

Editing *The Indexer*

Ruth Pincoe had been suggesting in a number of meetings over 2009 and 2010 that it was time for Canada to consider guest editing *The Indexer* again. Christine Jacobs had done it a number of years ago. After the June 2010 AGM in Montreal, I wrote to presidents Mary and Viv to offer my services. There was a bit of exec discussion, and then the exec kindly agreed to accept my offer.

As a first step, I circulated a call for papers on the ISC/SCI forum in the summer of 2010. That garnered some interest and potential papers. I also wrote targeted emails toward a few individuals (in particular, I wanted something on French-language indexing, as I believe that Canada has a major role in establishing standards for that, so I wrote to François and others; I also contacted Carolyn Brown about an article that followed the topic of her panel presentation in Montreal).

After my initial flurry of queries and emails, I confess that I did little with the journal for several months. François had agreed to write an article, and he and Carolyn periodically wrote me queries about timelines and expectations, keeping me on my toes. I also maintained contact with editor-in-chief Maureen MacGlashan, and with some information from her I was able to draft up a production schedule. I also prepared and maintained a list of promised and potential articles, as Maureen needed to vet the concepts (she knows better than anyone what subjects have already been handled in recent issues, etc.). She had a few articles in the works that she wanted to see published (only one of which came to fruition, but that was something she had warned me about), and I worked on finding the rest.

By the April ASI conference in Rhode Island, I had a fairly good list of articles and potential articles drawn up, and at the conference Maureen and I scouted out other potential papers by attending different sessions. I also considered presentations from the ISC/SCI conference a month later, although none of those transpired. Feeling a bit concerned about the low amount of material in hand and the number of potential papers that had been cancelled by the authors, and also trying to get away from the “navel-gazing” aspect of journal contributions, I wrote to James Harbeck to ask if he might contribute an article, and he kindly agreed.

Within another few weeks, I went from worrying that I mightn’t have enough material to worrying that I had too much. Over the course of July and August, the articles all came in, and I gave them a copy edit (and although Maureen had provided me with a style sheet, she also said that if I had specific preferences that countered those, she was fine with them) and then passed them on to Maureen for her review. Author queries were sent as needed. By early September we were into production with Susan Curran, finalizing the layout and any remaining queries. I wrote an editorial and passed it by Mary, Viv and Gillian for comments.

We did have quite a lot of material, so Maureen suggested that we put Noeline Bridge’s article into the Centrepiece along with the “Around the World” column. Maureen and Susan also asked if I had a preference for the order of the articles. I wanted François’s paper to be first, and after that I tried for a back-and-forth shift of “lighter” vs “heavier”. I was very pleased that we had primarily Canadian content, with the only non-Canadian articles being contributed by Nancy Humphreys (an American, but an ISC/SCI member) and Devon Thomas (who assured me that she makes a great butter tart, so I consider her an honorary Canadian).

Overall, this was a great experience, and not onerous. The guest editor’s role is primarily to garner the material. I am grateful that the ISC/SCI executive gave me this opportunity, and I thank all who participated either by writing or by reviewing my words and ideas.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Ebbs