



NEWSLETTER

Volume 28, Number 2, March-August 2004

From the National President

I'm sure some of you will be picking up this newsletter and thinking 'It's about time one of these arrived!' And of course that's true – despite all good intentions, the National Executive have not been able to carry on their normal functions and produce regular newsletters. This is the second newsletter produced by the 'interim' newsletter committee of the National Executive, in the absence of a Newsletter Editor. This issue was planned for shortly after the round of annual general meetings held in March, and its focus is on reports of those state and national meetings. We thank all the state branch representatives who answered our call for reports and minutes of their meetings.

It is conventional wisdom that if you want a task done, you give it to busy people; however, there is a point at which even the most organised, dedicated and hard working people simply can't take on additional tasks. Our National Committee members reached that 'saturation point' earlier this year. We tried, but personal and business commitments of all of us as individuals made it impossible to find the time to produce a newsletter. This has been a year of balancing the limited resources of volunteers against our hopes and plans for moving the Society forward – I allude to this in my President's Report later in this newsletter, but it was certainly brought home in trying to maintain a newsletter schedule. We haven't given up hope of reaching a regular production pattern; but in the meantime we must simply ask all of you to bear with us and accept a slightly 'irregular' series of newsletters for the next few months.

Before I launch into an impassioned plea for a newsletter editor, I'd like to update you on what has been achieved by the Society this year. While our newsletter production may have suffered, on many other counts Society members have been working quite successfully in furthering the aims of AusSI and its members.

We have now filled all the positions which were vacant at the end of last year, including Web Manager (Jon Jermey) and Membership Secretary (Joanna McLachlan). Taking on the Membership Secretary's role has involved a steep learning curve for Joanna, who is a relatively new member of AusSI as well. Joanna is currently familiarising herself with the membership database software to ensure our membership records are clean and up-to-date. The next major task will be to update Indexers Available entries. This involves not only canvassing all members for updated details, but ensuring those details are maintained in both the membership database and on the website. The current system for doing both is cumbersome; we are hoping that changes being investigated for the website will help to streamline these tasks.

Our Web Manager has been working on two fronts, keeping a 'maintenance brief' on the current website while working with our NSW Committee on a total redevelopment package. Jon has put forward proposals for changes and improvements, some of which the National Committee has asked be postponed until the direction of the new website is clearer. This can often be a frustrating situation to be in,

particularly when members ask for what seem to be minor changes which have wider related consequences, and we thank Jon for his patience in dealing with all website matters, and thank all of you for waiting for changes to happen.

The NSW Committee have taken on the task of overseeing the redesign of the AusSI website, and have made great progress in just a few months. Since their initial meeting they have developed a new information architecture for the site; are arranging focus groups to test its usability; have prepared a survey for AusSI members canvassing your thoughts on the site's redevelopment (which should reach you at about the same time as this newsletter); and are examining current and future content issues. The group is confident that changes will be ready to implement later this year. It is a pleasure to see the interest and enthusiasm of this group, and the results they are achieving – keep up the good work!

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Have you received your newsletters?

It appears that some members' names were left off the newsletter mailing lists when preparing the last two newsletters. If you have not received the November 2003 issue (vol 27 no 10) or the January/February 2004 issue (vol 28 no 1), you can now download these from the AusSI website. If you prefer the printed version, please contact Shirley Campbell at secretary@aussi.org for a copy.

The special subcommittee dealing with the AusSI Constitution has completed its work, and drafted a new Constitution which updates our earlier document to keep it relevant to changes in the Society. One of its major proposals is to change the term of AusSI memberships from calendar year subscriptions to financial year subscriptions. Part of this change again relates to the realities of our limited resources – sending out and collecting membership renewals at the time of year when both members and Committee workers are busy with seasonal holiday periods has meant repeated renewal reminders and follow-ups that we simply don't have the manpower to maintain. It is hoped that a move to the financial year will fit in better with the workloads of many of our members, and help streamline this important aspect of our Society.

This proposal and the other changes in the draft have been circulated to State Branch executives for comment and additions. Their comments will be received, collated and incorporated into a final proposal shortly, at which time all AusSI members will be sent a copy of the proposed Draft. Changes to the

Constitution will be voted on at a Special General Meeting, to be held at least 28 days after circulation of the Draft. You will be receiving more details of the Constitution and its proposed changes in early September, and we welcome your comments on this issue.

The Victorian Branch has developed its Mentoring Program and has plans to publish some of the indexes prepared under the scheme. These will form part of a publishing series produced under the auspices of the Society. It is hoped that other branches will undertake similar programs and publish their indexes in the same series. There has been strong interest in the ACT in the program, and the ACT Branch Committee is currently holding discussions with the National Library and others on possible historical serial publications which could use indexes prepared under the Mentoring Program.

Finally, Max McMaster recently visited New Zealand and met with indexers in Auckland and Wellington to discuss the possible formation of a New Zealand branch of AusSI. A short report of his visit is included in this newsletter. Max met with enthusiastic responses in both

cities, and I am assured by New Zealand members that they simply matched his enthusiasm, initiative and interest! We are grateful that Max took on this task on behalf of the Society, and hope that this will be the start of an even stronger trans-Tasman link than we currently have with our New Zealand counterparts.

So that's where we are at present. As you can see, we haven't been idle – but we are acutely conscious that you, our members, deserve tangible value for your membership fees. A regular newsletter is one of those expected 'tangibles'. To make up for its recent irregularity, we propose that, if the change to financial year membership is accepted by the Society, all current financial members have their membership extended gratis for the six months from January to June 2005, when the new membership year will begin. We hope this will ease the transition and compensate for the inconvenience this year has brought.

Lynn Farkas
President

Book Review

Website indexing: enhancing access to information within websites. 2nd edn. Glenda Browne, Jonathan Jermy. Adelaide, South Australia: Auslib Press, 2004. viii, 148 pp. Illus., Index. ISBN: 1-875145-56-7. \$46.20 (info@auslib.com.au)

First published in 2001, *Website indexing* has undergone substantial expansion and restructuring for the 2nd edition. In this it resembles a website, where a major restructure after only three years is not unusual.

Following a short introductory chapter, the first chapters focus on back-of-book-style indexes. There is good coverage of index types, policies, structure and software. Linking is discussed in detail, showing how links are made from the index entries to text within web pages and providing index layout options (since groupings may have to be done differently from page number options in a printed index). There is also a short section on XML as a publishing tool. As in the print world, back-of-book-style indexes provide useful entry points for individual books and serials. They may also be useful for sections of websites or even whole websites, offering a level of granularity between search engines and site maps. However, as Browne and Jermy acknowledge, it can be difficult to maintain a back-of-book-style index for a site with constantly changing resources.

The second section of the book is more complex, looking at a broad range of information retrieval topics relating to websites. Chapters cover navigation structures, search engines and the semantic web as well as metadata and thesauri. Publishing issues like usability and content management systems are also discussed. Some of these

topics may not seem like indexing. However, web indexers need to be aware of how their indexing techniques influence (and are influenced by) the search and navigation functions on a website. They may also need to be able to justify the costs of their work in terms of value to website users.

The final chapters summarise the different methods for accessing information on the web and demonstrate the need for human indexers. Appendices include a comprehensive glossary and some basic principles for back-of-book-style indexing (which might also be useful for site maps). Finally there is a polished index which I used successfully when checking my notes.

Website indexing is based on a short web indexing course offered at the University of NSW. It is presented as numerous short sections which means that the text does not always flow smoothly. On the other hand, this makes it more useful for later reference. There are plenty of examples and references to websites. Definitions are provided at useful points in the text although I found it a little disconcerting that the same box style was used for definitions, examples and figures.

