In the 1970s, Colleen Dunham worked for Lawyers Cooperative Publishing as a secretary. Then one day her boss was transferred to a position as managing editor of the indexing department. As Colleen put it, “He made me follow him.” Colleen was the first non-lawyer to become an index editor for this prestigious legal publisher, she worked there for almost three decades. This was the start of her career as an in-house indexer.

Today, Colleen works for Microsoft Corporation indexing Encarta, one of the world’s largest electronic encyclopedias. So, what is the life of an in-house indexer like? Well, pretty much like that of a freelancer, with a few exceptions. Instead of being able to work in her pajamas and fuzzy bunny slippers, Colleen has to go into the office, usually by 7:30 a.m. Once there, she spends almost 10 hours a day writing index entries and developing the index for Encarta. She also spends about 2 hours a day interacting with the rest of the Encarta staff—other indexers, software designers, and writers.

While in-house indexers may not have the autonomy of freelancers, Colleen enjoys her in-house work, particularly being “connected” into the larger process of developing and delivering information. Working as part of the encyclopedia production team, Colleen enjoys her easy-going relationship with the Encarta team. She noted with a smile, “Once I assured them that I worked for them, they were happy to have me around and abound with ideas of how I can make their lives easier.” On the other end of the process, she gets direct and regular feedback from the people who use her indexes, which is “invaluable in developing clever entries that draw readers into the content.”

Outside of work, Colleen makes time for both a “life” and sharing ideas with fellow indexers. At the November informal meeting, several folks discussed their indexing of a single chapter of a self-help book. Colleen led the group in a lively discussion as they compared entries and fielded numerous questions about what to include and what to leave out. Her advice was that on every page there were three entries that should always be made, three entries that should never be made and four that could go either way. The job was to find the three that had to be there and then to deal with the others appropriately. While this rule isn’t literal, it provides a great perspective. As Jeri Lee, meeting coordinator put it, “That has really hit home with me... I think it may be the key to the true ‘art’ of indexing.”

Judging the art of indexing is also part of Colleen’s world these days as she leads the judging committee for the ASI/HW Wilson Company Indexing Award. This award honors “excellence in indexing” and increases awareness of the need for quality indexing. The ASI President appointed Colleen to this 1-year position.

With all of her work and involvement with ASI, Colleen still finds enough time (although some days, only barely) to enjoy a variety of diversions, including reading contemporary Southern fiction and attending the theater.

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**What’s Inside.**

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Marketing 101
by Randi Ockey

With your marketing plan in hand (see Marketing 101 article in Fall 1998 issue), you’re ready to start making those cold calls, tapping into that network of colleagues and friends of friends, sending out those letters, etc. Right? Well, almost right.

Imagine the editor as a judge and think of what evidence you would present to argue your case.

One paragraph should refer to any previous contact with the individual, such as, “Thanks for taking the time to talk to me when I called today.” A second paragraph summarizes what you have to offer this particular publisher, and a final paragraph letting the editor know that you will follow up on this mailing. This amount of information is probably about all that is going to be read.

Before you venture into the uncharted waters of getting yourself known in the publishing world, you need to have a few marketing tools ready to send to that first publisher who takes an interest in you. Those tools include your resume, several work samples, a cover letter to accompany the resume and work samples, and business cards. Let’s discuss each one of these.

Cover letter
The first thing the editor sees when opening your packet is the cover letter. The purpose of this letter is to entice the reader into looking at the rest the packet. Two simple rules for writing a good cover letter are first, keep it short and simple, and second, to make it look professional.

Use good, resume-quality paper and the best printer you can find. Be sure to run spell-check, and have someone else read and critique your letter. Remember that the person who is going to be reading it is an EDITOR. Enough said.

Resume
If the editor gets past your cover letter, the next thing that will get read is your resume. Don’t even think of going past one page on your resume (the editor won’t), and just like your cover letter, your resume has to look very professional. The purpose of the resume is to give the editor some reasons to believe that you are a qualified indexer. Imagine the editor as a judge and think of what evidence you would present to argue your case. First, take a blank piece of paper and list all of your strongest arguments: “finished USDA course,” “B.A. in sociology,” “wrote five-year index for historical society newsletter,” etc. Then borrow or buy a good, up-to-date resume book that will show you how to package your qualifications (i.e., present your arguments). Last, get a friend (preferably someone who has worked in human resource management) to look over what you’ve done and offer some feedback.

