

***Information Bulletin Index***  
**Introduction**  
**By Ken Rockwell**

The Western Association of Map Libraries (WAML) has its roots in a meeting on November 12, 1966, at the University of California, Berkeley. On that date, sixteen map librarians, mostly from California, met to consider the establishment of an organization of professional map librarians on the west coast of the United States. WAML was subsequently organized in July of 1967, with its principal region quickly growing to encompass twelve western states and two Canadian provinces. This organization became the first independent association for map library professionals. In the fall of 1969, WAML's president at the time, Robert Sivers, launched a newsletter designed to facilitate the conducting of WAML business; to inform members of the activities and accomplishments of the Association; and to create a venue for the publishing of articles and newsbriefs of interest to those who work in map libraries in western North America. With the third issue, in March of 1970, the publication was formally named the *Information Bulletin* (or *IB*), and it has been issued three times per year (with a few exceptions) since then. The *IB*, like WAML itself, has a certain pragmatic bent, providing practical information for the map professional, from equipment to collection organization to acquisitions. Regularly included in the Bulletin are scholarly articles (including transcripts of presentations given at WAML meetings); bibliographies and book reviews that aid in collection development; and news items, announcements, and meeting summaries that serve as a record of the history of the Association.

Frances Woodward of the University of British Columbia compiled an index for the first ten volumes of the *IB* in 1979, which WAML published on microfiche. Efforts were made to index each subsequent yearly volume, but this was discontinued after volume 20, and no comprehensive index to that point was compiled. Then in 2004, Robert and Richard Huxford provided WAML with a single CD-ROM containing the first 35 volumes, plus vol. 36, no. 1, as scanned PDF files. This product could conceivably be marketed to libraries and subscribers who wanted the back files of the *IB*. But the PDFs were not searchable, making plain the need for an updated index.

WAML's Publications Advisory Committee started to discuss this by e-mail in 2005. At the 2006 Spring Meeting in Vancouver, B.C., envisioned a volunteer effort by WAML members, each taking a volume or two of the *IB* and indexing it according to some agreed-upon principles. Three of us—David Deckelbaum (then Chairman), Matthew Parsons, and myself—attempted to index a single volume (number 35) and came up with different versions, with varying degrees of detail. We then endeavored to consolidate our ideas into a set of indexing guidelines. But our busy schedules and the infrequency of meetings made it difficult to proceed, and there were doubts about the practicality of having numerous volunteers apply the guidelines consistently.

After I became Chairman of the committee, I proposed an alternative approach: hire a professional indexer with the time and talent to do the job for us. In the fall of 2007, I took the initiative to contact several indexers found on the site "Indexers Unlimited," and

began to discuss this project with them. During the following winter, I did a preliminary review of the Woodward index, and at the Spring Meeting in March 2008, I took the proposal to hire to the WAML Executive Board. They approved the concept, asking me to pursue negotiations with candidates for the job and spell out specifications for the work. Eventually, I signed a contract with Laura Shelley of Shelley Indexing Services, based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in the spring of 2009. We kept up frequent correspondence by e-mail to fine-tune the guidelines and points of style, and Ms. Shelley sent interval samples for review. When the final indexing of the *IB* was complete, I called for volunteers among the membership to review the product, and received several offers. Special thanks to WAML's founding President and long-time *IB* editor, Stan Stevens, for his numerous comments, as well as to Liz Paulus, Phil Hoehn, and Larry Cruse. Thanks also to the members of the Publications Advisory Committee over these past several years: David Deckelbaum, Linda Newman, Riley Moffat, Barbara Gasman, Jon Jablonski, and (ex officio) Matthew Parsons and Julie Hoff; and to Julia Sweetkind-Singer for helpful suggestions on this introduction.

The first edition of the index, covering all issues through volume 36, no. 1, was posted on the WAML website in 2011. Since then, WAML contracted with Ms. Shelley to complete the indexing up through volume 42. The present version reflects that work. Ms. Shelley is also contracted to continue indexing new issues, and will produce a supplement containing index entries as the *IB* continues to be published, chronicling the activities and evolution of the association. Contents of that supplement will eventually be consolidated into the master index.

In this age of digital information, WAML intends to remain a vital voice in the collection, dissemination, and preservation of geospatial information in all forms, electronic or paper. The *Information Bulletin* will be one of its chief instruments for that voice.