I have two quibbles with definitions. Firstly I feel it is incorrect to define 'classification' so narrowly: 'Classification: refers to formal established classification schemes ...'. Classification is a well-established term in information retrieval. For example, Lancaster says 'The fact is that classification, in the broadest sense, permeates all of the activities associated with information storage and

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Presidents'

reports

National President's Report for 2003

The year 2003 was a consolidating year for the National Committee, which saw slow but steady work on a number of initiatives implemented earlier.

The objectives defined in the 2002 Outlook Workshop continued to drive the Society, and the National Executive's work. These included revision of the Constitution; redevelopment of the website; a broadening of the criteria for our Indexing medal (to include other than book indexing, for example); and a re-design of our logo and corporate 'image'.

While none of these projects were completed during the year, they continue to occupy the time of the National and Branch Committees, and some progress has been made.

Biannual Conference

A major undertaking of the year was our biannual conference, with the theme 'Indexing the World of Information', hosted by the NSW Branch. The conference attracted not only our members but also participants from a wide variety of other information industries including information managers, librarians, information architects, technical communicators and editors. It was heartening to see over 40 non-AusSI members from these areas participating in sessions and networking with our members. Thanks to the NSW Branch for a stimulating and enjoyable conference.

Branch Activities

Our branches continue to be active in the year, as evidenced by the separate President's reports submitted from New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT. Susan Rintoul continues to act as a coordinating focal point in South Australia, and Ian Odgers has taken on that role in Queensland. Ling Heang, who has acted in this capacity for Western Australia, will not be continuing as WA Contact for 2004. We thank her for her contribution to the Society over the past few years, and will be seeking a WA contact for the future.

Committees

The Registration Committee (chaired by Michael Harrington) had fewer applications for registration to deal with than in previous years, and this year there were no successful applicants. Registration is a peer review and is based on a consistent level of quality being achieved by applicants. Like the Medal, it does not have to be awarded every time, or every year – and the Committee's role as a reviewing body

helps maintain the Society's reputation for quality indexing and high level indexers.

The Education Committee (no formal chair) did not formally meet this year, but continued to examine options for providing courses to members through exchange of information. The Australian Quality Framework was examined by a number of members, as was the new electronic training package of the British Society of Indexers. The Committee welcomed Glenda Browne as a new member, and farewellled Michael Wyatt as a departing member.

The Medal Subcommittee (chaired by John Simkin) began an examination of options for extending the Medal criteria and awards. This work is continuing. The Subcommittee recommended the Medal be awarded to Garry Cousins and provided details of their deliberations and decisions which are reported separately.

The Fees Subcommittee is still grappling with the possibility of moving to a scaled fee structure to replace our current single recommended rate for indexing. There was no change to the recommended rate for this year.

Two working parties were established at the Outlook Workshop. The Constitution Working Party is examining the provisions of the AusSI Constitution to ensure it is still relevant to our Society's structure and operations. Alan Walker and Shirley Campbell have taken on this task, and we are expecting a final proposal shortly. The Website Working Party, headed by Caroline Colton, will critically examine our website in terms of useability and content. This Working Party was relatively inactive in 2003, as many of the members were involved in organising the Sydney conference;

however a planning meeting to set out objectives and working strategies has been scheduled for early 2004 (note: at the time of publication in mid 2004, this group has advanced significantly in its work).

Awards and Prizes

There were no members who gained Registered Indexer status this year.

Our Indexing Medal was awarded this year to Garry Cousins, who 'scooped the pool' by winning both the Medal and a commendation for his indexing of *Fundamentals of pharmacology : a text for nurses and allied health professionals* and *Dark victory* respectively. A fuller report of the Medal Committee is available.

Committee Positions

In addition to those members elected or appointed to committees at the 2003 Annual General Meeting, a number of committee positions were filled and vacated during the year. Glenda Browne joined the Education Committee and Barry Howarth joined the Registration Committee. Frances Paterson (Newsletter Editor), Michael Wyatt (Membership Secretary and newsletter production), Emeline Haight (Web Manager), and Ling Heang (WA contact) decided not to continue in their positions in 2004. We welcome those filling positions, and thank those vacating posts for their longstanding efforts. In particular, we would like to thank Michael Wyatt, who is retiring not only from Society positions but from our profession. We wish him well in his new fields of endeavour.

One of the strengths of the Australian Society of Indexers is the willingness of members to be actively involved in the

business of the Society. I often receive surprised comments from members of other, larger societies at the high level of activity our 170 members enjoy. For this, we have to thank the generosity of our active members, like those noted above. Our office bearers and committee members at the branch and national levels volunteer considerable amounts of their time to Society business – and time is a precious commodity in our primarily freelance industry. With some key positions being vacated at the end of 2003, we hope others in the Society will come forward to take up these tasks and help ‘spread the load’ of Society work.

Other Activities

The position of National President often involves me in other indexing-related activities. I maintain regular contact with other professional bodies, notably the Australian Society for Technical Communication and various Societies of Editors in Australia. For the past two years, I have been a member of the judging panel which evaluates online annual reports as part of the Government Annual Reports Awards program of the Australian Institute of Public Administration. My comments on the value of indexes, navigation paths and search engines have been well received each year, and hopefully will raise awareness of the need for indexing input into these online publications.

The Australian Society of Indexers also maintains active contact with the other indexing societies worldwide. This year our biennial conference hosted a meeting of representatives from the British, Canadian, American and Australian societies – an event which occurs every 3 years at one of the societies’ conferences. Our meeting in 2003 discussed a number of issues which affect all the societies, including

the possible development of an international ‘best practice in indexing’ website (which looks promising and is being further investigated in England), and a proposal to use or franchise the British Society of Indexers training program (which is still under consideration).

Issues for the Future

Three issues continue to concern the National Committee – one short-term, one medium-term and one long-term.

In the short term, the ‘stalling’ of committee work this year because of other commitments, and the end of year vacancies of Web Manager, Newsletter Editor and Membership Secretary brought home how heavily we rely on the individual work of members, and how much work is involved in keeping the Society active and relevant. It is clear that we need a wider pool of people to call upon for performing key tasks, at all levels. We have strong and sometimes ambitious plans for the future of AusSI, but often need people to help carry them out.

This leads to the medium term concern – our membership. Our membership fluctuates between 170 and 190 members; however, a significant proportion of that figure is transitory – ‘exploring’ people who join AusSI for a year or two, try out the profession, then move on – perhaps to different types of work, or to an industry which can provide more steady employment. They are replaced by others who are ‘testing’ the indexing waters. It is good for the Society to have this steady infusion of new members, but would be better if we could keep them as long-term, contributing members. This is an issue which must be addressed at the national, branch and individual level, and we must all try to devise strategies to increase and retain members.

Which raises the longer-term issue – just what should the role of the Society be? Perhaps if we were clearer about our goals, it would make recruitment of prospective members easier. So the question is: What do we want to do, and how do we want to present ourselves? Of course we wish to alert people to what we do, but where does our Society’s focus lie?

For example, do we see our main role as an awareness raising body (via our brochures and information about indexing on the website)? As a recruitment source for new members (via our membership drives and membership information on the website)? As an agency for getting work for our members (via Indexers Available)? As a training agency (via our courses)? As a self-help group for our existing members (via our branch activities)? We try to do all of these tasks now, and are successful at some, less so at others. With limited membership and a small group of active volunteers, we may not be able to maintain all of these roles equally. Perhaps we should begin now to look carefully at our key roles and functions, and how we can position our society to attain them.

Conclusion

These, then, have been the achievements of 2003 and the challenges for the future. I would like to thank all the members of the National Committee, the State Branch Committees, our State Contacts, and our appointed position holders for their work and support in the past year. I look forward to working with all of them on behalf of our members in 2004.

Lynn Farkas

President
Australian Society of Indexers

ACT President’s Report for 2003

2003 was a busy year. We had a mix of training sessions, social events, post mortems on annual report indexes and the Sydney conference and a joint discussion on education and training with the Society of Editors.

