PNW/ASI NEWS

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

Newsletter News

In this issue:

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

PNW's Website: Chapter Charter

The PNW/ASI's website at www.pnwasi.org has many resources.

Find the new **Charter for ASI Committee Chapters and SIGs** by pulling down the "About Us" tab to "Chapter Bylaws." Click on the link for the Charter, which superseded the bylaws in 2018.

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

PNW Listserv

Are you subscribed to the PNW listserv? Sign up at:
http://lists.pnwasi.org/mailman/listinfo/indexing-pnw_lists.pnwasi.org

From the Chair: Judy Staigmiller

As a fairly new indexer, I look forward to taking on a greater role in our own local ASI chapter. I find our Pacific Northwest Chapter of the American Society for Indexing an unusually energetic and encouraging group of people, and it is fun to be among kindred spirits who understand the allure of this type of work and of working independently.

What's nice though, is that we are working independently only when we want to be. Do you have questions about the process of indexing itself? Do you need input from a more experienced indexer? Suggestions from someone who uses the same software? Perhaps you are wondering how to handle a specific aspect of the business side of indexing. The network is only an email away.

The networking is even better when attending chapter meetings and talking with fellow indexers face-to-face. I often think back on my first PNW meeting and how down-to-earth and welcoming the major presenter was. Additionally, we have a reputation as an active, go-getter chapter! Dollar for dollar, the local, day-long conference is one of the best bargains around for sharing knowledge and expertise.

PNW has weathered the organizational change mandated by the IRS and remains a strong and active group. My coming year as chapter committee chair has been eased by the hard work and commitment of previous officers, board members, and other volunteers. I look forward to a year of providing a great program and fine-tuning our role in the world of indexing and ASI.

PNW's Leadership for 2019

In addition to Judy Staigmiller as Chair, Angela Howard is PNW's new Treasurer, and Sam Arnold-Boyd continues as Program Chair. In addition, Maria Sosnowski has agreed to continue as Membership Coordinator.

We want to extend a huge thank you to the outgoing Board. Both Scott Smiley and Carolyn Weaver, outgoing Chair and Treasurer, have logged many years of indispensable volunteering on behalf of PNW. Thank you!!!

The PNW Board (Chair, Treasurer, and Program Chair) are elected annually in the fall. Don't be shy about jumping in and taking your turn!

Find descriptions of the duties of these officers on the PNW website under "Officers & Committees" on the "About Us" pull-down menu. The direct link to the descriptions is http://pnwasi.org/wp/?page_id=1177.

Lisa Fedorak with Sam Arnold-Boyd

"Preparing for the Future" at PNW's 2018 Fall Meeting

PNW members "prepared for the future" at their fall meeting on September 15, 2018 at the SpringHill Marriott in Vancouver, Washington. A handful of members arrived early on the 14th and enjoyed a walking tour of downtown Vancouver, Fort Vancouver, and the Columbia River waterfront.

Pilar Wyman, Wanda Meck, and Judy Staigmiller at Fort Vancouver.

Twenty-one people gathered the next day for a full day of presentations and sharing. Participants were mainly from Oregon and Washington with representation from New Mexico, Montana, California, Vancouver, B.C., and Washington D.C. Pilar Wyman, from D.C., won the "prize" for farthest distance traveled to attend!

The morning focused on digital indexing, with **Pilar Wyman** presenting an overview of the field. She outlined approaches for working with clients and used flowcharts to show specific paths for getting from print to digital. The flowcharts are a helpful visual guide for matching the relevant tools and software to specific applications. Her presentation was similar to the one she gave at the ASI conference in Cleveland, and the materials are posted on the Digital Publications Indexing website. On the "Ebook Indexing Resources" page, scroll down to "Conference presentation handouts and proceedings" for the links to "How to Be the Interface between Publishers and Digital Indexing Techniques."

