

PNW-ASI NEWS

Pacific Northwest Chapter | American Society for Indexing | www.pnwasi.org

Newsletter News

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The PNW newsletter is co-edited by Sam Arnold-Boyd and Judy Staigmilller. Watch for summer and winter issues, and please let us know of newsworthy items! Contact us at judyannst@gmail.com and arnoldsam@comcast.net.

PNW's Website: Information and Officers

The PNW-ASI's website, www.pnwasi.org has registration information for the September 16 meeting (under [Next Chapter Meeting](#)) and details about the [Sherry Smith Award for New Indexers](#). The website also features the [2017 PNW officers](#).

Members of the board are: Scott Smiley (president), Carolyn Weaver (past president), Sam Arnold-Boyd (vice president), Amber DeDerick (treasurer), and Maria Sosnowski (secretary).

Thank you to Erica Caridio and Carolyn Weaver for maintaining this website.

From the President's Desk: Scott Smiley



Dear PNW/ASI members and friends,

Our meeting this year will be a particularly important one, I think, as we are going to discuss the future structure of the chapter. The IRS has imposed new strictures on ASI that require that the chapters, including PNW/ASI, become less standalone entities, and so will technically become "committees" of ASI, following the member-approved change to the

ASI bylaws. This will mean our chapter bylaws will be replaced by a new Charter, and we will probably need to decide on some details in that new Charter (we are expecting a model charter to be available from ASI). One of the biggest pieces is that our leadership structure will change from the 5-member board we have now to probably a smaller leadership team for the chapter committee. This is an opportunity for us to build more flexibility in how we manage the chapter. Despite the ASI/IRS-directed changes, we will still have leadership control of our own chapter. ASI is also working on providing more resources to support chapter activities.

ASI Board member Paul Sweum, who is a PNW member, will be at PNW's Fall Meeting to help explain what all this means for our chapter and what we will need to do (see *also* the interview with him in this newsletter). This will be the chance for chapter members to discuss these changes with Paul and the chapter board. The PNW Indexing listserv will be an additional opportunity for discussion. If you're not on this listserv, you can join at http://lists.pnwasi.org/mailman/listinfo/indexing-pnw_lists.pnwasi.org (membership is not required to join the list). Please do note that as this newsletter goes to print, we don't yet have many of the details.

VP Sam Arnold-Boyd and the Program Committee have put together a great program for the Fall Meeting on September 16. With that and the important discussion of chapter matters, I hope to see many of you at the meeting!

PNW/ASI has always been a very strong chapter. Let's work together to keep it that way!

Scott Smiley, 2017 PNW/ASI President

The Sherry Smith Award for New Indexers

The Sherry Smith Award will grant \$100 to help one new indexer per year attend a PNW fall conference. Applicants must:

1. Be currently enrolled in an indexing course for initial training in indexing. (ASI Training in Indexing course, the UC Berkeley Extension Indexing: Theory and Application course, or individual instruction from an established professional indexer)

OR

2. Be in your first year after completion of one of the courses above, as of the date of the fall conference.

Apply no later than one month before the fall conference (August 16). Application is by email to the chapter secretary, indicating your name, location, course/teacher, completion date if applicable, and contact information so that we can verify accuracy. Winner must be willing to volunteer for a one year period after selection for the Program Team to help plan the fall conference. The purpose of the award is to help emerging indexers experience the benefits of networking with other indexers while we harness your ideas and energy to invigorate future conferences.

The winner will be selected by random drawing from the pool of applicants who meet the criteria. The winner will be awarded \$100, going first towards the conference fee, and then to defray other conference-related travel costs. Conference attendance is required.

Applications must be received by August 16.

Apply to Maria Sosnowski, PNW-ASI Chapter Secretary, at maria@index-plus.com

PNW's meeting is Sept. 16!

Who: Indexers and people interested in indexing, all are welcome!

What: PNW's "**Better Skills, Better Business**" meeting, an engaging and informative mix of speakers, discussion, and networking.

Where: **Marriott Springhill Suites**, 1421 SE Tech Center Drive, Vancouver, WA, a location that is a quick drive from the Portland airport.