As well as Michael Harrington’s workshop on annual report indexing in June, Glenda Browne conducted a full day web indexing course and we have

just completed Max McMaster’s Introduction to indexing course which was split in two because of the interest. Altogether more than 40 people came to our training sessions, most of whom were not indexers, but who could see the necessity for indexes.

In July we had our winter dinner at the Bamboo Hut, Deakin, at which Amanda Horne spoke on knowledge

management. This was a very well attended function. Also on the periphery of indexing was a talk by Lynn Farkas and Jill Buckley-Smith of Health Incite on 2 April, on information architecture. This was of particular interest to technical communicators. In the same month editors and indexers came together to discuss the problems and seek solutions to education and

training in our disciplines. We attended a meeting of the Canberra Society of Editors and gave a brief history of our societies. Unfortunately our own indexing members were not regular attenders at our functions. The two post mortems - the follow-up to the National conference and a discussion on annual report indexing, both held in October, attracted few members other than the committee.

The National Conference in Sydney in September attracted 14 participants from the ACT, 10 of whom were members of the society. The Branch paid \$50 to each attendee from the

society to help defray transport costs, which was well received.

Our Christmas barbecue at Lennox Gardens allowed families to enjoy the food, the fellowship, the sunshine and the birdlife in a beautiful setting. A fitting end to the year.

I think that in this coming year we will have to look at our activities to see if we can attract more participation from our members. Maybe we need more free meetings, to discuss specific indexing topics - back-of-book indexing, database indexing and web indexing. We have the necessary funds

to give us the opportunity to try different things. We are interested in seeing how the Victorian mentorship program works, for example.

Finally I would like to thank all the members of the committee for their ideas, help, and enthusiasm. Everyone has contributed to the full, participated in all our activities, found free venues for our courses and talks. I would particularly like to thank Edyth for her untiring support as secretary.

Geraldine Triffitt

President

Victorian President's Report for 2003

Activities

Six activities were offered to members this year.

Following the AGM for the year 2002 held in February 2003, where the national AusSI President, Lynn Farkas, outlined some aims and ideas for the national branch over the next few years, the year kicked off with a full house of members and non-members attending a March activity about the classification, cataloguing and indexing procedures involved in fingerprinting, and matching fingerprints to suspects.

Ian Forrester, Senior Fingerprint Expert with the Victoria Police addressed a public meeting at ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research). It was his first power-point presentation and his presentation coupled with crime-scene charts he brought with him kept his audience enthralled.

Our May activity held at ACER was a professional development activity, specifically designed for those who were interested in starting up an indexing business or had just recently done so. Pam Jonas, a former Managing Editor for a variety of book publishers, and experienced indexer and trainer Max Mc Master, and experienced indexer and editor Ann Philpott led a panel discussion, chaired by indexer and editor Karen Gillen. A wide variety of advice was offered on topics such as getting into indexing and obtaining your first and second index, how to quote, and staying in business, before the discussion was opened up to the floor,

where the audience asked the panel their own questions.

Our June activity was a visit to The Herald and Weekly Times Library and Customer Service Centre at Southbank, where Manager Leanne Easey took an eager collection of AusSI members around her library's collection of text and pictorial reference material. This library has two primary functions: the first is to provide reference services to HWT staff such as journalists, editors, photographer and advertisers, and the second function is to archive the newspaper, both text and photographs. We were shown how they search their databases and how they physically inspect old photographs and negatives, dating back to when the library commenced in 1922.

Our October activity was a popular panel discussion on the topic of 'Classification and indexing', also held at ACER. Panellists were Susan Liepa, Max McMaster and Fiona Mottram, and the discussion was chaired by Ann Philpott. Susan, who operates her own consultancy and project management business focusing predominantly on Victorian public libraries, gave a presentation on the topic 'Indexing to simulate library circulation'. In her role as Library Management System Project Manager for the merger of the Vision Australia Library and the National Information Library, she has overseen the planning, co-ordination and specification of the merger of the data from the joint RBS (Royal Blind Society)/RVIB (Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind) with the

data from the Vision Australia Library into a combined database to be managed by a single library management system. Her topic generated much interest from the audience.

Indexer and trainer Max McMaster then spoke about a project he had worked on that involved using classification principles to index material rather than using conventional indexing principles. Samples of this project were projected onto overhead transparencies, and a number of questions from the floor were taken.

Indexer and former librarian and town planner Fiona Mottram gave an entertaining and insightful account of her impressions as a first-time AusSI conference participant at the Sydney conference in September run by AusSI, NSW, entitled 'Indexing the world of information' as well as an account of how she obtained her first and second indexing jobs in the field of donkeys, a subject area in which she has much expertise.

Our November activity was a fascinating afternoon tour of the current displays and images collection at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. The afternoon tour commenced with Curator Daisy Searls taking the group through the current exhibition of displays commemorating Victoria Police's history, explaining the various items and exhibits of police memorabilia as she went. Richard Barnden, a volunteer of many years, then introduced the group to the print and non-print material held by the RHSV.

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria is moving from card catalogues to computer-based registries and is always seeking volunteers to assist with the indexing of their many files and collections. They use the database DB Textworks as it indexes all text, has good reporting capabilities and query screens, and have adapted this software to meet their own specific requirements.

The Images Room was the next port of call. It contained framed artworks on cyclone fencing screens, a William Barak painting, as well as a unique collection of photographs, glass slides, stereographs and so on. All in all, a wonderful experience for those who attended.

All activities offered by AusSI, Victoria, have an optional dinner for members and speakers to attend after each event, and many members and speakers have taken up this pleasant way of continuing discussion after each of our events this year.

Our Christmas activity for 2003 was at the King and I Thai Restaurant in Balwyn in December. Members enjoyed catching up and celebrating with a Thai banquet and free drinks, courtesy of AusSI, Victoria.

Other happenings

In September two committee members of AusSI, Victoria, Max McMaster and Jenny Restarick were interviewed by journalist Jane Sullivan for an article about indexers and the craft of indexing, which subsequently appeared in *The Sunday Age*, 5 October 2003, Agenda section. It was a good opportunity to help raise interest in indexing and AusSI as a professional association for indexers.

A question-and-answer section about any aspect of indexing appeared in AusSI's monthly newsletter. This was an initiative of the Victorian committee to see if there was any interest from the general membership in submitting or responding to questions about any professional or business matter concerning the practice of indexing. To date this has not been developed further due to lack of member interest.

Mentoring scheme: a pilot project

As part of the Victorian branch's educational strategy, and as a way of helping indexers who have completed courses on indexing to become registered indexers, a pilot project to mentor new book indexers or trainee book indexers was implemented in 2003. The project is under the auspices of the Mentoring Sub-committee and is chaired by Max McMaster.

Under the scheme five trainee indexers (known as 'mentees') were given the opportunity to select a book or journal published without an index from titles identified by staff at the State Library of Victoria and Monash University as being worthy candidates for indexing. To date four of the five mentees have completed their first index under supervision of their mentor; the fifth mentee's index is nearing completion and another of the mentees has completed two indexes.

The completed indexes are to be published by the Victorian branch under the proposed name of 'Australian Society of Indexers, Index Series'. Published indexes will then be sold to libraries and institutions that hold in their collections the original book on which the index is based. It is anticipated that once mentees have completed two or three titles through the mentoring scheme, they will have had sufficient grounding in indexing to be able to move out on their own. Both mentees and mentors are to be paid a small fee for their contribution to this series.

2005 Melbourne conference

A Conference Sub-committee has been formed under the chairperson of Margaret Findlay for preparing and delivering an AusSI conference in Melbourne in 2005. Work is under way with sub-committee members considering a number of possible venues for this conference. The dates for the conference are still to be decided.