Jan Wright and Pilar Wyman

Jan Wright contributed to this presentation and then led a discussion about the experiences of PNW indexers with digital indexing. The panel included Sam Arnold-Boyd and Angela Howard (in photo, from left). The session concluded with ample time for questions for both Pilar and Jan.

After lunch, tax attorney **Greg Bessert** presented "The New Tax Law and You," covering changes made in the new tax legislation that will impact filing 2018 tax returns. Greg went through drafts of the new forms, pointing out issues applicable to freelancers. For example, some deductions are going away, the age limit on making IRA contributions is going away, and college 529 savings plans will now be able to be used to make student loan payments. There is also a new deduction in the form of 20% of taxable business income, which is particularly nice for freelancers like indexers. This session was interactive with questions, discussion, and even some humor!

"Preparing for the Future" 2018 PNW Meeting (continued)

Disaster planning was the focus of the next session. **Carolyn Weaver** led a discussion of the various approaches to safeguarding against technological vulnerabilities, crisis mitigation strategies, and estate planning issues. She presented some information as well as asked people for ideas on how they manage various issues, and she suggested things people could do or think about to make it easier for loved ones to handle their clients and projects if they died or were suddenly incapacitated. Do you have a written plan for how to manage current and upcoming projects and clients and someone who is able to follow it? Have you met with an estate planning attorney to have a will, power of attorney, living will, and related documents drawn up?

In the last session of the day, **Judy Staigmiller** led a "knotty bits" discussion. The whole group discussed how they handle perplexing issues in indexing such as page ranges broken up by unrelated material, entries ending with a number that creates confusion with the page number, and words that represent more than one concept. This was a good interactive session to end the day, resulting in an energetic exchange of ideas.

After the sessions, most of the participants gathered for dinner at the Corbett Fish House in nearby Corbett. Delicious!

~ Maria Sosnowski contributed to this article.

We'd like to once again thank our excellent speakers: **Pilar Wyman**, **Jan Wright**, **Greg Bessert**, and **Carolyn Weaver.** *Thank you!!!*

Thanks also to **Sam Arnold-Boyd**, Program Chair, and the planning committee of **Judy Staigmiller** and **Angela Howard**. Many thanks to **Carolyn Weaver**, **Maria Sosnowski**, and **Scott Smiley** for all their help along the way. Thanks to **Cher Paul** for the great labels and to **Ruth Satterlee** for the volunteer bookmarks.

View of Crown Point and the Columbia River Gorge
Photo by Sam Arnold-Boyd

We need your ideas and help with planning for September 2019!

PNW's Program Chair, Sam Arnold-Boyd, is starting to lay the groundwork for this September's PNW meeting in Vancouver. We've had good luck with the central location of Vancouver's SpringHill Marriott in recent years and have tentative plans to make it our destination once again in 2019. We enjoyed lunch and a walking tour on the Friday before the meeting for those people who wanted to arrive earlier in the day on Friday and avoid the afternoon/evening traffic problems. If you have ideas about the location and/or logistics, please share them with Sam at cascadeindexing@gmail.com.

The Planning Committee would also love to hear about what you'd like to explore and learn in the upcoming fall of 2019! NOW is the time to send these ideas and wishes to Sam, once again at cascadeindexing@gmail.com.

If you are willing to help out with the the September meeting, let Sam know, along with the parameters of your ability to help.

Thanks in advance for sharing your ideas and a bit of your time to help ensure that PNW members will have another worthwhile meeting!

PNW/ASI Spotlight: An interview with Angela Howard

How and when did you learn about indexing? What inspired you to switch from technical writing?

