

The ATLANTIC INDEXER

A newsletter for the Capital Indexers of the Mid- and South-Atlantic Chapter
of the American Society for Indexing

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MSA Quick Glance

Calendar:

January 27th: Tour of the National
Agricultural Library

May 13-15th: ASI Annual Conference
Minneapolis, MN
<http://www.asindexing.org/site/mtgs.shtml>

January Meeting

Last Chance!!!

National Agricultural Library Tour

Date: January 27, 2010

Time: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Cost: Free! Bring your own lunch.

RSVP: programs@msasindexing.org

Location:

National Agricultural Library

10301 Baltimore Avenue

Beltsville, MD 20705-2351

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/>

Program:

The staff at the National Agricultural Library (NAL) will provide a general overview of NAL, a tour, and information about the NAL Thesaurus and indexing at NAL.

They are also inviting their indexers to have lunch with us, answer any questions we may have, and discuss indexing matters more informally. Be sure to bring a bag lunch.

The NAL Thesaurus is available online:

<http://agclass.nal.usda.gov/agt/agt.shtml>

(Word of warning - you may spend all day playing with this!)

RSVP and questions: programs@msasindexing.org

Attention indexers in the Carolinas. Would you be interested in a networking event sometime in 2010? I am willing to host you in Charlotte, NC, but I want to be sure there is a decent amount of interest before we schedule a time and perhaps a speaker. If you have an interest, please contact me at kmcmullen@rts.edu.

Thanks....Ken McMullen, MLIS

Take an Indexer to Lunch Month

February 2010

Back by popular demand, and extended from one week to an entire month, it is time to take an indexer to lunch!

Pick a convenient restaurant and split the bill, find a location that allows you to bring your own bag lunches, or organize a pot luck meal. Invite indexers in your area, whether you know them or not, and enjoy food, camaraderie, and conversation about indexing.

When you have a date, time, and place chosen, please post it to msanet@msasindexing.org or send an email to programs@msasindexing.org so other indexers may join you.

Be sure to take photos and send them with commentary about your lunch to newsletter@msasindexing.org to assure your place in history.

Questions? Contact programs@msasindexing.org



OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Authors Out Loud, Washington, DC
Various dates

<http://washingtondcjcc.org/center-for-arts/literary/literary-events.html>

Library of Congress Books & Beyond, Washington, DC
<http://www.read.gov/events/>

Book and author events, Washington, DC
<http://hooksbookevents.com/>

Savannah Book Festival, Savannah, Georgia
February 5-7
<http://www.savannahbookfestival.org/>

Much Ado About Books, Jacksonville, Florida
February 26-27
<http://www.muchadoaboutbooks.com/>

NFAIS Annual Conference, Philadelphia, PA
February 28-March 2
<http://www.nfaais.org/page/23-2010-annual-conference>

Lex Allen Literary Festival, Roanoke, VA
March 6
<http://www.hollins.edu/news-events/litfest/litfest.htm>

Virginia Festival of the Book, Charlottesville, VA
March 17-21
<http://www.vabook.org/index.html/>

Literary Feast, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
March 19-20
<http://www.bplfoundation.org/literaryfeast.htm>

Bethesda Literary Festival, Bethesda, Maryland
April 16-18
<http://www.bethesda.org/specialevents/litfest/litfest.htm>

ASI – Western New York Chapter meeting with Jan Wright,
East Aurora New York
April 17
<http://www.asindexing.org/site/chapters.shtml#wny>

Free Library Festival, Philadelphia, PA
April 17-18
<http://libwww.freelibrary.org/bookfestival/>

Pacific Northwest Chapter News

The PNW Chapter has developed a reputation for developing innovative programs. This spring, we are working on another idea.

One of the great challenges for our chapter is hosting meetings in locations that are convenient for most members. Since we cover over one million square miles on the continent as well as islands in the Pacific, this isn't easy.

For our spring meeting, under the leadership of Ann Yager and her Program Team, we are experimenting with the idea of taking the agenda and activities to our members instead of asking everyone to travel to the same semi-central location. On April 10, we will meet everywhere at the same time. Everywhere means any town/city in which two or more indexers register. If you live in Montana, there will be a meeting closer than

Oregon or Washington. If you live in Idaho, you may have several choices. If you live in British Columbia, you don't have to travel to the United States. Even our members in Tennessee, Texas, Delaware, and Colorado can make the opportunity to meet on the same day.