Thanks to committee and volunteer members

As outgoing President of AusSI, I would like to send words of special thanks to all who have served on the committee

this year: Jenny Restarick (as Vice President and Activities Coordinator), Fiona Mottram (as Secretary), Margaret Findlay (as Treasurer and Chairperson of the Conference Sub-committee), Max McMaster (as Trainer and Chairperson of the Mentoring Sub-committee), Elizabeth Wood-Ellem (who retired mid-way through the year, but is renominating for the 2004 committee), and general committee members who helped in a variety of local and national ways for AusSI: John Simkin, Jane Oliver, Karen Gillen and Kerry Biram. Fiona (who has travelled from near Foster in South Gippsland to take the Minutes at committee meetings) and Kerry have served AusSI, Victoria, with enthusiasm this year and are retiring from the committee for personal and business reasons, but remain members of the Society.

In addition to welcoming Elizabeth Wood-Ellem back to the committee in 2004, I welcome the following new general members to the 2004 committee: Catherine Tully, Julie Forrest and Jane Purton. I hope their time on the committee will be as enjoyable and rewarding as mine has been.

I would like to send a special word of thanks to our retiring archivist, Jean Hagger. Jean, a life member, has been the Society's archivist since the Society's inception in the 1970s. She has maintained the committee records up to 2000 and performed this service with distinction. The records are kept at the State Library of Victoria.

I am retiring from the committee to concentrate my energies on developing my business further.

I have served on the committee for the past four years as President in 2003 and as Treasurer (2000–2002) overseeing the change to an ABN and GST set-up (as well as an earlier stint from 1995 to 1998 as a general member including a time as newsletter editor from 1995 to 1996).

I have enjoyed my time supporting AusSI in this manner, and will continue to do so as a general member.

Ann M. Philpott
President

Annual general meetings

Australian Society of Indexers (National) Annual General Meeting

Report of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 23 March 2004 at 7.30pm at The Brassey of Canberra, Belmore Gardens, Barton.

The meeting was held in a Victorian-style room furnished in crimson and dark green, and attended by 26 people: 18 members including Garry Cousins from the NSW branch and Max McMaster from the Victorian branch, as well as the speaker and several partners and friends. It had been hoped that the Vice-President, Clodagh Jones from Tasmania would be able to be present, but this was not possible due to her ill health.

The committee for 2004 is as follows:

Elected members

President	Lynn Farkas
Vice-President	Clodagh Jones
Hon. Secretary	Shirley Campbell
Hon. Treasurer	Penelope Whitten
Committee member	Barry Howarth

Ex-officio members

President NSW Branch	Caroline Colton
President ACT Region Branch	Geraldine Triffitt
President Vic Branch	Max McMaster
Chairman Registration Panel	Michael Harrington
Webmaster	Jon Jermey
Membership Secretary	Joanna McLachlan
Editor Newsletter	Vacant

Co-opted members

Chairman Medal Subcommittee	John Simkin
Chairman Education Subcommittee	Vacant

The president, Lynn Farkas, spoke of the consolidation work done by the national committee in 2003, following the transfer of the national executive from NSW to ACT in 2002. She thanked the 2003 committee, in particular Robert Hyslop, who is retiring from the committee.

The treasurer's report was tabled, showing expenditure of \$15,139, including conference sponsorship, administration and the cost of special meetings, and an end-of-year balance of \$20,942.

A motion was put forward to award Honorary Life Membership to Michael Wyatt of the NSW Branch. A testimonial written by Alan Walker and Garry Cousins was read out. The motion was carried unanimously and the Honorary Life Membership was awarded in Michael's absence.

The presentation of the AusSI medal followed. The panel of judges report was read and all the books nominated for the

award were tabled for members to examine. The winner was Garry Cousins for his index to the 4th edition of *Fundamentals of Pharmacology*. The President presented the medal to Garry, who responded with a speech of thanks.

The meeting was declared closed and the annual general meeting of the ACT Region Branch followed.

Australian Society of Indexers (ACT Region Branch) Annual General Meeting

The following committee was elected:

President:	Geraldine Triffitt.
Secretary:	Edyth Binkowski.
Treasurer:	No nominations were received but Sandra Henderson was later appointed.
Committee:	Lynn Farkas (ex officio as National President), Joan Merrell, Susan White

The president, Geraldine Triffitt, reported on the ACT Region Branch activities. A mixture of social and business activities included courses on web-indexing, annual report indexing and back-of-book indexing; talks on knowledge management and information architecture; and social functions such as a joint meeting with the Society of Editors, and a Christmas barbecue brunch. Geraldine thanked the committee, especially the secretary and Robert Hyslop, who is retiring from the committee.

The treasurer's report was tabled showing a closing balance of \$15,888.

After a delicious dinner, the speaker was Victor Crittenden, who has been a librarian, bibliographer and indexer all his life. He retired some years ago from the position of chief librarian of the University of Canberra. Victor runs one of the few private presses in Canberra, specialising in nineteenth century Australian literature. He told us how he had compiled bibliographies and indexes to books and magazines which had no index, and that this interest had developed early in his life. He has published many of his bibliographies, either as books or articles in journals. His most touching story was not about indexing but about his father, who as a young man had fought in World War I, and had been buried alive when a bomb had exploded killing most of his fellow soldiers. He survived, having been dug out but this experience obviously affected the rest of his life and those of his family.

Lynn Farkas thanked Victor on behalf of us all, and this concluded the formal part of the evening.

Edyth Binkowski

ACT Region Branch Secretary

Honorary Life Membership

Nomination of Michael Wyatt as Honorary Life Member of the Australian Society of Indexers

The Society's Constitution provides for the award of Honorary Life Membership in recognition of outstanding service to indexing and/or to the Society. Honorary Life Members have full membership rights without being required to pay membership fees.

We wish to nominate Michael Wyatt for this award, and provide the following testimonial. If the nomination is accepted by the National Committee, a motion for the award should be presented to the Annual General Meeting, for voting by members, where a two-thirds majority will apply.

Testimonial

Michael Wyatt has recently announced his decision to retire from indexing, a profession in which he has worked full-time for nearly twenty years.

Michael has made major contributions to the Society throughout his indexing career, as a committee member and more often than not in time-consuming roles such as Membership Secretary, conference and workshop organisation, and the editing, desktop publishing and distribution of the *Newsletter*.

He has been an active member of professional societies with related interests, such as the Society of Editors (NSW), which he has served as President and Membership Secretary, and the Galley Club of Sydney. His links with associated societies have been invaluable for AusSI.

In the late 1980s Michael was instrumental in getting indexing courses

going in NSW, designing and teaching the first courses, and continuing to teach courses at the University of New South Wales, Macquarie University and Macleay College until last year.

He was also instrumental in establishing the NSW Branch of AusSI, which he has served as an office-bearer for over fifteen years, and to which he has contributed a great deal of time and expertise.

Michael has always been innovative and imaginative in proposing projects for the Society and for the profession generally. His curiosity in investigating and using new technology has been invaluable to the Society, yet has always been tempered by his keen sense of what was practical. He has helped many indexers with his tutelage and advice, and through his many published articles in the *AusSI Newsletter* and his contributions to indexers' discussion lists. He is recognised internationally for his knowledge of indexing software, and is appreciated by many for his willingness to record and share his knowledge.

In recognition of these contributions, which have gone far beyond the call of duty, we are happy to nominate Michael as a worthy Honorary Life Member of the Society.

*Alan Walker
Garry Cousins*

Dinner in Honour of Michael Wyatt

In May the NSW Branch held a dinner in honour of Michael Wyatt. Michael has sadly left the indexing industry to become a *barista in Katoomba*.

Michael was one of the leading lights in the early years establishing the NSW Branch of AusSI. Over a fifteen year period he served in many official capacities including President and Newsletter editor and desktop publisher.

Michael was also heavily involved in teaching indexing. He designed and taught many courses and workshops including courses at the University of New South Wales, Macquarie University and Macleay College.