Work samples
Work samples (one to three pages each from several indexes you’ve written) are probably the best proof you can offer that you know how to index. If you’ve taken the USDA course, you already have a work sample or two that you can send out to a potential customer. But you need more than that. The simplest way to generate other samples (and to gain some very valuable experience) is to do volunteer work. Find an organization, government agency, local library, or some other entity with a publication in need of an index and offer to write the index for free. “Free” is a very attractive price — you won’t get too many turndowns, and in the process you’ll produce some very nice work samples for yourself.

Business cards
Collect some cards from friends and local businesses to get ideas and stimulate your creativity, and then visit your local print shop. You can also produce them yourself on your laser printer, using stock from PaperDirect or similar companies. The bottom line is you need business cards. These cards must do a good job of representing you, and you should include several in each packet you send out to a publisher.

Informal Meetings
Small, informal meetings are being held throughout the Chapter territory. Meetings have been held in Seattle, Eugene, and Richland. In Seattle, members compared sample indexes they had written for the same book. In Eugene, they critiqued one another’s published indexes. In Richland, they enjoyed the chance to meet each other for the first time and are making plans for future meetings. Meeting times and agendas are posted on INDEX-NW. These meetings can be a great way to meet other indexers in your local area.

Next issue: Contacting publishers
Statistical Snapshot of Our Membership

These statistics were gathered from responses to questions asked in our last newsletter. There were a record 24 respondents to the 200 newsletters mailed! Thanks for helping us keep current statistics on our members. These statistics help us plan meetings targeted to our membership.

What is your highest level of education?
- Associate’s degree: 1
- Bachelor’s degree: 11
- Master’s degree: 9
- Doctorate: 3

How do you describe your current indexing status?
- Full-time professional employee: 3
- Part-time professional employee: 1
- Full-time freelance: 3
- Part-time freelance: 6
- Apprentice: 1
- Student: 6
- No indexing responsibilities: 4

How did you learn indexing?
- Employer-sponsored training: 1
- USDA course(s): 12
- Library school curriculum: 3
- Self-taught: 9
- University/College course: 5
- Videotaped course: 1
- Other indexing course (e.g.: WASSER’s indexing workshop): 3
- Mentoring relationship: 2
- Other: National Library of Medicine MEDLARS training: 1

What other professional organizations do you hold membership in?
- Society for Technical Communication: 5
- American Library Association: 2

The following were written in by one member each: American Chemical Society, American Medical Writers’ Association, American Society for Information Science, American Society of Archivists, Association of Independent Information Professionals, Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada, Medical Library Association, Society for Human Resource Management, Special Library Association.

Which of the following is true for you?
- Indexing is the only service I provide as an independent contractor: 9
- Indexing is one of the services I provide as an independent contractor: 4
- I am also a librarian: 6
- I am also a writer: 8
- I am also an editor: 7
- I also work in other aspects of publishing: 4

The following professions were written in by one member each: artist/illustrator, banker, desktop publishing, environmental consultant, nursing, resume preparer, software developer, teacher.

Readership Survey
Do you read the newsletter? If so, is it useful?
What else would you like to see in it?
Do you find the statistics interesting and useful?
Contact Sherry Smith, Editor; indexer@ibm.net

I can index an entire library in my sleep, but I can’t find a thing in here!
**Ask an Indexer**  
*by Cheryl Landes*

**Q:** I am an indexer with no published samples. How do I get samples to show to potential clients? (Elsbeth Pope)

**A:** There are several ways to create samples:
1. Go to the library, find a book that has not been indexed, and index it. If you do this, make sure that you make a note on your finished index that it was created as a sample.
2. Volunteer to index a book for a non-profit organization. There are many organizations that publish books and manuals. All of these publications need a good index. To find out more about non-profit organizations in your area, check your local public library, or call the closest branch of United Way.
3. If you’re a permanent employee, offer to index a corporate publication that does not have an index. Chances are you’ll find lots of practice material, because many companies don’t have indexes in their publications. Usually this is because they haven’t thought about including indexes or don’t understand the value of indexes. My first sample, an index from a HAZWOPER training manual, helped me get my first freelancing job for the publisher of an art history book. (HAZWOPER is a fancy acronym for Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response.)

The goals of creating a sample index are to show that you understand the subject of the book, and that your analysis of the manuscript — the entries you create — will help readers find the information they need quickly and easily.

**To submit questions to the "Ask an Indexer" column, E-mail your questions to Cheryl Landes at clandes407@aol.com or send via snail mail.**

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**Indexer in the News!**

Julie Kawabata, freelance indexer and active PNW Chapter member, was profiled in the *Portland Oregonian* in August 1998. Julie, along with a bookseller and literary translator, were featured in “Writing in the Rain,” a Sunday column written by Ellen Emry Heltzel. Julie discussed the importance of a professional index and her role in the freelance world.

