STC SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

A to Z welcomes letters from members of the STC Indexing SIG and others interested in indexing. Printed letters do not necessarily reflect the views of the STC Indexing SIG and may be edited for length. Letters may be sent to Jan Wright at jancw@wrightinformation.com.

Microsoft Indexers in the Classroom

by Mary Rosewood

"You mean you get paid to read?" one boy asked with awe. That question came from a seventh-grade Language Arts class in suburban Seattle when Mary Rosewood and Colleen Dunham gave an indexing lesson there in January.

Colleen and Mary are indexers at Microsoft who took advantage of Coughlin Indexing Services' education program for middle schools (http://www.indexing.com/), which is designed to introduce young readers to indexing. The curriculum explores students' familiarity with indexes, reviews the features of an index, and provides an opportunity for students to write an index themselves. The seventh-graders wrote an index for *A Day in the Life of a Midshipman*, a book jam-packed with interesting information, but no index. The young readers saw that without an index, information in that book got lost. If they couldn't find it when they needed it, they couldn't use it. It was knowledge wasted!

"You have to read a page, then turn away from it, and play it back in a few short statements. That's what indexing is all about. A collection of those statements, organized in some useful way, is what becomes the index," Colleen told the students. She showed the students the index her team created for Windows XP Help and Support.

Coughlin Indexing Services will share their lesson plan and materials with other indexers who would like to use this program in the classroom. Contact Jennifer Burton at: (410)269-0978 or jen@indexing.com for more information.

To see more pictures, please visit http://groups.msn.com/Midshipman/yourwebpage.msnw

*Since we are no longer publishing in print, please check our Web site (www.stcsig.org/idx/) for information on all events. We also want to thank to Ginny Hudak-David for acting as events editor over the past several months, and wish you didn't have to give it up. But we are pleased to announce a replacement. Please send upcoming conference and meeting announcements to our **new** events editor, Colleen Dunham, colleend@microsoft.com.*