The dinner was held at the Arjuna Indian Restaurant in Katoomba on a typically cold blustery mountain's night. It was very cosy inside however, with eleven people gathered to share good conversation, fine wine and excellent food.

Michael was presented with an Honorary Life Membership of the Australian Society of Indexers by the National Committee. The Victorian Branch made a gift of a wonderful book of international food writing titled *Choice Cuts* edited by Mark Kurlansky, and the NSW Branch made a gift of wooden A and Z bookends to keep the book in its rightful place on the shelf.

Michael was rather taken aback by the occasion expressing his thanks to everyone present and the Society for the recognition it had made to his indexing career.

For indexers visiting Katoomba, you can find Michael at his café, the Parakeet at the south end of Katoomba Street.

Caroline Colton
President (NSW Branch)

Indexers' Medal 2003

Report of the Panel of Judges

The standard of the works submitted for the 2003 award indicates that the entrants generally heeded the comments in reports from earlier years regarding the guidelines which require that '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'. Furthermore 'indexes are judged at the level of outstanding professional achievement'.

The entries were:

The Australian garden: Designing with Australian plants, by Diana Snape (Blooming's Books, 2002)

This index was limited by the subject and presentation of the work which made it inevitable that there would be many similar entries and not much

scope for the indexer to add those elements which would have made it more amenable to the browser. On the other hand the book itself, its text and illustrations, are fine browsing material. Within this limitation this index is a careful and accurate piece of work.

Many voices: Reflections on experiences of indigenous child separation, edited by Doreen Mellor and Anna Hoebich (National Library of Australia, 2002)

Unearthed: The Aboriginal Tasmanians of Kangaroo Island, by Rebe Taylor (Wakefield Press, 2002)

These two entries on Aboriginal topics suffered from overlong strings of references caused by using general headings which could have been subdivided or which could have been distributed among more specific and appropriate headings. The result of these strings was to reduce the effectiveness and readability of otherwise well considered work.

Trace gas exchange in forest ecosystems, edited by Rainer Gasche, Hans Papen and Heinz Rennenberg (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002)

This book is one of the 'Tree physiology' series. Skillful editing has built a logical pattern to the work rather than providing an array of disconnected papers, so that the use of terminology is consistent providing a secure basis from which the indexer could work. The indexer has taken advantage of this. The index has many botanical and chemical entries. The subheadings are well composed giving precisely the right amount of detail. In a few cases there are undifferentiated strings of

references where there was an apparent reluctance to go to a second level of subheading.

Dark victory, by David Marr and Marian Wilkinson (Allen & Unwin, 2003)

This is a topical study of the politics of 'boat people' starting with the controversy over the Tampa affair. A reading of the index especially by those wishing to pursue particular aspects of the subject, is enlightening. The entries under key characters, e.g. John Howard and Peter Reith, and subjects, e.g. BASARNAS (Indonesian rescue authority) and Pacific Solution, make exciting reading. The indexer has handled what is a proliferation of acronyms effectively by entering under full name as well as acronym. In this he was aided by the authors who included a well compiled glossary. All checks confirmed the complete consistency of the indexing. The indexer, Garry Cousins, is highly commended.

Fundamentals of pharmacology: A text for nurses and allied health professionals, by Alan Galbraith, Shane Bullock and Elizabeth Manias 4th edition (Pearson Education Australia, 2004)

Previous editions of this work were indexed by the authors. Since the work has expanded considerably the publishers wisely decided to employ a professional indexer to start afresh. The book is a very dense, 1000 page text containing details of all the drugs currently available in Australia and New Zealand, their mechanisms of action, clinical application and adverse effects. The indexer has weaved his way through the drug names and brands, many of which are very similar, without faltering. At the same time he has used headings and subheadings which provide the information needed to exactly identify the subjects and aspects described and are pitched at a level entirely suitable for the target readership while still being accessible to the lay reader. The indexer, Garry Cousins, is congratulated for this fine work and is awarded the Australian Society of Indexers Medal for 2003.

Ann Bentley (Librarian)
Pam Jonas (Editor)
Max McMaster (Indexer)
John Simkin (Chairman)

Medal Winner's Acceptance Speech

Fellow indexers and friends,

It is with great pleasure that I accept this medal tonight. To also be this year's runner-up is a double honour. I would first like to thank the panel of assessors for their vote of confidence in me: it is always gratifying to receive recognition of one's work from one's peers, and especially so for a freelance indexer, since, as those of you who are freelancers will know, it is a rather solitary occupation.

I would also like to thank my editors: Kathryn Fairfax from Pearson Education, and Rebecca Kaiser from Allen & Unwin, both of whom submitted my indexes without my knowledge, which made the honour of receiving the medal a completely unexpected surprise.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank the person I regard as my mentor in indexing: Alan Walker. Most of you probably do not know that Alan took me under his wing as an apprentice indexer back in 1988, and I worked with him for over a year before branching out on my own. His patience and willingness to impart his knowledge set me in good stead when the time came to hang out my own shingle as a freelance indexer. I count myself as very lucky to have had that opportunity: I don't think I would be an indexer today if it were not for Alan, and I am sure that I would not be standing here tonight as winner of the medal without the benefit of his tuition and support.

I would like to say a few brief words about the winning indexes. The medal winner, *Fundamentals of Pharmacology*,

4th edition, by Alan Galbraith, Shane Bullock and Elizabeth Manias is a book of just over 1000 pages. It was certainly a challenge to index, not only because of its size, but also because of the thousands of drug names it contained, many of which began with Greek letters, numbers and single letters. I also had to bear in mind that the text was for students, most of whom would not be familiar with conventions regarding the naming of drugs.

It was particularly gratifying for me to receive the medal for this index because it was not the first time I had indexed it. About ten years ago I indexed a previous edition of the same book, under less than ideal conditions. The index turned out OK, but I had to work within severe time constraints, and I was also experimenting at the time with using sub-contractors to help with the indexing. Not to put too fine a point on it, it was a disaster, mainly because I am such a fuss-pot that I spent so much time checking the work of the other indexers that I completely defeated the purpose of using them in the first place! This time the work was completely my own, and even though time was tight (five weeks), it was ample, even though they were an intense five weeks! So I feel that this time I was able to get it right.

The index which was runner-up was for a book about the Tampa incident by David Marr and Marian Wilkinson: *Dark Victory*. This was a fascinating read for me, not least because I had been overseas in the Himalayas at the time the Tampa incident occurred, and so I was coming to much of the story for the first time. When the *Australian Book Review* reviewed the book, the reviewer mentioned that the index "read like a

tart novella”, so I would like to think that the pleasure I had in indexing it was reflected in the index.

One of the things Alan Walker taught me was the value of humour in indexes (he once told me that he tries to put at least one joke in each index he does), and I have carried on that tradition in both of my indexes here. The joke in the *Fundamentals of Pharmacology* is a little risqué. At one point the text talks about drug therapies for the treatment of premature ejaculation in men, and mentions the efficacy of the anaesthetic drug lignocaine, saying that for the most part it is very effective, except in a few extreme cases, where men “have said they felt that their penis had disappeared before they looked to check”. I put an entry in the index under “penis, apparent disappearance of”. As far as I know, the editor missed it.

The joke in *Dark Victory* was spotted by the editor, who thought it very funny, and also by the reviewer in the *Australian Book Review*. It concerns Admiral Chris Barrie. Some weeks after the Tampa episode, when nearly everyone concerned with the incident (politicians and naval personnel alike) had conceded that there was no evidence to suggest that any children had been thrown overboard, Admiral Barrie stuck to his guns, insisting that there was no evidence that children had *not* been thrown overboard. Eventually at a press conference, however, even he had to concede that there was no evidence, prompting the journalist Laurie Oakes to ask him if he now felt like a dill. I put an entry in the index which reads: “Barrie, Chris, considers whether he is a dill”.

