


DICTIONARY
SOCIETY of NORTH
AMERICA

DSNA

N E W S L E T T E R

VOLUME 19 NUMBER 1 SPRING 1995

THE 1995 MEETING

As previously mentioned, the tenth biennial meeting of the Dictionary Society will take place from July 20 to July 22, 1995 at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, beginning at 9 a.m. on the first day and ending at about noon on the third day. The deadline for abstracts has been extended to March 31, 1995. Abstracts should fit on a single page and be sent to **Professor P.K. Saha**, Department of English, 11112 Bellflower Road, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio 44106-7117, who is the chairman of the local committee. Members of the American Dialect Society, who are also members of the Dictionary Society, are urged to send in their abstracts. Sessions are also being planned by **Richard W. Bailey** (Michigan) on the Century Dictionary, whose centennial year is being celebrated, and by **William Frawley** (Delaware) on Amerindian language dictionaries. **The organizers of the meeting request that those who are planning to attend, whether or not they are offering papers, will let us know by returning the form on the reverse side of the enclosed ballot.**

BALLOTS

The Nominating Committee (**Victoria Neufeldt**, **Allan Metcalf**, **Arthur Bronstein** and **Thomas Clark**) have submitted for your approval the slate listed on the enclosed ballot for the offices of Vice-President and two members of the Executive Board.

Please mark yours and return it to the DSNA office before June 30, 1995.

DUES, AGAIN

Many members whose e-mail addresses are in our subscriber files recently received messages from us requesting the payment of dues, both arrears and current. This effort, intended to save postage, has been fairly successful, although some recipients demanded accountings and were under the impression that they had already paid. Regardless, we intend to continue to use this practical means of communicating. Those who do not have e-mail will receive regular mail invoices, which we hope they will not ignore.

TEACHING LEXICOGRAPHY

Although we understand that positions in lexicography for beginners are not easy to get and that formal instruction in lexicography is not required by dictionary editors, we continue to receive a number of inquiries about where to study lexicography. One answer is the University of Exeter in England, where **R.K.K. Hartmann's** Dictionary Research Centre provides a program in this field. For those preferring to stay on this side of the water, there is no fully developed program, but there are a number of courses taught by members of linguistics departments in various universities, including perhaps in the near

future Cleveland State University in combination with other lexicographic resources in this city (Webster's New World Dictionary, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Public Library...). When this program has come to fruition we shall provide information about it.

CATALOGUES

We have again received catalogues of language books for sale from **Karen Thomson** (19 Northumberland Street, Edinburgh EH3 6LR, Scotland); and **Rulon-Miller Books** (400 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55102).

VERBATIM AWARDS

Cash awards by Verbatim for the pursuit of lexicographic scholarship have been announced by EURALEX. The winners are **M. Lynne Murphy**, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, for a study of racial category labels, **Anuska Stambuk**, University of Split, Croatia, for work on electronic terminology in English and Croatian, and **Mihaela Ogrin** of Romania for research in terminology and linguistics.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Niemeyer

Lexicographica 9, ed. F.M. Dolezal, A. Kucera, A. Rey, H.E. Wiegand, W. Wolski and L. Zgusta (ISSN 0175-6206, 1994, DM 176).

Margarete Lindemann, *Die Französischen Wörterbücher von den Anfängen bis 1600* (ISBN, 3-484-30954-7, 1994, 786pp.).

Symposium on Lexicography VI, ed. Karl Hyldgaard-Jensen, Viggo Hjornager-Pedersen (ISBN 3-484-30957-1, 1994, 334pp.).

Gustav Muthmann, *Döppelformer in der Deutsche Sprache der Gegenwart*, 1994.

Tadeusz Piotrowski, *Problems in Bilingual Lexicography* (ISBN 83-229-1175-0, Wydawnictwo uniwersytetu wroclawskiego, 1994, 183 pp.)

Jack Halpern, *New Japanese-English Character Dictionary* (ISBN 0-8442-8434-3, NTC, 1993, \$49.95, 1992 pp.).

Geoff Thompson, *Collins Cobuild English Guides, 5: Reporting* (Harper-Collins, 1994).

PERIODICALS RECEIVED

American Speech: A Quarterly of Linguistic Usage, 69, 3 (Fall 1994), Edited at Duke University, Published by the University of Alabama Press for the American Dialect Society (ISSN 0003-1283).

Computational Linguistics, 20, 4 (Dec. 1994), Association for Computational Linguistics (ISSN 0891-2017).

English Today, 10, 4 (Oct. 1994), Cambridge University Press (ISSN 0266-0784).

International Journal of Lexicography (IJL), VII, 4 (Winter 1994), Published by Oxford University Press for the European Association for Lexicography (EURALEX).