When: **Saturday, September 16, 8:30-5:30** followed by a dinner at a local restaurant. Registration is now open. To get the *Early Bird discount* (\$65 for ASI, ISC/SCI, and STC members and \$85 for non-members), register by August 31. To get the special rate at the Springhill Marriott, reserve your room by August 16.

How: Follow this link to the **registration packet**. New indexers, apply for the **Sherry Smith Award** for a chance to get \$100 toward conference expenses (see sidebar for more info).

Why: Continue reading below about the line-up for the day's sessions and opportunities for networking...

...Thérèse Shere on indexing cookbooks



Thérèse Shere has indexed more than a hundred and fifty cookbooks over the years, has taught cookbook indexing workshops around the country, and is the author of "Best Practices for Cookbooks" in "Best Practices for Indexing" (American Society for Indexing, 2015) and "Indexing Recipe Titles" in *Indexing Specialties: Cookbooks* (Information Today/American Society of Indexers, 2009). In her previous life, she worked for 20 years in the food business, including as restaurant cook and hostess, food magazine columnist, organic farmer, and bakery owner. She lives in Sonoma County, California – food and wine heaven.

...Thérèse Shere on indexing cookbooks

In her session, Thérèse will give us a fresh look at cookbook indexing.

Thérèse shares:

Cookbook indexing may sound simple, but it isn't. We'll investigate what makes cookbooks (and their users) different from typical texts, principles and best practices for indexing them, and indexing challenges and how to handle them. And we'll look at as many real examples as we have time for, so if there's a cookbook index in your library that you love or hate, bring that too, along with your questions, comments and pet peeves.

PNW's September 16 meeting (continued)...

...Scott Smiley's tax tips, followed by a business-oriented group discussion

Scott Smiley is a full-time freelance indexer who is currently president of PNW/ASI. A member of ASI since 1999 and of PNW/ASI since 2002, he previously served two terms as chapter treasurer and also stepped in to fill a vacancy for one term as past president. Scott was an instructor for the Graduate School (USDA) indexing course from 2009 until its demise in 2015, has a Ph.D. in geography, and was previously an accountant. He indexes primarily scholarly works in the social sciences, humanities, and other fields. Scott is also a published poet and relishes his book and film collections.

Back by popular demand, Scott's session will focus on tax tips that can lead to significant savings over the years. Attendees will learn how to maximize deductions when coming to an indexing conference. Scott will show how some people may be able to deduct more than they actually spend at the meeting!

Following his presentation, participants can share problems and solutions about the business aspects of being an indexer. Scheduling jobs, managing time, organizing records, communicating with clients, and keeping healthy might be some of the topics we'll address. Bring your business-related questions and ideas!

...a "Knotty Bits" group discussion

A "knotty bit" is a perplexing indexing problem which can be a struggle for new and experienced indexers alike. Participants will submit "knotty bits" both ahead of time and during the discussion, knowing that many minds working together are much better than one mind in isolation when it comes to generating possible solutions to aggravating conundrums. If you want to submit questions ahead of time, which will be read anonymously for group discussion, please send them to judyannst@gmail.com.

...“Speed Networking”

This session will give every attendee an opportunity to meet and find out a bit about every other attendee in a fun, comfortable format. **Please bring something to introduce yourself to exchange with others** – it could be a résumé, a few pages of a sample index, a paragraph or two about yourself, or a combination of your choosing. We will let you know prior to the meeting how many copies to bring.

...the PNW business meeting

See Scott Smiley's "From the President's desk" letter on page 1 of this newsletter for an explanation of this important meeting.

...and a networking lunch and dinner

A wide variety of restaurants are within walking distance of the Springhill Marriott. Attendees can use Scott's map of these restaurants to find an option to match their palette and enjoy lunch out with friends new and old. A delivery option will be available for those who would rather remain on-site for lunch.

Dinner will be at a location that will be nearby the Springhill Marriott and that will have vegetarian and gluten-free options. Both meals are pay-your-own-way.