Ann and her Team members are developing an agenda that includes a marketing session, a more technical session about learning to create and use macros, and a peer review of one or more indexes. Materials for these activities will be sent to each registrant prior to the meeting.

During the next few months, Ann will describe this no-cost program in more detail. She will also announce locations and local coordinators.

Traveling to a PNW meeting will be easy this spring. Mark your calendars for this innovative and fun educational experience.

New England Chapter News

Spring Meeting, April 17, 2010

The 2010 spring meeting of the New England Chapter of the American Society for Indexing (NEASI) will be held on Saturday, April 17, 2010 at the Chelmsford Public Library in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. **Cheryl Landes**, an award-winning technical writer and member of the Pacific Northwest Chapter as well as NEASI, will present "Experience an Index Usability Test," and **Ilise Benun**, a national speaker and co-founder of Marketing Mentor, will present "Nitty-Gritty Marketing and Pricing for Freelancers." There will also be a panel of NEASI members speaking about their own marketing experiences. Details will be available by the end of January. **Please save the date!**

CHAIR NOTES

Happy New Year!

January is a great time for renewing one's commitment and focus. Resolve to learn something new, interact more with colleagues, expand your client base, improve your indexing skills, or volunteer to help out our Chapter. Whatever your resolution, MSA has a way to help fulfill it. We have an exciting tour of the National Agricultural Library in January, and February brings our second annual "Take an Indexer to Lunch" event. Look over the calendar of events sponsored by other organizations – there is a lot going on in our area. If you have ideas for future programs, email programs@msasindexing.org.

ASI membership renewals were due in December. If you haven't sent your payment in be sure to do so, and specify MSA as your chapter. Our Chapter receives \$7 per member. We strive to have each program pay for itself and use dues to cover our website, postage, and miscellaneous expenses that arise. We will receive the list of members soon and if you have dropped off the list we will send you a renewal reminder.

It is also time to start thinking about officer nominations for the coming year. The current officer terms expire on April 30. Elections will be held in mid-March. Becky Hornyak, our Chair-Elect, will take over the Chair position, bringing her wonderful organizational skills. We'll be voting for a Secretary and Treasurer. If you wish to nominate someone, run for one of the offices, or serve on the nominating committee, please email nominations@msasindexing.org.

Thanks to all of our indexers who are working on pro bono projects for our chapter. Deborah Patton is leading a team of volunteers who are diligently indexing a book for the Weimaraner Rescue League. If you know of a need for pro bono indexing, or are interested in volunteering for the next project that comes along, email programs@msasindexing.org

Hope to see you at an event soon!

Connie Binder
chair@msasindexing.org

COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT Nominating Committee

Our chapter elections are coming up, and we need strong candidates to fill positions. The nominating committee selects a slate of one or more nominees for each office (Chair-Elect, Secretary, and Treasury), striving for balance between the different employment preferences (i.e., freelance or employee, small or large business), genders, geographical areas, and employers represented within the membership.

This is a short-term position; ballots go out in mid-March.

ARCHIVES

Becky Hornyak is coordinating a working group on the chapter archives, comprised of Deborah Patton, Sue Nedrow, and Bonnie Hanks. Upcoming tasks will include sorting and culling the written documents, and deciding how to best preserve them for ease of access by future members and officers. If any of you have documents that you think should be included in the archives, please contact one of the group members.

Program Reports

This Is How We Work at Home

By Camilla Clocker

A Roundtable on September 19, 2009, entitled "Organizing Processes and Workspace for Your Home-Based Business" highlighted several areas for discussion.

- Backup methods used are flash drives, external hard drives, and web-based email. An online backup utility is called ibackup.com. An external hard drive can be set up to back up an entire system with one push of a button.
- A website is not essential, but helpful for displaying information about your services. A "business card website" -- also called a "brochure" site -- offers a single static page with contact information and a listing of your subject areas.
- Office size can be whatever makes you happy. Separate space makes it easier to deduct taxes as a home business.
- Forms for keeping track of everything should be written up: a phone call form for new clients, a project form for each job, an indexing agreement for authors who pay for the index and for first-time small clients, an information sheet for new authors at the beginning of a project that prevents questions at ends of projects.
- Keep track of hourly times spent on each job so that as your business grows you can choose clients that generate higher per hour rates.
- When working with authors, keep everything straight with checklists, then confirm by email the details discussed by telephone.
- Setting boundaries for time to spend working, especially time to stop working, will prevent stress building up around irregular hours.
- Before leaving your office for the day, place on top of the current pile of pages what one of us calls "my Drop Dead List." This is a listing of all in-process projects giving their status and contacts. If you drop dead before completing all projects, your executor will contact everyone on the list.

