Spring 2013 Meeting Recap
By Meridith Murray

The spring 2013 Heartland Chapter meeting was held on Saturday, May 11 at the MCL Restaurant & Bakery on 86th Street in Indianapolis. There were fourteen members in attendance, including three from the Chicago chapter and two “newbies.” We enjoyed meeting Zenia Tatarsky from Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, who is in the beginning stages of the ASI indexing course, and Eileen Simon from Dayton, Ohio, who is thinking about getting started in indexing. We hope they were encouraged by our association.

Margie Towery led a productive and informative discussion on the subject of index evaluation. Her presentation is the subject of another article so I won’t go into it here, except to say that I love her terminology. From now on, as I work on indexes, I will take delight in knowing that what I am doing is “clumping, gathering, and scattering”! It was extremely instructive to look at one of Margie’s indexes along with the indexes of others in my group and examine together how they could be improved. We are fortunate to have Margie as a member of our chapter, and we appreciate her willingness to share her experience and expertise with us.

Margie also brought with her examples of recent Wilson Award-winning books for us to peruse and admire. Some of these undertakings are nothing short of amazing. Kate Mertes’ 2013 winner, Mes Pensées, is particularly impressive, containing as it does a full page of prefatory/explanatory notes before the index even gets started. Margie’s two-volume work on Renaissance cartography is simply astounding (it took her three months to create it). These examples serve to remind us that what we are doing is as much art as it is craft, and the best indexes are a happy melding of form and function with some creativity and imagination added in (plus, I suspect, a sprinkling of stardust!)

At our business meeting, we welcomed Sue Klefstad as our new Junior Co-President. Outgoing Senior President Margaret Hentz conducted the business meeting with her usual aplomb. I will have to brush up on Roberts Rules of Order before it is my turn in the fall! We had a brief discussion on the subject of pro bono indexing as a way for new indexers to gain experience and a portfolio of work by completing indexing projects under the guidance of an experienced indexer. The Rocky Mountain chapter is looking into starting such a program, and we decided to let them pilot this endeavor (and work the kinks out of it) before we decide if it is something we would like to do.

At each of our meetings I am reminded of the power of synergy. I am invigorated and encouraged by the opportunity to spend time with others with whom I have so much in common. Indexers have a unique way of looking at the world, and often other people don’t understand or appreciate our craft or our peculiar mindset. We may work alone, but it’s comforting to realize that we are not alone. I hope to see everyone again in the fall. We will probably meet in early October in Richmond (more details forthcoming—thanks, Sue!) Until then, keep calm and carry on! Happy indexing.
A Message from our Outgoing Co-President

Hello fellow Heartland indexers,

As outgoing Senior Co-President of the chapter, I would like to thank all of you who have participated in our various chapter activities and attended our meetings. I want to extend special thanks to Meridith who volunteered to be Junior Co-President for 2 terms and planned great programs during that time. We wouldn’t have such a great chapter without our other officers—Cherry Delaney, Secretary and Mary Johnson, Treasurer.

Carol Reed, Laura Ewald, Paula McCoy, and Shelley Quattrocchi have turned our website into a vibrant source of news about our chapter. In addition, Carol has diligently produced extremely informative and professional looking newsletters which help keep us connected despite our geographically dispersed locations. Hats off to others who have contributed to the chapter during the years. It is invigorating and intellectually stimulating to be a member of this chapter. I have always come away from our meetings with new indexing techniques to try and a renewed enthusiasm about indexing as a career.

As I look back over the last couple of years, we as a chapter can be proud of our accomplishments. We celebrated our 20th anniversary as a chapter, held two great meetings a year, produced informative newsletters, redesigned our website, uplifted our publicity brochure, and revised our Policies and Procedures Manual. I am confident that Meridith and Sue Klefstad, incoming Junior Co-President will lead the chapter to new heights.

Kind regards,

Margaret Hentz ■

Greetings from our New Junior Co-President

Hi, everyone!

I’m really pleased to be coming in as Heartland’s Junior Co-President. This is my second year as a freelance indexer and the Heartland Chapter has been a valuable resource for me.