Coming from out of town?

The Marriott Springhill Suites offers attendees a special rate for a small suite that includes a full buffet breakfast with gluten-free options. Be sure to make your reservation before August 16 to secure the discount. Get details in the [registration packet](#). Vancouver and Portland offer a wide variety of amazing opportunities for sight-seeing, adventuring, dining, and shopping. If you're from out of town and plan to extend your stay, find ideas for things to do in the [registration packet](#) and in [Visit Vancouver's magazine](#).

See you in September! Questions???

If you have any questions, feel free to contact

Sam Arnold-Boyd at cascadeindexing@gmail.com or Maria Sosnowski at maria@index-plus.com.

ASI 2017 Conference in Portland, Maine - An Interview with Paul Sweum

The 2017 American Society for Indexing's national conference had many wonderful sessions running concurrently. Which ones did you attend?

Let's see. I attended "Size Does Matter: Fitting the Index to the Pages" and the session on the new embedded indexing software, "Index Manager," which has the most flexible, engaging interface I've seen with any indexing programs currently available. I also attended the session on "Metadata: Creating & Maintaining Accessibility" and "Indexing Outside the Box." Other sessions included "Editing as You Go: Using Structure and Term Selection to Produce an Almost-Final Index" and "Developing Your Online Presence."

When two sessions running concurrently seemed like a toss-up to you, how did you decide? Coin toss, or ...?

This is always the most frustrating part of attending these conferences—having to decide between two simultaneous sessions. Before the conference, I typically evaluate the content of the brief as it relates to my business needs. Sometimes, if the circumstances call for it, I might slip between two sessions....but I try to keep doing that sort of thing to a minimum. This is why the content of the brief is critical and needs to accurately describe what takes place in the session, as professionals pay big money to attend these conferences to bolster their training and businesses.

You have many years of experience as an indexer under your belt. Is there anything you anticipate doing differently as a result of attending the 2017 conference?

Not really, since my array of services offers more than just indexing, but I'm not a typical indexing business. However, the ASI conference helps to stay in tune with incoming trends and with what's new in the industry, and does serve its purposes for adding to my indexing facility by observing new methods and ideas other indexers incorporate into their workflow. It's also a way to cultivate new and ongoing relationships in the industry.

Did you participate in the "conference buddy" system? Any comments about it?

In the buddy system, I was matched up with a gentleman from Virginia who is a former nuclear physicist. After meeting him at the opening reception, I introduced him to several other indexers, then a group of us invited him out to a seafood dinner on the Portland waterfront. From there, he mingled and got to know several other indexers. I believe in the merits of the buddy system and the warm reception it brings to a newcomer. It helps someone new to break into a room which has its moments of presenting itself as rather intimidating. If it was offered when I attended my first indexing conference in Portland, OR in 2009, I was not aware of it and wish it had been available to me. It can make a significant difference in the perception of the industry, and I believe it serves a meaningful purpose in helping to retain new and interested talent.

I see you were one of the presenters of Usability Analysis in the Indexing Profession. What motivates you to present and what are the rewards?

Since I'm in front of my colleagues at an indexing conference (as opposed to a client base), my mission is to do whatever I can to pass along any experience as part of my effort to help the industry thrive. At past indexing conferences, I hosted marketing workshops, although I did not host it this time because I wanted to concentrate all my energies on the board meeting at the front end of the conference. I was one of three presenters for the session on Usability. I host workshops in other industries to bring in business, so hosting a workshop at an indexing conference or being part of a panel helps to keep my presentation

ASI 2017 Conference in Portland, Maine - An Interview with Paul Sweum (continued)

skills fresh. It also provides an opportunity to receive feedback from the attendees during discussions, which can be especially helpful when someone pokes holes in a theory or practice that I float in the session; it forces me to revisit that content and generally improves its usefulness for the future. This illustrates yet another example in how feedback, whether it's positive or negative, is valuable information.

Often at conferences attendees talk about indexing problems and solutions at meals or other "on-your-own" time. Do you have any thoughts about what you glean from unofficial conversations compared to what you take home from the official programming?