Since the appearance of the article, Julie has received responses from friends and acquaintances and from curious potential indexers. She has boosted our profession by referring the curious to the ASI web site. Did the publishers descend upon her? She comments, “I don’t recall receiving any offers of work that I can attribute to this article or, for that matter, to my web site. But that is okay; I haven’t really expected that kind of return. Some things that I do, I do to — as I call it — establish a presence, or stake out a position. I consider that I’m in this profession for the long haul, and one never knows how or where a connection might surface down the road. That’s enough for me.”

**Q:** Is the second USDA indexing course, Applied Indexing, worth the investment? (Cynthia Holloway)

**A:** Applied Indexing would be worth the investment for two reasons:
1. It’s a simulation of the “real world” of indexing, which gives you experience to get your first job. Class projects involve creating indexes to submit to a “publisher” (the instructor) and learning to handle issues that can come up during a real project. The advantage is that someone is there to give you support and comment about how you’re doing — good or bad — in a non-threatening environment. In the real world, generally the only time indexers receive feedback on their work is when something goes wrong. We usually don’t hear about the good points of our indexes.
2. If you’re still not sure whether you want to be an indexer after finishing the Basic Indexing course, this class should help you to decide.

**Q:** Do I need a separate fax machine if I have a computer with a fax-modem? (Cynthia Holloway)

**A:** For indexing, a computer with a fax-modem is all you need. Rarely do I fax indexing materials to publishers; almost all of my work is done either by attaching files to e-mail or sending printouts and files on disks by overnight services. If you’re offering writing and editing services in addition to indexing, however, you will probably need a separate fax machine to send copies of printed materials to clients.
Recent Indexes by PNW/ASI Members
compiled by Helen Schinske

Charles Anderson
♦  Parsley, Peppers, Potatoes & Peas: Using and Storing a Garden’s Bounty, by Pat Katz

Kari Kells
♦  Fire Inspection and Code Enforcement, by Fire Fighting Productions
♦  Fire Service Loss Control, by Fire Protection Publications
♦  LMS Quick Reference, by Gateway Software Corporation

Kristin Manke

Randi Ockey
♦  The Genealogy Forum on America Online, by George G. Morgan
♦  Carpentry: Tricks of the Trade for Building and Finishing Your House, by Bob Syvanen

Martha Osgood
♦  The Spirituality of Resistance, by Roger Gottlieb. Crossroad Publishing
♦  History of Hispanics in Southern Nevada, by M.L. Miranda

Sherry L. Smith
♦  Growing Pains: Russian Democracy and the Election of 1993, by Timothy J. Colton and Jerry F. Hough, Editors
♦  Trogons, Laughing Falcons, and Other Neotropical Birds by Alexander F. Skutch

Do Mi Stauber
♦  A big encyclopedia of the Vietnam War

Carolyn Weaver
♦  Beyond Brawn, the Encyclopedia on How to Build Muscle and Might, by Stuart McRobert
♦  Cancer Pain, IASP Press

If you would like to add your published indexes to this list, please contact Helen Schinske at the chapter meeting or with e-mail, HsSchinske@aol.com.

Indexing Training Focus of Fall Chapter Meeting

New indexers and those wanting to advance their skills had the chance to gather information about a variety of indexing courses at the PNW/ASI fall meeting in Portland on October 10, 1998.

The session began with a short segment from Susan Holbert’s five-hour training video, “How to index books: a practical workshop on freelance indexing,” which discussed creating index entries. Then they practiced creating entries from a book excerpt and compared their results with the video.

Workbooks from the Basic and Applied Indexing classes, sponsored by the USDA Graduate School, and the Book Indexing Post Tutorials (BIPT) were available for browsing. Other training discussed during the session included:

♦  indexing courses offered through the University of Washington’s library school and technical communication program
♦  Indexing Basics seminar, sponsored by IndexWest Seminars
♦  WWW Walker Indexing Course.

Detailed information about indexing courses available to new and experienced indexers is available on the ASI web site at http://www.asindexing.org/courses.htm.

Indexstudents, a new listserv, is open to anyone interested in indexer education. For more information, contact Dan Connolly at connolly@neca.com.

HELP

Make this the best newsletter possible. Send Sherry Smith your comments on it. See the article on the last page.
October '98 Business Meeting
Record-breaking Attendance
by Cheryl Landes

Attendance reached an all-time high of 50 at the second Pacific Northwest chapter meeting of 1998 in Portland.