My first Heartland meeting was in the spring of 2009. I was working at a book production company as an editorial assistant and taking the ASI Training in Indexing course. At that meeting, I was with people who were actually indexing and it was nothing short of inspirational for me.

I thought I’d offer a few bits about my book production background as a way of shining a small light on that big publishing industry we work in. In 2000 I started working at Omegatype Typography, setting college textbooks. It was the days of paper manuscripts and at first I simply applied the edits marked on the manuscript to the Word document. I graduated to being a compositor and working with page layout software. I especially loved setting the boxes and tables that abound in college textbooks. Allyn & Bacon was a primary customer and their parent Pearson started off-shoring comp. That’s when I moved to editorial.

Have you ever wondered what the difference is between a typesetter and a compositor? In the olden days, a typesetter produced a column of text of some specified width. That column of text was given to the page layout person, who cut it into page pieces and worked it around floating elements such as photos or figures. These days page layout software is used, and the typesetting and page layout jobs are being done by one person, called a compositor, aka “comp,” who works in the composition department, aka “comp.”

In my later editorial days, I was a packager. A packager shepherds a manuscript through copyediting, art, comp, proofreading, and indexing, hiring freelancers as necessary along the way.

Many large publishers use packagers instead of tracking those details themselves. An indexing job from a packager will probably have a lower page rate than a job
directly from the publisher, since the packager is taking a cut. On the other hand, the jobs may be more regular, because a large publisher will funnel a lot of books through their packagers. And a busy packager loves nothing better than a dependable freelancer.

When it comes to marketing, packagers and book production companies are listed in Literary Market Place. Check to see if your library subscribes to the online edition so you can access it for free.

I live in the Monticello area in central Illinois on the banks of the Sangamon River with my partner and dogs. We’ve been container gardeners for years because our soil is glacial till—clay and small rock; it makes for fun rock collecting! We’ve been “growing” garden soil with compost and will have our first in-ground garden this year.

I look forward to hearing from you about what you need Heartland to provide, to assist your indexing; let me know.

—Sue Klefstad ■

**ASI Conference Highlights**

*By Margie Towery*

The initial hot topic at the 2013 ASI Conference in San Antonio was the American Airlines computer glitch on Tuesday before the conference, which impacted several of the attendees’ arrivals in San Antonio. The conference itself started off with a plenary session by Judith Pascoe, an English professor at the University of Iowa. Judith caught indexers’ attention when she blogged about indexing on the Chronicle of Higher Education’s website. Her presentation was an expansion of that post. I was delighted because she reminded us of Barbara Pym’s fiction about indexers and editors. She spoke particularly about No Fond Return of Love, which I downloaded and started reading on the trip. Joshua Tallent, who also spoke at the 2011 conference, followed her and updated us on what has been happening in the e-book realm.

The session most useful to me as a scholarly indexer was Kate Mertes’s talk on historical documents. She (and the audience) discussed issues particular to indexing primary documents (letters, journals, diaries, classic reprints, etc.). Those issues include names, terminology and synonyms, modern user expectations, and reflexivity. Kate also won the Wilson Award this year (and I’ll bring her winning book to the meeting on May 11).

The second day’s plenary session had the audience laughing but was nonetheless thought-provoking. Corey Pressman threw out a lot of terminology, including “information curators,” that is, indexers are curators of the aboutness of the texts/objects. He showed examples of “post-book objects” (e.g., apps and e-books with embedded videos). Corey emphasized that humans are at the very beginning of this transformation in information and how it’s presented. We as indexers must be at the core of this revolution.

Jan Wright received the Hines Award, not the least for her work on the DTTF. Her acceptance speech provided an inside look at the committee’s operations and relationships and more information about writing e-book indexes. Overall, this conference, like last year’s, focused on e-books, providing current ideas, EPUB 3 updates, and related ideas. ■

Heartlanders Judy McConville, Devon Thomas, and Maureen Johnson
Digital Trends Task Force Update
By Maureen Johnson

At this year’s ASI conference, Jan Wright, Pilar Wyman, and Dave Ream reported on the progress of the Digital Trends Task Force over the past year. A complete list of task force members is on the DTTF page on the ASI website, along with an extensive collection of references and links.