For me, those moments are more about cultivating relationships. Certainly, some chats over dinner and drinks are about indexing or the industry, but most of it involves personal matters and getting to know who you're talking to. For my time, it's all about finding common interests, because so many folks in indexing come from such an array of interesting backgrounds....for example, I'm a baseball fan, and I discovered by chatting with someone that they're a big Atlanta Braves fan. So, we were able to talk about past playoff matchups and some Hall of Fame players who were on our teams. Had I not made that effort to converse with this person, I would have never discovered that common interest....but of course she won't talk to me now because of a comment I made about Bobby Cox (former Braves manager), so there you are, I'm making friends wherever I go! (Actually, it all worked out.) So, with that effort to converse I've opened the door to future potentials in terms of work or ASI-related collaboration, and can operate from that point to cultivate the relationship.

How did you like meeting in Portland, Maine? Was there anything about the city that enhanced the conference experience?

One of my colleagues at the conference, who lives in the Northeast, commented on how Portland is like a smaller version of Boston. Having spent some time in Boston by foot and subway, I must agree with her. The waterfront was beautiful, and my first meal was a lobster omelet. I also took a dive into other local seafood delights, such as oysters. There were also a couple gelato places, including one called The Gelato Fiasco, so I had to check that out!

Do you have any words to inspire others, newcomers to the profession and more experienced people alike, to attend national conference as often as they can?

Let me put it like this....if I'm a technical writer offering indexing as one of several services, and I'm finding value in attending the national conferences, I can only imagine the value it presents to dedicated indexers. As we know, not everyone is, nor can everyone be an indexer. Indexing is a unique skill that I believe carries an element of mystique to an outsider's perspective, and when someone such as a potential client realizes you know how to do it, it attracts attention and sets you apart. To me, that warrants an effort in seeking out ways to develop and maximize your facility, and anyone running a small business needs to understand there's an investment and cost to doing business. It's your profession, so why not further excellence in what you do?

It's worth the time and treasure to attend the national conference as often as possible for several reasons. First, it provides the greatest mix of sessions, including the day-long introductory indexing pre-session....and while that's aimed at newbies, it's also helpful to reinforce skills and methods for more experienced indexers. In the general conference, sessions serve both new, intermediate and experienced indexers. In addition, the national conference is the best opportunity to meet indexers with a variety of specializations, so that maximizes connecting opportunities in that regard.

The conference is the most robust introduction to the field for prospective or new indexers, and ASI is considering new ways of making conference attendance more accessible for newcomers. Another key element at the conferences involves how ASI is working to expand opportunities for the field, such as

ASI 2017 Conference in Portland, Maine - An Interview with Paul Sweum (continued)

work beyond typical publishing circles....and the national conference is a primary way to help that along, where a diverse set of backgrounds and perspectives come together to develop and evolve innovative ideas.

Finally, ASI is working diligently and thinking outside the box to create a series of conferences in upcoming years that take place at interesting locations, close to airport and transportation hubs, as part of an effort to maximize value and accessibility for all attendees. It's also important that these destinations offer recreational opportunities for attendees to provide options for sightseeing and vacation plans, and in my time on the board that's something I consider. I'm excited about the prospects and places we're looking at!

Do you have any comments about the Society and how it's influenced your career in general?

ASI has helped my professional development tremendously, and that began by helping me understand where the bar sits in terms of expectations related to indexing skills. There are a number of ASI members over the years who have served as mentors and been supportive, and I'm indebted to them for their time, attention, and interest in me as an individual with goofy ideas who has something different to offer. I hope I'm able to help and inspire others in that way. In addition, as I've continued to attend conferences I've maintained my awareness with current trends and developing technologies in the industry, helping to bolster my skills and confidence as a professional. That in turn helps me to present a complete and honed professional service package for my clients.