Look for an extended article about this roundtable in the next issue of KeyWords.

POLISHING YOUR INDEX WORKSHOP **December 5, 2009**

By Donna Shear

As any indexer can tell you, creating a good index is far more than just taking a book and generating a list of headings. The index needs to be edited, an essential step requiring its own self-checks and decisions. On Saturday, December 5, 2009 veteran indexer Enid Zafran offered a workshop to address the issues, strategies, and decisions involved in creating a well-polished index.

The one-day workshop, "Polishing Your Index," was organized by MSA Chair Connie Binder. Twenty-one intrepid indexers braved inclement weather to attend the workshop, which took place at the EEI offices in Alexandria, Virginia.

Enid's professional credentials are well-established and substantial. She possesses an MLS and a JD, and specializes in legal and scholarly indexing. Her many years in the field include heading two indexing departments and training innumerable indexers. At present, she owns and manages one of the largest freelance indexing businesses in the U.S., overseeing numerous indexing subcontractors at any given time.

On the morning session of the workshop, Enid made a presentation and distributed materials for review. The afternoon session began with a hands-on exercise for all participants. Each person received a copy of an error-laden index and was invited to review the index, flag any problem areas, and suggest solutions. Afterward, there was a discussion of the various proposed solutions.

The MSA Chapter would like to thank Jane Rea and EEI for their generosity to our chapter. They regularly provide meeting space for our get-togethers.

Among the key points Enid highlighted were the following:

1. In approaching the book, consider the metatopic and key points. Take a look at the Table of Contents. This can be helpful as it is an overview of the book's main topics. Try to find these topics in the index.
2. Consider that the length of the index should be appropriate to the book. For example, while some books may only warrant 3 or 4 entries per page, a history book might have 10 entries a page. The general rule: "don't overcomplicate the index." Similarly, an index must be balanced. For example, a common pitfall is too many entries for the first few pages of a book.
3. Enid recommended various self-checks that can make indexing easier and more accurate. These can be helpful in catching repetitions, misspellings, and incorrect page sequences. For example, it is helpful to run a Spell Check early in the process, then at half-way, and then at the end.
4. In CINDEX, it's helpful to run the Cross-Reference Check. Look for cross-references pointing to entries with only one or two locators. Replace them with a double-post.
5. An additional check should be made to avoid page number or sequence errors, such as a sequence appearing as, say, 12-12, or 312 when the book ends on page 300. You will also want to check that no page numbers were accidentally omitted. Internal controls in CINDEX can be set up to prevent such mistakes.

This enjoyable and highly informative workshop included strategies helpful to seasoned indexers as well as "newbies." Additional information about polishing the index can be obtained by purchasing one of Enid's publications, or by signing up for her intensive Indexing Boot Camp.

Continuing Education

Hot off the presses! Index It Right! Advice from the Experts, Vol. 2 is now available from Information Today.

This second book in the well-received series was edited by Janet Perlman and Enid Zafran. It includes an article on subheadings written by Margie Towery and Vicky Agee that is based on a workshop they developed for ASI. The centerpiece of the book, this in-depth discussion (35 pages!) by two highly regarded indexers offers extensive guidance and examples about how to phrase (and what pitfalls to avoid) clear and concise subentries. This is a must-have for all indexers' personal libraries.

Also covered are the niche areas of textbooks, technical writing, naval and military, and public policy. In the realm of electronic or special types of indexing, the book offers chapters on databases, embedded techniques, and taxonomies and thesauri. Lots of information from names you recognize like Jan Wright, Deborah Patton, Heather Heddon, Janet Russell, Leoni McVey, Lucie Haskins, Linda Mamassian, and Enid Zafran.

Be sure to order your copy at the ASI discounted price of \$32. A true member benefit!