During the past year significant progress has been made increasing awareness of the importance of a quality index in digital content. Members of the task force have presented at several major publishing conferences and gained a lot of attention for indexing. At the Tools of Change conference in New York, Pilar Wyman’s presentation became one of the top trending topics on Twitter!

Dave Ream reported that the EPUB 3.0 standard for indexing has been written in record time and has been submitted for review for final inclusion in the upcoming EPUB standard release. EPUB is an open source standard that is followed by most e-book publishers to allow for quality display and functionality of their digital products. The indexing standard that the DTTF created will allow for a fully-linked, interactive index for navigation in the digital environment. The EPUB standards team has done presentations with all of the ASI chapters. If you missed that, be sure to check out the resources on the DTTF page on the ASI website.

Jan Wright’s persistence in promoting improved indexing capabilities was rewarded with a face-to-face meeting with the engineers at Adobe. She cautioned that software changes take time but the meeting was very productive and better tools will be coming one day. In the meantime, she has created a software workaround for indexes in InDesign. Those of you who work in InDesign can contact her directly to get details on how to create unique IDs at the paragraph level to create active indexes.

Pilar Wyman encouraged all of us to become advocates for indexing, not only of books and journals, but to speak in terms of content in all its forms. Some key terms indexers should begin to use are:

• **Monetization** — access to content does in fact lead to sales and that gets publishers attention.

• **Discovery** — in the overload of information on the Internet, being “findable” is key. Using indexes for search helps users find specific products, which leads to sales.

• **Search the index first** — when producing digital products, the index can be placed as the first “page,” it will be searched first and it will provide the most useful entries into the content.

• **Metadata** — we should think of the index as a metadata set for a given product. The DTTF is currently trying to get the index as a field in the ONIX for Books standard, which provides searchable information on books and publications. This will increase findability . . . which leads to sales.

The final speaker in this session was Corey Pressman of Exprima Media, a producer of digital products. He is a big fan of indexes as a solution to the problem of findability in the abundance of information that is available today. He encourages indexers to remember that we are at the beginning of these dramatic changes and instead of being anxious, we should be excited about the opportunities that creates for people with our skill set. I recommend reading his blog post on the importance of indexes.

All in all the session was an uplifting, optimistic look at the future of indexing. I encourage you all to review the DTTF page on the ASI website. There is much to learn about our new horizons.

Review: Berkeley Online Indexing Course
By Cherry Delaney

Once I decided to pursue training in indexing, I looked at the main three sources for training. At the Providence, Rhode Island, ASI conference in 2011, I attended sessions in which participants reviewed the three major sources. ASI Training in Indexing was in the process of upgrading their course, and it was mainly a self-learning approach. You read the materials, then tested for the three separate levels or courses. The USDA course didn’t seem as up-to-date or relevant as the other two, and I liked the idea of a project-based learning style, which Berkeley offered. I could test how well I was doing at this new skill set and get valuable feedback before throwing myself into freelance indexing. The Berkeley course allowed six months to complete all the assignments.

When I joined, I was grouped with others in various stages of the course. Thursday evenings gave us a chance to ask questions of whichever teacher was assigned the chat session. Though there were hiccups with the chat sessions, they switched to a new tool that worked a little better. I was assigned to Max Macallister, who lives in Australia. Getting assignments returned from him always involved a time delay, since our time zones are over 14 hours apart. Without the luxury of Skype or audio calls, it took me a while to get a feel for Max's grading and instruction style. I remember him saying that I had done a “reasonable attempt” at one index assignment. I didn’t know if this was a nice way of saying, “not so good” or a compliment. Turns out, it was a compliment, but it took some email conversations to clarify. Also, you were graded on participation and interaction in the chat sessions. This helped make sure everyone contributed something during the chat sessions.

Sylvia Coates, creator of the course, would moderate chat sessions and share her personal experiences. I think that indexers are great at sharing how they do freelance work and how it is an ongoing learning experience from the variety of books indexed to the peculiarities of publishers/authors. There are so many nuances of indexing that it will continually test your ability to be a lifelong learner. It helps if you enjoy this.