I studied Computer Science in college and was a programmer (back when we called them "programmers") for a few years, but I didn't enjoy it very much, so when I was asked to write a user's manual for a program I had written, I discovered technical writing, a career I hadn't heard about before. I took extension courses, learned about and joined STC (Society for Technical Communication), and was quite happy as a tech writer for many years. Then, when I had the chance to write a new manual (rather than continually editing existing manuals), I had to write the index myself and figured it wouldn't be that difficult--it's just common sense, right?--but it was a lot more difficult than I thought it would be, and I was humbled to realize I couldn't find information I had written in the manual using my own index. So once again I looked for courses, and I discovered the USDA Indexing Course, and ASI. When the company I was working for as a tech writer closed down its local office, I decided to try freelancing as an indexer rather than look for a new tech writing job. I'm happy to say I have now been an indexer longer than I was a programmer and a tech writer combined.

If someone had told you in your teen years that you would someday index for work, what would you have thought?

If someone had told me I would or could be an indexer, and explained what that was, I think I would've been over the moon! I liked nothing better than reading books, and I often studied by taking notes on my text books and organizing the material so I could understand and remember it better. I would have studied English and/or Library Science in college. I'm not sure I would've heeded any warnings about pay rates or the difficulties of freelancing. I was kind of lost about what I wanted to do at that age; I liked English and Math the best, but I thought the only thing I could do with an English degree was teach, which seemed too scary, and the only thing I could do with a Math degree was be an accountant, which seemed too boring. I followed the advice of a high school counselor who said, "You're smart in every subject, and computers are the wave of the future, so you could study Computer Science and be assured of a good, well-paying job." (See previous question for how that turned out.)

If you could choose the perfect fun project for yourself, including subject area, what would it be?

One of my outside interests is modern art, and I take art classes where we study various artists. One of the things I like to do for my class, for example if we're studying Matisse, is to take all the art books I own that have any information about him and create sort of a meta-index that tells me where to find all of his information and his individual works in those books. I share it with my class, and they can discover which books they might want to get that have certain information or works they're interested in. I think it would be fascinating to index biographies of artists.

Do you have thoughts you would like to share with newcomers and persons who are considering indexing?

I think I'd like to share the benefits and difficulties in equal doses. Indexing is fascinating work if you love reading and organizing information, and the flexibility of working from home is wonderful, especially if you have children or want to participate in other daytime activities. But, getting started and building up steady clients can take years, depending on the market for the type of indexes you specialize in, and you'll need to have another source of income during that time. Scheduling and time management are ongoing problems. I know some people are able to index full time and make a livable income, but I don't think that's necessarily a given.

PNW/ASI Spotlight: An interview with Angela Howard (continued)

For me, indexing is an ideal second income for our household, and it allows me to belong to my husband's health insurance plan. I want to emphasize that these are my opinions based on my experiences and situation. From talking with other indexers, I know there are many ways to make indexing work as a career.

Finally, how does membership in ASI and the PNW chapter impact your indexing life?

Building on my response to the previous question, I would say that it's absolutely vital to belong to an organization like ASI or ISC/SCI or the Society of Indexers. There is no other way to obtain or discover opportunities for continuing education and professional development. The publishing world and the tools of our trade are continually changing and advancing. And when you're a freelancer, networking is just as vital. When other indexers get to know you and what you do, you get referrals. The Indexer Locator in ASI is invaluable; several ongoing clients have found me that way. I also have to emphasize that the personal connections I've made have helped me feel a lot less isolated. No matter how introverted you are (extremely, in my case), if you go to enough conferences and chapter meetings, you can't help but form some friendships along the way. Indexers as a whole are open and kind, and even though I'm fairly new to the PNW chapter, I've been very impressed by the kindness and professionalism of those I've met.

ASI 2019 Annual Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona

https://www.istockphoto.com/photos/

ASI's annual conference is scheduled for April 25-27, 2019 in the sunny city of Scottsdale, Arizona. Say "hello" to summer early by enjoying the desert warmth in the springtime and "Bloom in the Desert."

Stay tuned to the ASI website for the specific line-up of sessions and other opportunities for networking in Scottsdale in April: https://www.asindexing.org/category/conference/.