INDEXING BOOT CAMP

Attention, new indexers! Indexing Partners is offering its Indexing Boot Camp for new indexers. Those interested in learning to index or to sharpen their skills during their first few years as indexers will benefit from studying with Enid Zafran in a three-day intensive one-on-one training experience. Participants will learn how to decide what is indexable, how to phrase entries, how to double post properly, and when to use cross-references. Even if you've taken an indexing course, you will greatly improve your skills from this hands-on training. The session is conducted in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.

To learn more about Enid and Indexing Partners, visit www.indexingpartners.com.

To contact Enid for more details, enid@indexingpartners.com or 302/644-7466.

Member's Corner

Indexers in Your Neighborhood

Meet **Connie Binder**, Mid and South Atlantic Chapter Chair (2009-2010) of ASI. I was fortunate enough to meet Connie at the ASI conference in Portland last year. She is a very dynamic person and a lot of fun to be with. Let's find out more about her.

Interview by Linnea Dwyer

Connie, can you tell us about your family and pets?

Sometimes I think I am the only indexer in the world without pets, but I am happy that way. It allows me to travel freely with my husband, two children, parents, siblings, nieces, nephews, and in-laws. We make quite a group!

Well, since you don't have any pets, how about any hobbies?

I love having adventures, big and small. That's one of the things that makes indexing so great – each book is a new experience, with me for a short, but very intense, time. Then I ship it off with fond memories, no regrets, and an eagerness to fully immerse myself in whatever comes next.

When I'm not otherwise occupied: rug hooking, fabric dyeing (wool, silk scarves, natural dyes, shibori, etc.). I am a textile junkie, and plan to learn to weave in the coming years.

And what about those cool boots you have?

<contented sigh> I am a shoe person. If there were anything negative about it, it would be a really bad habit. Fortunately, the only downside is that I can only wear one pair at a time.





I really love indexing, and generally even subjects I wouldn't choose to read for pleasure become interesting

when analyzing the text. Once in a while I get books that are a bit of a chore, but the payment at the end is reward enough. Last year, for the first time ever, I had a real stinker of a project. It was a subject that I have always detested (but is straight-forward to index and quite lucrative, so I don't turn these down). In addition to not enjoying the topic, the author was obnoxious and had an extremely irritating writing style. I could not *stand* to index this book. I could not concentrate, and would use any excuse to surf the internet, leave my computer, throw things at walls, and exclaim loudly to no one in particular. I did not want to work on the book, and I did have a deadline to meet. Then, in one of my bouts of surfing the internet, I spotted them -- superhero boots!

With these boots, I could do anything! I proceeded to settle down and index the book, toggling to a photo of "my" boots whenever I would get restless. It worked. I conquered the book, met the deadline, cashed the check, and bought the boots. Watch for them at indexing get-togethers. And, check these out (the perfect thing should I ever encounter a difficult Yeti book):



What is your educational background?

Public schools in Michigan, B.A. in Anthropology from Michigan State University, MLS from University of Maryland. One of the great things about indexing is that just about everything I have ever learned has come in handy. The only class I had that has not yet proven its usefulness is calculus, and I know it's only a matter of time.

Speaking of indexing, how did you get into it?

I was dragged into indexing, kicking and screaming. I had been doing freelance cataloging, and one of the people I worked for took over responsibility for hiring freelance indexers. She asked me to take the USDA indexing course so I could index for her. I started the course but never found time to finish it (or even turn in my first lesson). She kept asking about my course progress, and finally gave up on that and had me apprentice with her on-staff indexers. A career was born. I really love what I do.

Now that you like it, what is your favorite part of the indexing process?

Seeing the initial email in my inbox, asking about my availability for a project – they like me, they really like me!

No wait! My favorite part of the process is choosing my highlighter color, thematic pencils, and music to coordinate with the book's topic.

No wait! It's when I really get into the book, realize I am nailing the index, and have complete confidence that the next Wilson Award will be mine.

No wait! It must be when I turn in the index, relax with a glass of wine, and maybe take that long-overdue shower.

No wait! My favorite thing is surely when the editor tells me how pleased and impressed the author was with my work.

No wait! The arrival of the check.

Definitely, the arrival of the check.

No wait! Using the check to buy new shoes.

No wait! I just got another indexing job offer – they like me, they really like me!