We were given access to test versions of each of the three main software indexing tools, and I really struggled with Macrex. I recall a fellow novice indexer not taking

the Berkeley course precisely because of the requirement to complete the first several assignments using each of the tools. I thought it provided an IT challenge that I could hang my hat on; however, there were evenings that I questioned my quest to conquer all three tools. Still, it gave me insight into how the tools worked before committing money to purchase one of them. I settled on purchasing Cindex and have not regretted the decision.

Berkeley offered some very basic embedded assignments which I feel could have been developed more. Although I thought I would finish early, a summer visit with our son from South Korea had me finishing just a few weeks from the full six-month time limit. Having six months to complete the course gives you freedom to work around the events and interruptions in your life. It also gives you time to do more reading and practicing. I liked the real life project-based training. It worked well for me. I have gone on to create indexes for pay, and I have the course materials to review, with notes.

My graduate degree was in education, instructional design, and curriculum development, and I work for a university, so it was intriguing to see how the course would be designed and how I would feel about taking an online course, when I have always attended a brick and mortar setting. I highly recommend it for adult learners with day jobs. Self discipline is required, but that will be needed once you start indexing, too!
Index Evaluation Workshop
By Laura A. Ewald

While the term “peer review” can send a chill up the spine of any writer, I think it is never more so than among indexers. We are a hardy lot, but we work solo most of the time, with our brains, expertise and personalities wholly engaged in every project, and though every indexer will expect to find some mistakes in indexes past, we would prefer to find those “oops” moments ourselves rather than advertise the fact that we’re not perfect, especially to our peers.

And yet, how can we get better at what we do, if we don’t evaluate our work? And as in anything else creative, how can we as “author,” really evaluate an index we have written? As both a writer and proofreader/editor in my other life, I know for a fact that an author is generally too close to the work to catch all the mistakes. As an indexer, I know that an author is too close to his or her work to index it effectively, that a fresh set of eyes—belonging to a professional indexer—is needed to view and evaluate the work in order to make the index the best it can be for the reader.

Well, at the spring 2013 Heartland Chapter meeting in Indianapolis, attendees were given the opportunity to be both the reviewer and the “reviewee” in the peer review process thanks to Margie Towery’s great workshop, Evaluating an Index Together. We gathered at the MCL Restaurant & Bakery meeting room for this two-part workshop based on the Wilson Award Index Evaluation Worksheet, using the Wilson Award Short-form Checklist as our guide.

One of the things that Margie clarified for us is that evaluation is not the same thing as editing. Evaluation means to look at the big picture, things like the overall usability, coverage, analysis, and style, while editing is really looking at getting the little details right. Certain items on the checklist are important to both, of course: accuracy in spelling, alphabetization and cross-references will certainly be edited, but how these things contribute to the way the index works for the reader is a part of the evaluation.

Margie began the workshop by handing out a copies of one of her own indexes from the early 1990s, which gave attendees the opportunity to look at an index Margie had done when she was not far from where most of us are in our indexing now. The whole group then worked to apply the Wilson Award Short-form Checklist in order to evaluate for the Mechanics, Substance, and Elegance of the index.

Mechanics refers to accuracy, cross-references, double-postings and flipped entries, format and layout, locators, names and terms, and style. The substance category includes analysis, coverage, creative problem solving, main headings, subheadings, terms and access, and usability. Elegance is the most subjective of the three areas of evaluation. It includes overall impressions, such as visual appeal, readability, and consistency, but it also touches on the intangibles, such as “graceful simplicity” and “precise richness.” Pretty heady stuff, isn’t it? And not always easy to apply, but we could recognize it in the several examples of previous Wilson Award-winning indexes Margie brought to share with the group.

After lunch, we broke into small groups, which Margie chose based on the subjects of the books for which we had each provided an index for this exercise. (Pre-meeting publicity asked us to each bring three copies of either an index we had written or, if we had not yet written one, then an index we had used in a published book.) We then took time to use the Wilson Checklist to evaluate each of the indexes individually and then discussed our findings within the small groups. This was the scary part! But as Margie herself says, “Index evaluation is the most important way to continue to improve one’s indexing, no matter the stage you’re at or the type of material you index. It is, of course, scary, as several comments on the evaluations note. Maybe that is why the practice has declined.”