Thank you.

Garry Cousins

News from the branches

Victorian Branch

We are just about to call for expressions of interest for the next batch of Victorian mentees, to join the mentoring scheme. To be eligible you need to have attended an intermediate-level indexing course, or at least have the same level of expertise, and not be a registered indexer. We are considering having a group of mentees indexing a worthwhile nineteenth century journal/magazine which doesn't already have an index. Details are still being finalised at this stage. If you are interested in being considered for the scheme please contact Max McMaster (mindexer@optusnet.com.au) or (03) 9500 8715.

Vic Branch is organising the next Australian Society of Indexers Conference, to be held in Melbourne, 18-19 March, 2005. The Conference is being held at Rydges Riverwalk (about 10 minutes out of the city). A call for papers/expression of interest form is included in this Newsletter. Don't be bashful, there is a diverse range of 'indexing' topics, so there must be something of interest. Even if your burning issue doesn't seem to fit in, don't worry, we'll make it fit. We have managed to squeeze in cookery indexing, so there is plenty of scope!

Max McMaster

President

Victorian Branch Excursion

Visit to State Library of Victoria Wednesday 7 April 2004

A large group of indexers and friends spent an enjoyable afternoon exploring and playing with the many and varied indexing tools now readily available to the public in the newly renovated State Library of Victoria in Swanston Street, Melbourne.

Our tour guide, Jennifer Gissing, led us through areas such as the Cowen Gallery, the Trescowthick Information Centre, the La Trobe Reading Room (Australiana), the Helen Macpherson Smith Genealogy Centre and the Herald & Weekly Times Limited Newspaper Reading Room.

Taking them separately:

The courtyard which now houses the Genealogy Collection was completed in 1995, the first of four courtyards to be constructed as part of the redevelopment project. It opened as the Genealogy Centre in 2003.

Trescowthick Information Centre was the home of the newspaper reading room from 1913-1980. This area retains some original architectural features such as the elegant fan-ribbed roof. The information centre, opened in 1997, was the first public area of the Library specifically designed around computer technology.

The Herald & Weekly Times Ltd Newspaper Reading Room opened in mid-1998. The reading room is located in the second courtyard to be completed during the redevelopment. Indexes housed here include card indexes to *The Sun* and to *The Herald* newspapers. In the past some of us were delighted to handle bound volumes of the Argus newspaper when we were indexing from the original elephant folio editions from 1859 through to 1909. Now we can handle the bound published decennial indexes covering several decades of the missing period. This major indexing project, which began in Victoria's sesquicentenary year, is progressing well towards completion.

La Trobe Reading Room

The best known and most impressive architectural feature of the Library, the Domed Reading Room, was opened in 1913. The octagonal building consists of a basement, ground floor, first floor reading room and four gallery levels. It was designed to contain over half a million volumes and provide accommodation for 320 readers.

NSW Branch

The domed building, occupying a site 220 feet square, is built of brick, ferro-concrete and glass and has double walls forming an annulus 16 feet wide. The reading room is 114 feet in both diameter and height. The original skylights in the dome were covered in 1959 because of water leakage problems and copper sheathing was installed on the dome's exterior at this time.

The Domed Reading Room closed to the public in late 1999 for a program of major renovation works that included creation of exhibition galleries and reinstatement of glass to the skylights in the dome. It was reopened in 2003 as the La Trobe Reading Room, housing the Library's Australiana collection.

We also saw the Cowen Gallery which houses many paintings from the Library's Picture Collection devoted to historical pictures of Melbourne and its civic worthies; the Redmond Barry Reading Room (formerly McCoy Hall); the Heritage Collections Reading Room; the M.V. Anderson Chess Collection; the Maps Collection; the Picture Collection and the Rare Books Collection.

To our amazement and delight, Jennifer showed us the many indexes available to both online and "real" visitors who wish to delve into these wonderful collections. Access to them is well signposted and clearly labelled. On microfiche is the Australian architectural index by Miles Lewis, of Melbourne University Architecture Department, that indexes journals by architect as well as location and building. Several sequences of in-house card indexes have been compiled by Library staff from a variety of published sources over a number of years. These unique indexes provide references to biographical, subject, shipping, local history and pictorial sources in a variety of published books, newspapers, journals and also to in-house files. Some of the information previously on cards is available on the Australiana Index that can be searched online via the State Library of Victoria Library web site at www.statelibrary.vic.gov.au. All indexing is now done on-line.

The Main Catalogue of books, journals, newspapers, video recordings, music, maps and oral history can be searched via the web site. Registered users can pre-order many of the items from home. Many of the photographs, prints and drawings held in the Picture Collection have been digitised and can be viewed online via the Pictures Catalogue. Catalogue entries for approximately half of the Australian Manuscripts Collection can be searched online via the Manuscripts Catalogue.

I have spent much time since our visit searching these online treasures and am amazed at what I am picking up - thank you Jennifer for both whetting our appetites and showing off this wonderful building and its fantastic collections now readily available in such user-friendly circumstances.

Jenny Restarick

ACT Region Branch

On 22 July 2004 the ACT Region Branch Committee held an early evening function to thank those who have helped us in the past and to welcome some who may be able to use our services and advice in the future.

We cast our net wide, hoping to attract editors, publishers, technical communicators, people involved with writing annual reports, and potential mentors. We also invited the AusSI National Committee, three of whom were able to attend. About twenty people gathered in the Visitors Lounge of the National Archives in the Parliamentary Triangle. Geraldine Triffitt, ACT Region Branch President,

made a brief speech of welcome and thanks. There were several editors present, some of whom have offered work to ACT indexers, as well as National Archives staff, and a member of the PC Users Group which has made venues available to us. We were also fortunate to have two members of the Institute of Public Administration Australia, ACT Division with us. This institute organises seminars each year for the public service, including an annual seminar on writing annual reports. In the ACT the indexing of annual reports is very important, as it is compulsory for an annual report to have an index. Many of us, and indexers further afield, are in great demand in

The new committee elected in March hit the ground running. The two main areas of endeavour have been the fostering of a relationship with staff at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney. The Powerhouse does of course keep a lot of records and they are examining ways in which indexing can assist in collection management. The Committee is looking at the possibility of putting together a panel that would include both indexers and curators. The aim is to share knowledge and nut out ways of optimising indexes, thesauri and classifications for the Powerhouse and museums in general.

The Committee is also engaged in project managing the re-development of the AusSI web site. This is a big job and will likely continued into 2005.

A web site survey is now ready and members should receive this in their post box soon. We hope a lot of our members will fill in the survey as this will provide invaluable information to the project team. To have some fun around we are putting all survey respondents into a \$70 book voucher draw.

Later in the year we will also be asking interested members to contribute to focus groups for web usability. This is an important task as it enables the project team to test web designs.

We are very fortunate to have Helen Skewes on the Committee. Helen is experienced in information architecture (IA) and web usability and has significantly progressed the web design project.

Caroline Colton
President (NSW Branch)

August and September for this work. We are delighted that the IPAA has now suggested that an indexer speak at the 2005 annual reports seminar.

Because we were a small group we could circulate and thus ensure that any newcomers could become familiar with what an indexer's work involves. We enjoyed delicious nibbles, served by two charming and helpful young men. We hope to be able to organise similar functions in the future in order to renew current contacts and to make new contacts.

Edyth Binkowski
ACT Region Branch Secretary

South Australian Representative

South Australia continues with few members, but generally ones working in the field. Members are cordially invited to attend Society of Editors (SA) meetings as we are affiliated with them. Please see the Society's web site <http://www.editors-sa.org.au> for details of future meetings.