Have you had any unusual indexing experiences?

I haven't had any unusual indexing experiences, but I did have a rewarding one. One of my favorite indexing moments came one morning when I was working at my mother-in-law's kitchen table. She knew that I indexed books, but apparently she had never really thought about what that means. She was watching me work, and was shocked, "So YOU DECIDE what goes into the index? That's so important! If you don't put something in, people can't find it!" She was simultaneously impressed by my importance, slightly anxious that so many people were depending on me, and absolutely mortified that for years she had been chatting away as I work. (I'm usually the first one up, and don't expect to get any real work done once others start stirring.)

Proudest moment of accomplishment in your life?

Having two kids grow up into really cool adults. It's their accomplishment, not mine, but I'm proud.

Do you have any goals you are working toward, work or otherwise?

I am not particularly goal-driven. I generally just sort of go with the flow and see what happens. But, I do have a long and growing bucket list involving indexing accomplishments, exotic travel, and flying trapeze lessons.

Favorite quote on life?

My recent horoscope sums it up pretty well: Making lemonade from lemons is too passé for you. You'll turn your lemons into something more exciting – a flaming sorbet or a fancy pie. With a twist and a flourish, you create magic and entertainment.

Quirky thing/story about yourself?

At the ASI Conference in Portland, I fractured my wrist while ice skating at the rink where Tanya Harding learned to skate. (And experienced the amazing kindness of my fellow indexers.)

What did you want to be when you grew up?

Elementary school teacher, third baseman for the Detroit Tigers, cowboy, pig farmer in Wyoming. So far, I'm 0-for-4, but who knows what the future will hold?

If you were an insect, what would you be?

A bookworm would be the obvious answer, but I think I tend more toward a cicada – iridescent, noisy, and comically clumsy.

Any other thoughts you would like to share?

Smile and greet everyone you see. The world will be a better place.

Response Question - "What is your favorite part of the indexing process"

I have two favorite parts to indexing. I love to do the editing and proofreading, which allows me to see how my work all came together. And I love getting an email asking if I am available to do another index!

My favorite part of indexing is that moment right before I start reading for the first time. It's like the start of a new relationship (which is hopefully a friendship and not adversary). I look forward to getting to know the text inside and out over the next week or two.

This might sound strange, because I love what I do, but my favorite part of the indexing process is finishing a project and sending in the invoice! One of the characteristics of indexing that has always appealed to me is that it's production-type work--the more we do, the more we earn. That also means that when a project is over, it's over and gone. Whether it's fun, interesting and informative, or stressful and horribly written by an author who didn't know what an index is supposed to be, it will soon be over. I like to turn in indexes before the deadline, to get them "off my desk" as soon as possible

For the next newsletter.....

What's the best part of being an indexer?

MSA Presence at ASI 2010 Conference in Minneapolis

A panel presentation on organizational tips and techniques is planned for the conference in May. Connie Binder, Bonnie Hanks, and Becky Hornyak have agreed to be members of the panel. A request has been made by the conference planner, Frances Lennie, for information about keeping track of indexing business data using Excel spreadsheets. If any of you have experience in that area, and are interested in participating on the panel, please contact Becky.

(becky@hornyakindex.com)

Welcome to our new members!

Marie Botkin
Deborah A. Broocker
Amy L. Cannon
April Michelle Davis
Susan V. Eaton
Kebede Gessesse
Laurie J. Graulich
Solwyn R. Hart
Heidi L. Hoerman
Nancy Kaplon
Jodi Kaye
Karen Lehmkuhl
Cheryl Lockett Zubak
Jessica Milstead
Barbara Dunn Nadelbach
Chandon Kumar Singh
Estalita Slivoskey
Laura Strashny
Martha Swearingen

Judy Reveal is looking for articles and program reports for KeyWords newsletter. KeyWords is another great avenue in which to publish your article. Contact her at jreveal@verizon.net.

A note from the editor...

Thanks to all who contributed to this quarter's newsletter. If you have an announcement or an idea for a feature, please send me an email at newsletter@msasindexing.org.

*Thanks,
Vicki Swope*



The MSA Chapter has bumper stickers for sale for \$4.00. They may be ordered by contacting Vicki Swope at vswope@keystoneindexing.com or call 717-919-1981.

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