What an eye-opener this small-group exercise was! Having a good idea of what we were looking for, based on the morning’s group discussion of Margie’s early index, we could delve into these new indexes, Wilson Checklist in hand, with at least an idea of where to start. And yet, everyone in my small group still went at the evaluation from a different angle, and the feedback I received on my own index, pointed things out to me—both good and bad—that can only help me with the next one.
Finally, we reconvened as a large group, and each small group shared our findings. Again, the range of what we focused on in our evaluations was broad, and gave us all something to add to our own internal evaluation checklist. Some attendees focused on the headings and cross-references of their index, others the usability, and still others the style. One of the most interesting points made was about an index which used headings that were questionable and/or confusing to those of us who didn’t know the topic well, but the person who brought the book explained that for the book’s audience, they were perfect and, in fact, enhanced the usability of the index. (See “terms and access” under “Substance”!)

“The key,” Margie says, is "to learn the concept and then apply it." She goes on to explain,”Unlike most other indexers, I learned indexing in an apprenticeship. The most valuable thing was that my mentor took her red pencil to my indexes and indicated what was wrong or could be handled better, as well as alternatives to consider—and then, most importantly: why.

I believe that sort of evaluative practice, really delving into the contents and structure of my indexes, thinking about alternatives to the way I’d done it, and learning about the underlying reasons, is what made me a good indexer (along with a willingness to play with words; be creative; use my intuition; analyze, digest and simplify; and disregard the rules when it makes an index more usable)."

Would Heartland Chapter members agree? According to the results of the workshop survey, the answer is a resounding, “Yes!” When given the statement, “The morning demonstration of the index evaluation process was helpful,” 77% strongly agreed and 23% agreed, and when given the statement, “The directed peer review portion will help me be a better indexer,” a resounding 85% strongly agreed and 15% agreed. The only negative feedback came in response to the statement, “The pacing and time allocated to index evaluation was adequate,” to which only 24% responded with “strongly agree,” 38% agreed, but 38% disagreed! The Heartland members wanted more! Scary? Yes! Useful as a teaching tool? A resounding “Yes!” As one attendee put it, “I need this kind of feedback! Aside from great conversations, we all feel a bit vulnerable about having our indexes evaluated—this makes for a fun dynamic and keeps us in a humble, teachable frame of mind.”

And a final note from Margie:

“As indexers, we are all open to learning new stuff with each project we tackle. We are willing to learn new technology to keep up. We attend workshops about other indexes, indexing techniques (e.g., for editing, names, specific materials), project and time management, and even ergonomics. Index evaluation, which gets at the specific core of an indexer’s practice in a way that editing (or looking at bits and pieces of indexes) cannot, is absent.”

For members of the ASI Heartland Chapter who attended the spring 2013 meeting, index evaluation and the peer review process are now being seen in a whole new light. With comments like, “Necessary, indispensable,” and “Critical for my own quality control, a great use of time,” it is clear this group of indexers, at least, will be first in line the next time a workshop on index evaluation or an opportunity for a peer review session is offered.

[i] Margie Towery won the H. W. Wilson Award for Excellence in Indexing in 2002, for the Cumulative Index to The Letters of Matthew Arnold (6 volumes), edited by Cecil Lang, and published by the University of Virginia Press, and in 2008 for the index to The History of Cartography, volume 3: Cartography in the European Renaissance, parts 1 and 2, published by the University of Chicago Press. She served on the Wilson Committee in 2011, 2012, and 2013 (as incoming chair, chair, and outgoing chair, respectively), and conducted two Mock Wilsons, one for the Heartland Chapter and one for the Chicago Chapter.

[ii] The award has been renamed ASI/EBSCO Publishing Award.