Susan Rintoul
seaview@seaviewpress.com.au

Queensland Representative

I would be pleased to hear from members in Queensland who would be interested in a forum of some kind or simply for an exchange of news and views. I worked for some years as a database indexer (mainly agricultural and natural resources sciences) from home while I was living in Melbourne, and now I'm continuing that work on a full-time contract while relocated in the subtropical splendour of the Sunshine Coast. I was involved with AusSI previously some years ago when I was a member of the Victorian Committee.

Ian Odgers
Ph (07) 5448 3001 (w & h)
igo@keypoint.com.au

AusSI in New Zealand

We are fortunate in having a small but steady number of New Zealand indexers who have been members of the Australian Society of Indexers for a number of years. Recently Max McMaster has been visiting New Zealand for a series of training sessions, and found interest in indexing higher than anticipated. On his last visit, he arranged meetings in Auckland and Wellington to discuss the formation of a New Zealand branch with prospective members.

The meeting in Auckland on 6 July 2004 attracted 12 attendees, with another 5 interested but unable to attend. In Wellington on 10 July 8 people attended, with another 8 apologies. At each meeting, Max outlined the purpose, structure and activities of AusSI as well as the requirements for forming a Branch. The meetings then canvassed a number of issues. These included:

- how a NZ branch could operate
- the logistics of one or a number of branches for the islands
- a New Zealand page on the AusSI website
- a possible name change for AusSI (how about ANZSI – Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers?), and

- forging links with other New Zealand groups like librarians, records managers and the Local Publishers Forum (including editors).

There was great enthusiasm for the concept of a New Zealand Branch and people at both meetings agreed to continue carrying on discussions about the practical aspects of Branch formation. Linley Stone from Auckland (for the northern group) and Tordis Flath from Nelson (for the southern group) are acting as provisional coordinators. We hope to have a proposal from New Zealand in the near future and would welcome the idea of a New Zealand Branch for our Society.

Our thanks to Max McMaster for initiating this idea and organising the meetings.

News flash!

A letter has just been received from Tordis Flath making a formal approach to the Australian Society of Indexers to form one Branch in New Zealand.

From the Literature... and other thoughts

Glenda Browne

How do you make a million dollars as an indexer?

(Answer at bottom of page 26)

Technology Review May 21 2004

Researchers from Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) have created a system called ScentIndex which generates custom indexes in response to user keyword searches <http://www.technologyreview.com/articles/rnb_052104.asp?trk=nl>. The system's algorithm uses a co-occurrence matrix to extract entries from a manually created index that are conceptually relevant to the keywords. The ScentIndex made an e-book quicker and easier to search than the physical book.

Cookbook Indexing

I presented a brief training session on cookbook indexing to ACP (*Australian Women's Weekly and Gourmet*). I found *Indexing from A to Z* by Hans Wellisch very helpful, as well as the Culinary Indexing Special Interest Group of ASI website (www.culinaryindexing.org). It links to a number of articles and book chapters about cookbook indexing. Cynthia Bertelsen's article 'A piece of cake?' lists many online dictionaries ranging from the 'Beer term dictionary' through 'Cajun cooking terms' to 'Scottish food and drink'.

***i-Torque*, i.11 January 2004**

This issue of *i-Torque* starts with an interesting well-expounded excerpt on 'Indexing the simple metatopic' (ie, overall topic of the book) from DoMi Stauber's new book 'Facing the text: content and structure in book indexing'. Details of the book are at www.DoMiStauberIndexing.com.

***i-Torque*, i.12 February 2004**

In an article on offshoring, Nancy Mulvany notes that database indexing work for Thomson Gale has moved from California to India, and that the legal publisher West (also part of Thomson Corp) has outsourced legal work to India. Since the Indian legal system is based on British common law, this means the Indian lawyers have to be trained in US law. (Somewhere like the Philippines would perhaps have been a better choice.) These examples indicate that offshoring is progressing beyond IT and call centre-type jobs. *Australian IT* ('IT outsourcing makes sense, globally, 19 January 2004) reports that Australia has net gains from offshoring, with India (to which Telstra IT jobs are going) identified as a potential market for service exports.

***i-Torque*, i.15 May/June 2004**

Gale Rhoades (North American publisher of Macrex) discusses useful equipment for indexers including:

- uninterruptible power supplies
- shredders
- multifunction fax, copier, printer, scanners
- broadband and firewalls (eg ZoneAlarm)
- backup systems
- WiFi networking
- USB hubs

***IASC/SCAD Bulletin* v.26 n.4 Winter 2003/04**

This issue contains a detailed report by Noeline Bridge on the AusSI conference 'Indexing the world of information' (pp. 5-7).

***IASC/SCAD Bulletin* v.27 n.1 Spring 2004**

Donna Kynaston (a records manager for the WHO in Geneva) reviewed the Information Today/ASI publication *Genealogy and Indexing*, edited by Kathleen Spaltro (pp. 10-11; <<http://books.infotoday.com/books/Genealogy/Indexing.shtml>>. She concludes '*Genealogy and Indexing* is a good introduction to the special requirements of genealogical indexing, and a good place to start exploring specific aspects of the subject in more detail.'

Indexing rates

Setting the AusSI recommended indexing rate is very difficult because there are so many different jobs, levels of indexing skill, and so on. If the rate is set for a 'competent' indexer, then a beginner might expect to get less, and an experienced indexer should get more. Some fields of indexing (eg web-related) and some clients (eg corporate) may also pay better than traditional book publishers.

It is also important to be able to translate an hourly rate into a page or word rate for a certain type of book. For example, page rates might range from \$1 for a simple children's book with few words per page, to \$12 for a complex medical text. This would provide editors with a rough guide to the expected cost of an index to a particular book, and would give indexers guidance to the 'going rates' for categories of indexes such as annual reports or looseleaf updates.

I have recently heard two interesting comments on the way pay rates are perceived. An editor who employs freelance indexers and editors said that clients expect a society's recommended rate to be about 20% higher than the rate they actually expect to be paid. This means that if our recommended rate is \$45 per hour this might be perceived as saying we'd love \$45 per hour but would be happy with less than \$40. Another client asked me 'Are there 60 minutes in your hour?' She had found that IT staff she had worked with thought that 45 minutes work deserved an hour's pay.

***Offpress* February 2004**

In the last 'From the Literature' I mentioned a discussion by John Kerr (*Offpress* November 2003) on pay rates for editors compared with pay rates for historians. The February 2004 issue of *Offpress* noted the death of John Kerr on 26 November 2003 (p. 6). It also noted the award of the Order of Australia to editor Barbara Ker Wilson.

Parakeet Café

The *Blue Mountains Gazette* regularly carries advertisements for the Parakeet Café, Katoomba (not to be confused with the Paragon), now run by indexer and ex-AusSI Membership Secretary Michael Wyatt and his partner. During the recent music festival, indexer and 2003 AusSI Newsletter Editor Frances Paterson launched her Latin-style CD 'Strange Attractors' at the café.

***Online Currents* v.19 n.3 April 2004**

This issue has an article by Katie Wilson (pp. 3-4, 6-8) on Microsoft Office's Research pane, which gives easy access from Microsoft programs to reference tools including thesauri, translation services, and research sites such as E-library. I have written two articles on thesaurus construction software. The first one, in this issue, focuses on TermTree (pp. 10-12) while the one in the next issue covers MultiTees and WebChoir. Jon Jermy discusses micropayments on the web (pp. 16-17) and Colin Fong discusses the good and the improvable in free legal websites including AustLII, SCALEplus and LawLink (pp. 22-31).

NOIE will be split into AGIMO and OIE at DCITA which will manage ITOL (p. 38). That is, the National Office for the Information Economy will not exist anymore. Its functions will move to the newly formed Australian Government Information Management Office, which will focus on access to government information, the AusTender system and e-publishing guidelines. The remnant of NOIE that is left will become the Office for the Information Economy (OIE – a strange name change since it is surely still National) in the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, and will work on issues to do with broadband, spam, and modelling the information economy, and will manage the Information Technology On-line program which is encouraging uptake of B2B (business-to-business) programs throughout Australia.

