Friday, 10 December, 1999.

For further information, please contact Jenny Restarick: telephone/fax 61 3 95282539, email: jenny.restarick@enquiries.csiro.au

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President’s letter

HARD CORE IN HOBART

It is worth remarking that, at a conference attended by fifty-five delegates, presentations were given by at least thirty different people.

That was the pattern at Hobart, according to my count. The quality of the papers and demonstrations was also excellent. We are a small society, with less than 200 members, but with high professional standards and participation rates. There was never enough time for discussion at Hobart, which was as lively as conferences of indexers always are.

It was good to have contributions from colleagues from the US and the UK, as well as strong representation of Tasmanian indexers, editors and publishers among the other Australians and New Zealanders.

A CHANGE OF NAME?

The proposal to change the name of AusSI to include New Zealand was discussed at a general meeting of members in Hobart, but no great enthusiasm for a name change emerged. Most importantly, perhaps, the New Zealanders present were quite comfortable with the present name. Discussion brought out a range of suggestions and opinions about the name of the Society, acronyms, and the logo.

We held a straw poll of those attending the conference (including non-members, if they wished to express an opinion), providing people with a list of eleven names (with acronyms) which had been suggested, and asking them to express their preferences, and to make comments and suggestions. 23 people voted. The most popular names were the present name: Australian Society of Indexers (AusSI), Indexing Society of Australia and New Zealand (ISANZ), and Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers (ANZSI).

A new domain name for the website was also discussed, and we have subsequently become: www.aussi.org.

I think it is fair to say, however, that there was no groundswell of opinion for change. In my view, we may be able to accommodate the thinking behind the suggestion for change by adopting an unofficial subtitle (or gloss) on the name of the Society, in a similar way to the Society of Indexers, which now identifies itself on its website as: “The Society of Indexers: The British and Irish professional body for indexing”.

A few suggestions for our Society:

The Australian Society of Indexers: representing indexers in Australia and New Zealand, OR
The Australian Society of Indexers: promoting quality indexing in Australia and New Zealand.

The National Committee would appreciate your reactions and suggestions.

"THE INDEXER"

Under new editorial arrangements for "The Indexer", AusSI has agreed to provide Issue Editors for the April 2001 issue. The editor of our newsletter, Glenda Browne, is willing to be one of the editors. We would appreciate expressions of interest from members interested in helping with the editing or writing articles.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

We are now affiliated with indexing societies in Britain, America, Canada, Southern Africa and China, the last two having recently signed the agreement. Discussions are proceeding on various matters including exchanges of publications, international conferences and multiple memberships. I will be carrying messages of welcome to members of the China Society of Indexers when I attend their conference in Dalian on 18-22 October. A.W.

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Email: admin@socind.demon.co.uk

Visit our website at
http://www.socind.demon.co.uk
SKY Index Users list on the Internet

A list has been established for users of SKY Index, to allow and encourage the exchange of tips, tricks and techniques among owners of SKY Index. The list is also intended to aid those who are trying the SKY Index demo and would like to learn more about the program’s capabilities. Finally, the list is also open to indexers in general and to the users of other professional indexing software packages so that they may get an idea of the features of SKY Index from the perspective of actual SKY Index users.

To find out more about the list, go to http://www.onelist.com/community/SKYIndexUsers
To subscribe to the list, click the "Join Community" button. Alternatively, you can go directly to http://www.onelist.com/subscribe/SKYIndexUsers
Registration is free. As well as requests for information and responses, early messages on the list include:

- a description of the new 'translation' feature that allows you to include special characters like hyphens, dashes and commas in your page references without upsetting the formatting
- Macros for incorporating hotlinked URLs in your Web index
- A sure-fire method for keeping your index in original page number order while you’re updating an index for a new edition
- A function-key template for your keyboard
- Some undocumented features of SKY Index
- A way of embedding authority control records in a periodical index

Michael Wyatt, Moderator

VALA conference

The 10th VALA biennial conference will be held in Melbourne from 16 to 18 February, 2000. I’ve never been, but the programs always look interesting.


(Conference report, Cont. from p. 85)

perspective; Database indexing; Web indexing; Back of the Book indexing...and more.

Indexing systems were well represented with sessions on Cindex (our official sponsor); SKY Index,; DB Textworks; HTML Indexer and MACREX all being covered.

The Keynote Address was given by Robyn Colman of Quill Australia Pty Ltd, who used the delightful title 'Quithering' to discuss the vagaries and delights of writing, publishing and word processing packages.