[iii] Complete criteria for the ASI/EBSCO Publishing Award are listed on the ASI website: <http://www.asindexing.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3339#awcrit>
Reflexivity
Creating Better Indexes, Part 3
By Margie Towery

Reflexivity is one of what I call the “Ten Principles for Creating Better Indexes.” In addition to reflexivity, the principles (or characteristics) are accuracy, audience and access, clarity, common sense, comprehensiveness, conciseness, consistency, metatopic and structure, and readability. While all of these principles are finely interwoven, it is possible to disentangle them a bit, examine what each means, and apply them to our daily indexing work. This is the third essay in a series in which I’ll briefly consider each principle and explore some related tools for the indexer’s toolbox.

What is reflexivity?

*Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (10th ed.) defines reflexive as “directed or turned back on itself; . . . marked by, or capable of reflection; . . . of, relating to, characterized by, or being in a relation that exists between an entity and itself,” and so on. Thus, an index exists in relation to the text from which it is drawn. That may sound simple enough, but it is in fact quite complex.

There are many ways in which an index is reflexive. Following are just a few examples. Concepts in the text must be represented in the index in the same proportion as they are in the text; that is, if there is a small amount of information about A and a lot of information about B, then that should be true in the index as well. If there is a key point made about several different concepts, then that point should be captured in a similar manner for each. If everything in a text comes from an overarching idea and then breaks it down, that should be reflected in the index structure by capturing that overarching idea and perhaps using cross-references to the main headings in which the idea is broken down. Utilizing the author’s terminology in the index is also part of reflexivity.

What reflexivity is not

An index is not simply a repetition or a regurgitation of the text. Rather, it is a carefully analyzed presentation of the information in a text. Nor is it a concordance that traces every use of the terms in the text, although a concordance is inherently reflexive of the text.

A reflexive index need not repeat the author’s biases. Indexers may face some ugly prejudices in a text whether that text is contemporary or historical. For example, in an 1830s text that includes quite derogatory comments about American Indians, the index may utilize more neutral subheadings:

- alcohol’s effects on
- appearance of
- conditions of
- trade with

While one meaning of reflexivity is “characterized by habitual and unthinking behavior,” indexers should provide indexes based on the other definitions of reflexive and strive to avoid habit-driven and “unthinking” indexing!

Reflexivity tools

Probably the best tool an indexer can bring to the task of creating a reflexive index is background knowledge of the specific subject as well as the discipline in which the text is based. Taking just thirty or sixty minutes to search out some background information before plunging into indexing can aid in reflexivity as well as speed in indexing. It will also provide great clues on terminology and synonyms.

Another tool in reflexive indexing, which works best with such knowledge, is intuition. I think intuitive processes allow the art of indexing to come forth, allowing the right and left brains to play together. Intuition and background knowledge also foster fresh thinking about the treatment of a concept or term, moving us away from our habits and deeper into the text while never losing track of balancing best indexing practices with the world of the text.

Note: I fear that in the past I may have used the term “reflectivity” without thinking about the term or considering its differences from “reflexivity.” The former is more related to electromagnetics and water or surface reflection, while the latter is more related to language and literature.
Indexing in the Age of E-books
By Maureen Johnson

The 2013 ASI Conference in San Antonio, TX, was full of energy and optimism about the current state and future potential of the field of indexing. The plenary session on Thursday, titled “Indexing in the Age of eBooks,” was presented by Joshua Tallent of eBook Architects and Firebrand Technologies. Joshua is an e-book producer who has become well known in the field and has been a passionate advocate for including indexes in digital content. His message had two themes. First, e-books are not going to take the place of print. According to his data, e-books were 25% of total book revenue last year and seem to be plateauing as a percentage of total sales. In addition, e-book sales seem to favor fiction over non-fiction, in part because navigating and referencing material in the digital form is still difficult.

Joshua’s second point was that digital is not going to go away, and indexing is at a crossroads. While our skills are increasingly important in an age of information overload, indexers are often not part of the conversations going on in publishing. He encouraged us to become advocates for our craft and to promote the ways indexing can enhance the user experience with digital content. Our jobs are changing, and we should not stand still. We need to become educated on the current state of e-book technology and advocate for the value of indexing.

A few of Joshua’s suggestions for getting up to speed include reading the article “Dumb eBooks Must Die, Smart eBooks Must Live”1 by Mike Cane. He also recommends reviewing various Bible software products. In his opinion, these products are some of the best examples of ways to access content. You can hover over a word and get a list of resources, comments, links etc. to other content.