ASI was also where I cut my teeth as a presenter for workshops, so it has helped me "road test" that skill set. In addition to helping develop skills, ASI introduced me to interesting professionals from across the country, and many of them are friends who I keep in touch with outside of the conference. They're some of the smartest, brightest, informed individuals I've ever met, and my life is richer as a result from both a professional and personal standpoint. ASI is critical in promoting indexing in the States, along with the coordinated efforts and support from our sister organizations around the world, and it's been a fascinating journey to grow as an indexer as the organization grows with information findability excellence and the related technologies.

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Paul Sweum, the Principal of Top Hat Word & Index since 2006, provides over 20 years of professional technical communications and writing experience, including over a decade as an urban planning professional. His experience in both publishing and government sector provides him with a unique skill set in bringing effective solutions to his clients. As a technical writer and document usability specialist, he focuses on documentation in government and business.

In addition to consulting on project management, facilitating stakeholder involvement and writing planning policy, he helps planners and communities across the West maximize the usability of content in their plans and documents. Paul is a graduate of Arizona State University, and carries certificates in grammar and technical writing. In his spare time, he enjoys baseball, travel, reading nonfiction, and dabbles in stained glass.

ISC-SCI 2017 Conference in Montreal - Judy Gibbs

I attended the annual conference of the Indexing Society of Canada (ISC), which was held June 2 – 3 in Montreal. It was a wonderful conference held in a wonderful city.

The conference began with a 2-hour panel discussion by the bi-lingual team of indexers who indexed the *Truth and Reconciliation Report*. The report reflects the trauma of parents and children separated by a government policy that sent children away to Indian boarding schools in an attempt to eradicate indigenous culture. Children endured hardships due to insufficient government funding. They also endured mental and physical abuse.



Research for the report drew on sources compiled in different locations over many decades. It varied greatly in depth and quality. Indexers faced the challenge of indexing information that was often incomplete and spotty. The content was also extremely painful. Indexing it was emotionally challenging—a “tear-jerker.” The report was published by McGill-Queen’s University Press, which is in Montreal. The managing editor from the press joined the discussion to comment on his interaction with the indexers. The presentation was a poignant beginning to the conference.

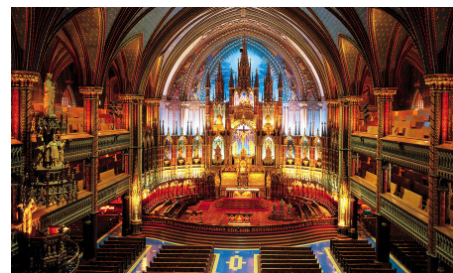
Other presentations included cookbook indexing, usability, and thesaurus creation. Two presentations were on software. I was recruited at the last minute for the presentation on indexing software so that I could do a show-and-tell on SKY software. The conference ended with a presentation by Kate Mertes on term selection. I always learn from Kate, and this presentation was no exception. It was an excellent conclusion to an excellent two-day conference.



The conference was very affordable, as was my lodging. Lodging options ranged from the conference hotel to dorm rooms at McGill University. I picked the least expensive dorm room, which was \$45 Canadian. It was inexpensive enough that I could afford a room by myself. It was also extremely quiet, so I could index in the evening. It was inexpensive enough that I could afford an entire week in Montreal.

Mount Royal Park from <http://gomontrealtourism>.

Montreal is a wonderful city. The high point—literally—is Mont Royal, which has a beautiful view of the city. I walked up from my dorm room. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts is fabulous. While I was there, it had a Chagall exhibit that must have filled at least ten rooms. I’ve never seen so much work by a single major artist in one exhibit. Montreal Old Town has the Notre-Dame Basilica, which rivals the major European Churches. Lectures and tours are in English as well as French. The city is very walkable and apparently very safe any time of day or night. I savored every moment of the conference and the trip.



Notre-Dame Basilica from <http://gomontrealtourism>.

Judi Gibbs

Judi Gibbs, president of [Write Guru, Ltd.](http://www.writeguru.com), has been indexing since 1999. She holds a BA in Anthropology and an MLS from the University of Washington. Previous work experience includes usability testing, and the usability of her indexes reflects that experience. She indexes a wide range of subject matter. She has traveled extensively and has an ongoing interest in folk art and cultures from around the world.