Membership continues to grow. As of the October meeting, 104 members are affiliated with the Pacific Northwest chapter, an increase from 90 reported at the March meeting. President Kari Kells said that the treasury continues to be healthy.

Informal gatherings are now held in various cities in Oregon and Washington for people who want to continue networking between the chapter’s semi-annual meetings. Announcements for these gatherings are posted on the INDEX-NW listserv.

President-Elect/Program Chair Jan Wright is looking for ideas for future chapter meetings. If you have a subject of interest, contact Jan at jancw@wrightinformation.com

The next meeting will be in March 1999 in the Seattle area. See enclosure for details.

Volunteer Corner

The Pacific Northwest Chapter of ASI is a strong professional organization because many members have volunteered their time and skills. Their recent accomplishments include:

- chapter meetings with agendas that include professional education and networking opportunities
- regular newsletters with educational and informative articles
- member directory for PNW publishers
- lending library of educational materials
- electronic discussion group.

Ideas and energy are always needed. Think about finding time to “give back” to your profession.

You can volunteer your time and services for any of these committees:

Program Committee; contact Jan Wright; jancw@wrightinformation.com

Newsletter Committee; contact Sherry Smith; indexer@ibm.net

Membership Committee; contact Elspeth Pope; ludgate@wnl.com

Publicity Committee; contact Carolyn Weaver; cgweaver@mindspring.com

Volunteer Recognition Committee; contact Sherry Smith; indexer@ibm.net

If you have other ideas or suggestions, contact Kari Kells, indexwest@mindspring.com.

Readership Survey
Do you read the newsletter? If so, is it useful? What else would you like to see in it?
Do you find the statistics interesting and useful?
Contact Sherry Smith, Editor; indexer@ibm.net

Pacific Northwest Chapter, ASI
http://www.mindspring.com/~indexwest/ASI/

Chair: Kari Kells
indexwest@mindspring.com or 206-567-5696

Vice-Chair / Program Coordinator: Jan C. Wright
jancw@mindspring.com or 206-784-2895

Secretary / Treasurer: Louise Martin
lmartin@oz.net or 360-895-4427

Archivist: Elspeth Pope
ludgate@wnl.com or 360-427-0760

Newsletter Coordinator: Sherry L. Smith
indexer@ibm.net or 541-382-6414

Publicity / Outreach Coordinator: Still needed!

Speakers Bureau Coordinator: Still needed!

Newsletter Volunteers
Cheryl Landes, Kristin Manke, Randl Ockey,
Helen Schinske, Sherry Smith

PNW Chapter News is published by the Pacific Northwest chapter of the American Society of Indexers.
Visit our web site at http://www.mindspring.com/~indexwest/ASI/
Send comments or submissions to Sherry Smith, Editor, indexer@ibm.net or 541-382-6414
Member Relations: Elspeth Pope, ludgate@wnl.com or 360-427-0760
More Statistics!

Please answer the following questions so that we can maintain and report accurate statistics of our membership. Include your answers with your meeting registration. If you will not be attending the meeting, feel free to send your answers via mail or e-mail to Kari Kells. If there are any questions you'd like us to ask our members, let Kari know.

Please rank the categories listed below according to the usefulness of bringing new clients to you? (Do not rank methods that you don't use.)

☐ advertising (describe your advertising efforts) ________________________________

☐ cold calls and cold query letters
☐ directory listing in ASI's Indexer Services
☐ directory listing in Yellow Pages
☐ referrals from other indexers
☐ referrals from clients
☐ networking at non-ASI meetings
☐ previous employers
☐ web site
☐ other ____________________________________________________________

Do you use a contract?

☐ no
☐ always
☐ sometimes
☐ a confirmation letter serves as my contract

If yes, who supplies it?

☐ my client(s)
☐ myself

If you provide a contract, did you seek guidance on the contents of the contract?

☐ no
☐ yes, I based it on the ASI Recommended Indexing Agreement
☐ yes, I consulted with a legal professional
☐ yes, I consulted contracts of other freelance professionals
☐ yes, I consulted ______________________________________________________

Do you invoice under:

☐ Social Security Number
☐ Business Identification Number
☐ Employer Identification Number
☐ other ______________________________

Send completed survey to Kari Kells, PO Box 2748, Vashon Island, WA 98070 or via e-mail to indexwest@mindspring.com
Kari Kells
PO Box 2748
Vashon Island, WA 98070