Throughout the three days of the conference we enjoyed many sumptuous morning and afternoon teas and lunches. After a full day’s program on Friday we were treated to an hilarious presentation of a ‘hypothetical’ session, with Ann Philpott acting out her Geoffrey Robertson alter ego and coercing a number of folk to also take roles as author, editor, publisher, printer and obnoxious son.

Saturday evening’s conference dinner saw us all looking very swish as we sat down to dinner in the decorated dining room. Roy Harden Jones was a brief but brilliant dinner speaker, after which the Presentation of Awards took place. The Society’s Web Indexing Prize was won by the team of Lloyd Solkvive, Liz Holliday and Elizabeth Louden for their construction of the website for Tasmania Online.

Clodagh Jones was presented with a Highly Commended Certificate for her index to the text ‘The journal of Annie Baxter Dawbin July 1858 May 1868’ Ed. By Lucy Frost, publ. Univ. of Oid Press, 1998.

Sunday afternoon saw the exodus of the first lot of interstate and international visitors. Some participants took advantage of the mild weather and glorious Tasmanian scenery to extend their stays.

By Jenny Restarick

We failed to see a Tassie Tiger, but saw the veraciously feeding Tassie Devils, Bennett’s wallabies, Forester kangaroos, tiger quolls and eagles. Picture by Bill Browne.
New AusSI Website and email addresses

AusSI has a new website under development at http://www.aussi.org. After some discussion the Committee decided to register our own domain name and pay for a hosted site rather than continue using the free space which comes with our Zeta account. The new website is hosted by Kangaweb, but this will be invisible to users, who will see it as a self-contained system starting from the main address. The new site is now officially open and the Zeta account will probably be retired by the end of the year.

Why a new Website? The main arguments for using a paid hosting service were:

1. It allows us to use our own, more memorable domain name, rather than being tacked on to the end of the Zeta domain name. This gives us greater ‘findability’ on the World Wide Web and enhances our credibility with users, including potential employers and future members.

2. The paid hosting allows us to use facilities that weren’t available on the Zeta system, such as forms to collect and store information, secure connections for financial transactions, a text-based search system, and various others that will be appearing on the site over time.

3. The site hosting comes with ten email addresses which have been assigned to committee members within AusSI. These will go with the office when the incumbents change, allowing for continuity of addressing and allowing us to pass on membership on mailing lists, etc, without having to change subscription details. Recipients can also sort their incoming mail into ‘AusSI’ and ‘other’ on this basis.

The hosting also includes additional Web space and free technical support. I’ve had occasion to use this several times already and found Kangaweb very responsive and helpful.

Members and guests who want to visit the new website before the official opening will find it at http://www.aussi.org. At the moment I am concentrating on making our existing material accessible, but I will take the opportunity to do some spring cleaning and a little site redesign as well. If you have any comments on, suggestions for, or problems with the site please let me know at webmaster@aussi.org.

The other new addresses are:

- president@aussi.org - use for official mail to Alan Walker in place of: alan.walker@054.aone.net.au
- memsec@aussi.org - use for official mail to Michael Wyatt in place of: keyword@ozemail.com.au
- secretary@aussi.org - use for official mail to Lorraine Doyle in place of: Lorraine.Doylc@lbc.com.au
- treasurer@aussi.org - use for official mail to Tricia Waters in place of: WatersIT@ozemail.com.au
- newsletter@aussi.org - use for official mail to Glenda Browne in place of: diagonal@hermes.net.au
- Messages to any other address in that domain - eg. postmaster@aussi.org, support@aussi.org - will be forwarded through to me.

Jonathan Jermey

Educational publishing competition

The Australian Publishers Association (APA) recently published the results of their educational publishing competition. Two books that I had indexed were shortlisted.

I rang the APA to find out what role (if any) the indexing had in the judging. Unfortunately the answer is little: if the indexing was bad this would be noted, but judges do not specifically examine any aspects of the indexing. G.B.
Newsletter and Webmaster contacts

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This newsletter is sent free to all members of the Australian Society of Indexers. It is published 11 times a year, with a combined issue for Jan/Feb. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Society.

Copy should be sent to the editor by the last day of each month for publication in the middle of the next month. I am delighted to receive contributions, both large and small, from members. Please contact me if you have any questions about suitable items for publication. The editor reserves the right to cut and edit material.

If greater than one A4 page, please send files on a disk or via email in Rich Text Format, Word for Windows, or plain text (ASCII).

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Please send image files in Windows Metafile (WMF), JPEG, or PCX format. Photographs and camera-ready copy can be scanned by the editor.

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