Yet another restructure...yet another acronym, or two, or three...

***ASAIB Newsletter* No. 17, October 2003**

This newsletter contains reports on an indexing workshop and the ASAIB conference both held in Cape Town, and the Society of Indexers conference in Scotland. In 'The Alexandria Library Lives Again' (pp. 4-5), Mike Sandrock discusses the new Bibliotheca Alexandrina which was opened in October 2003 by Suzanne Mubarak. The building, designed by Norwegian architects, sounds intriguing. It is cylindrical, and is set into the ground at an angle to give the impression of

'cutting through time'. You can see all eight stories at the same time. The roof is a flat translucent disk resembling Ancient Egyptian depictions of the Sun God, and there is a moat on three sides of the building. The library is quite empty still, and is relying on donations to fill it.

ASAIB Newsletter No. 18, April 2004

The Southern African indexers share an association with bibliographers, and this is reflected in two reviews in their recent newsletter. One, *The Khoe and San: an annotated bibliography* (by Shelagh Willet et al., Gabarone, Botswana: Lightbooks, 2002, 2003), comprises 1400 entries on all aspects of these remotely-located minority groups (previously referred to as the Bushmen). The compilers developed a taxonomy of languages, speech communities and place names, as they found no consistency in this area. The author index includes personal and corporate authors. The subject index is short as it only uses broad keywords such as Development planning and Hunting-Gathering.

The second review is of *South Africa's second democratic election 1999: an annotated bibliography* (by B. Strachan, Auckland Park: Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), 2001), which provides references to books, pamphlets, periodical articles, reports and conferences, but not newspaper articles, concerning South Africa's second democratic election on 2 June 1999.

The book is divided into five sections: the Election Chronology (starting August 1998), Bibliography (850 entries), Author Index, Subject Index, and Acronyms.

Society of Editors (Victoria) Newsletter, v.33 n.7/8, January/February 2004

The editors' Christmas Party had a number of prizes – the First-Booker Award (for the earliest booking), the Big-Booker Award (for the largest group), and for tales of woe and joy, the Nightmare Award, the Eye Teeth Award, and the Em-dash Award (won for a brow-furrowing 10-line sentence).

In the same issue, Robyn Colman from Tasmania wrote about 'Insurance and the freelance editor' (p. 3) and presented a questionnaire on public liability and other insurance requirements. Interested indexers could send comments to Robyn at words@word-wise.com.au. This issue also contains a report on their website survey by Ann Philpott (pp. 9-10).

Australian Author April 2004

Jeremy Fisher, an early AusSI Medal winner, writes on 'Heritage restoration' (pp. 8-13) – the print-on-demand delivery of early Australian books such as *Lantana Lane* by Eleanor Dark, and *Foveaux* by Kylie Tennant.

Oxford University Press (OUP)

OUP has sent promotional material about the opportunity to syndicate OUP material and make it available to members via a website. Sounds interesting, but costs *start* at 2000 pounds per year. Details about their products are at www.oxfordonline.com.

Blue Pencil May 2004

Deb Doyle reviews *Death sentence: the decay of public language* by Don Watson (p. 5) and says: 'I also think the book is begging for an index, or at least a table of contents that included a list of major subheadings, and an extended glossary and list of suggested alternative terms.' This issue also contains the information and questionnaire on insurance noted in the Victorian editors' newsletter.

The Professional Development Workshop Report (p. 8) notes a well-received indexing workshop presented by Caroline Colton, AusSI NSW President.

E-book mailing list

A message from Brett Rutherford to ebook-community@yahoogroups.com on 23 May 2004 noted the production of a CD-ROM containing e-books and images on ancient history. Many of the e-books appeared to have been retrieved using a search for the letters 'rome' – not only in the word 'Rome', but also as components of names such as 'Jerome' and 'Romeo and Juliet!'. The CD is available from the azzcds.com website for US \$ 9.95. You can search the list of books included at <http://azzcds.com/DetailInfo.asp?pid=11>.

Million dollar answer:

Start with a billion dollars!

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

Back in 1970 in a paper entitled 'Computer-organised display of subject information*', Dr Michael Lynch made this statement:

'We cannot yet produce adequate abstracts, for example, by computer, nor can we analyse subject matter so as to assign subject headings at an acceptable level of performance.... Thus there would remain a continuing need for the indexer's skills well into the future.'

Now that we are thirty four years further into the computer age, I would suggest that this still holds true. Does anyone disagree?

Regards

Carolyn Kearney MA DiplLib DiplLaw
Registered Indexer

**Indexers on Indexing: a selection of articles published in The Indexer* edited by L.M. Harrod. London, 1978

AuSI Conference 2005: call for papers

CALL FOR PAPERS / EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Australian Society of Indexers will hold its next conference in Melbourne at Rydges Riverwalk, Richmond, from Friday 18 to Saturday 19 March 2005 with the theme:

INDEXING: engagement, enlightenment, entertainment

The Conference is being designed to consider indexing in a diverse range of disciplines, not just the traditional indexing spheres of back-of-book and database indexing. Areas of interest include:

Museum indexing	Integrated database/library catalogues	Database indexing
Pictorial indexing	Web indexing	Knowledge management
Sound/moving image indexing	Newspaper indexing	Back-of-book indexing
Thesaurus development	Records management	Education for indexing
Historical indexing	Technical writers & indexing	Indexing of children's literature

.... and more

Papers may be presented as full conference papers, in workshops, or round table discussions.

Excellent opportunities are available before and after the Conference to spend time exploring Melbourne's many attractions, particularly the cafés, restaurants, clothing shops and theatres.

Please complete the tear-off slip below to express your interest in presenting a paper or just participating in the conference. Your name will be recorded to receive further details.

Send to: Australian Society of Indexers Conference Committee
GPO Box 1251
Melbourne Vic 3001
tel/fax: + 61 3 9500 8715
email: mindexer@optusnet.com.au

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

FAX _____

Email: _____

I AM INTERESTED IN PRESENTING A PAPER

(Title or theme attached)

I AM INTERESTED IN RECEIVING MORE DETAILS

From the Web Manager

My main role as webmanager at the moment is keeping the site up to date pending a major redesign. This will be carried out in the latter half of 2004 and will standardise the site and make it more user-friendly and easier to maintain. Materials such as the member list and *Indexers Available* will be based on database files and generated as required rather than having to be individually hand-crafted as is currently the case.

Jon Jermey

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retrieval.' 'Categorisation' does not seem a good replacement for this broad concept. I also would not define 'taxonomy' as a controlled vocabulary. To me it is a hierarchical classification, as originally used in biology. Unfortunately 'taxonomies' are now being promoted as the solution to all information architecture problems. Indexers need to be aware of the false promises and be ready to inject some realism when they are involved in taxonomy projects.

I highly recommend *Website indexing* to indexers thinking about tackling a web project. To those already working in this

area, it will be a valuable reference. I also think it would be useful for web managers and web developers to discover all the indexing possibilities beyond the raw index of a search engine. I hope that they will read the book – and then hire an indexer!

Prue Deacon

HealthInsite Editorial Team
Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

Reference: Lancaster, F.W. *Indexing and abstracting in theory and practice*. 2nd ed. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois, 1998. p. 16. (Note: a 3rd edition of this book was published last year.)

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This newsletter is sent free to all members of the Australian Society of Indexers. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Society.

We are delighted to receive contributions, both large and small, from members. Please contact us 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 disk or via email in Rich Text format, Word for Windows, or plain text (ASCII). Do not embed footnotes in Word files.

Graphics

Image files can be accepted in most common formats. Do not embed images in text files. If possible, submit line drawings in a vector format or as an EPS file. Camera-ready art and photographs can be scanned by the editor.

Advertising charges

Full page: \$90; Half page: \$50;
Quarter page \$25
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