Literary and Linguistic Computing: Journal of the Association for Literary and Linguistic Computing, IX, 3 (1994), Oxford University Press (ISSN 0268-1145).

Terminometro: Publication de l'Union Latine, #16 (Oct.1994:ISSN 1012-4993). The inserted *Lettre Mensuelle* (No. 32, Dec. 1994) announces a Colloque (Analyse de la valeur des dictionnaires spécialisés) in Brussels, on May 31 and June 1, 1995.

Verbatim: the Language Quarterly, 21, 2 (Autumn 1994: ISSN 0162-0932).

APPEAL

John Shirley (248935), who is confined at AVC Hope C-1, 100 Prison Road, Cottport LA 71327, asks that members who have any books about language that they are willing to spare send them to him to further his education.

IRISH DICTIONARY

Dr. Diarmaid O Muirthe of an institution described only as UCD is at work on a dictionary of Irish English. He shares the work with several collaborators and is himself the specialist on the Gaelic substratum. He has been scouring Ireland for material, receiving many contributions from readers of his column in the Irish Times. The work is expected to take a number of years.

CHANGES AT CORDELL COLLECTION

David Vancil, who has left the curatorship of the Cordell Collection at Indiana State University for an advisory position announces the publication of his *Incunable Dictionaries: A Checklist and Publishing History* (1994, \$25 postpaid, 223pp.) by Rulon-Miller Books, 400 Summit Avenue, St. Paul MN 55102. His successor as curator is **Dr. Tsokan Huang**. Additions to the collection will be listed when they are received here. E-mail addresses are libvancl@indstate.edu and libhng@cml.indstate.edu and phone is (812) 237-2610/1.

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Sidney Landau, currently president of DSNA, is revising his book, *Dictionaries: The Art and Craft of Lexicography* (NY: Cambridge University Press) and would welcome suggestions from members. Please write to him at Cambridge University Press, 40 West 20 Street, New York NY 10011.

BOOK REVIEW

John Willinsky, *The Empire of Words: The Reign of the OED* (Princeton University Press, 1994, 258 pp., ISBN 0-691-03719-1, \$22.95).

This interesting book is not merely another accolade for the "cultural icon" that goes by the name of The Oxford English Dictionary. It is primarily a study of the influence of the choice of citations on the public's comprehension of its own language. And it is also an investigation of the extent to which individual editors are able to affect the process of

definition by the careful and sometimes deliberate selection of examples. This process can go as far as planting examples in the press in order to recover them as citations. What the book indirectly emphasizes is the extent to which individual editors often have a stake in the contents of a reference work supposedly produced according to scientific and objective principles. The emphasis in this book on the adjective Victorian to describe the early editors and their product leads the reader to reach the conclusion that these editors willy-nilly had an agenda in their selection of words and examples and the framing of their definitions. The hagiographic treatment of Shakespeare's language, it is suggested, which derives from the quasi-theological awe in which this writer was held during the nineteenth century, is essentially misleading as a source of linguistic information.

The several stages of the OED's formation (the original, the supplementary, and the technological recent end-product) are covered with creditable objectivity and valuable detail. It should not, however, be inferred that this book is an expose of misdeeds. What is obvious about dictionary builders is that they are human and fallible and often have a social or intellectual agenda, as did Samuel Johnson, who began by selecting his citations for their useful content, though he could not keep it up. He was not above self-quotation when a convenient citation would not come his way and he was pressed for time. There is a long tradition of individuality not to say eccentricity among lexicographers, so we should not be surprised to find that it infected even the OED.

This book has an extensive bibliography that students of lexicography will welcome. It also has an appendix, which in some ways, is the most engrossing part of the book. In a dozen pages of tables we learn who are the most cited authors and books both in Johnson and in the OED and its supplements, the most commonly cited periodicals, the most common honorifics, the most cited women authors and sources for earliest citations. These tables are not merely food for the statistically minded; they represent a kind of depiction of the OED's structure.

LOUIS T. MILIC

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N.B.: Members are reminded that they are entitled to one free classified ad of ten words maximum per year (additional words 30 cents each).

Dr. Henry G. Burger's add-on, binary Dictionary:
To interrupt & prolong=Delay. To debate &
delay=Filibuster
Etc.-Free brochure.

Wordtree®, 10876 Bradshaw W58.
Overland Park KS 66210-1148. U.S.A.

MEMBERS who wish to buy back numbers of *Dictionaries* may do so at \$10 each, postpaid. The numbers that are still available are 1, 3, 6-7, and 9-15. Checks with order, please. Write to Dictionary Society of North America, RT-936, Cleveland State University, 1983 East 24 Street, Cleveland OH 44115-2403.



The Newsletter of the DSNA appears in Spring and Fall. The editor is Louis T. Milic, to whom all news, inquiries and publications should be sent.

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