Getting up to speed also means becoming knowledgeable about the work of ASI’s Digital Trends Task Force, or DTTF, and their ePub standards for indexes. We should all read the standard and be aware of the way indexes can and should work in digital content. We should also be able to understand the code that lies beneath the digital page; even if we don’t write code, we should be conversant with it. This will not only help us join the conversation about tool development but will enable us to visualize better workflows and improve the tools that are being created.

Finally, we need to join the voices of other indexers in this conversation. The more publishers see a united front from the indexing profession and content users, the more likely they are to tackle the tough questions about the future of digital content. We need to promote the index as a source of metadata that retailers can use to make their content more findable on the Internet. Books with the best metadata are picked up by search engines and presented to customers. Indexes matter very much to our customer’s bottom line. It’s up to us to continually promote that message.

1 <http://goo.gl/MqCC9> ■
Crafting your Indexer Locator Listing
By Maureen Johnson

Connie Binder presented a session on how to craft a useful Locator listing to advertise your business. She had a lot of good advice on how to make your listing as useful as possible. The Indexer Locator page\(^1\) is one of the most-visited pages on the ASI website. The primary users of the list are small publishers, organizations that publish infrequently, individual authors, and experienced indexers looking for assistance. In addition, large publishers use the list when a specialized project requires skills not available in their usual pool of indexers. The fee for a listing is $150 per year. This fee easily pays for itself with even one project.

Connie had many tips for crafting your listing and discussed the tips listed on the ASI website.

**10 Tips to Make Your Locator Listing Work for You:**

1) Keep your contact information updated so that a potential client can reach you promptly via phone and/or email.

2) Include a link to your website, if you have one.

3) Include your years of experience as an indexer, especially if it sounds impressive. If you been indexing longer than you care to remember, pick an honest number and simply say “more than x years.”

4) Include any specific or unusual specialties in your description.

5) Periodically update or rewrite your description to reflect current interests or recent expertise.

6) Show your description to a colleague. Ask for their opinion.

7) Compare your listing with others, both generally and in your subject category. How does yours stack up? How can you distinguish your services from other indexers?

8) Mention your ASI Indexer Locator listing in your other marketing materials. Since only ASI members can take out a listing, it indicates that you are a serious indexer.

9) Like advertising, a one-time listing isn't effective. Familiarity is important. Potential clients need to know they can always find you again.

10) If you cannot accept a project from an established client, refer your client to the Indexer Locator. This builds goodwill. They won't forget your helpfulness.

\(^1\)[http://www.asindexing.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3292]
Meet a Fellow Heartlander: Mary Peterson
By Paula McCoy

Mary Peterson, Treasurer of the Heartland Chapter, has been indexing since 2001. She is a “soon-to-be-retired” librarian at Cranbrook Schools in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. She completed her MLIS at Wayne State University. Mary got started with book indexing after taking an indexing class as part of her program with Hermina Angelescu.

Mary has indexed six books and now is waiting to begin an index for a dissertation written by one of Cranbook’s Religion faculty members that is being published as a book. She has also indexed the Journal of Education for Library and Information Science (JELIS), and she is the indexer for the Information & Culture journal for the University of Texas Press.

Mary began taking the ASI indexing course but found she couldn’t complete it due to other commitments. She suggests that others interested in learning indexing take either the new ASI course or the U.C. Berkeley course. Also important, she says, is keeping current through listservs, as well as looking at award-winning indexes. The Spring 2013 Heartland Chapter meeting, at which Margie Towery guided the group through an all-day index exercise, is another example of an excellent way for new indexers to learn a lot about indexing in a short period of time from experienced indexers.

Mary believes that back-of-the-book indexes are here to stay, “although we may see them in different formats.” She thinks the human touch is important, because the human indexer can be more exact than a computer-generated index. “Technology constantly changes all things,” she says, “but this is something I believe will always be a necessity.”

Mary is married and has three grown children. When she retires, she does not plan to cut back on her indexing. Rather, “it’s part of the way I relax, believe it or not.” Many book indexers might agree with that—when they’re not struggling with a time crunch!