



THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR



THE NEW YEAR TIME TO SPREAD WINGS AND EXPAND? - OR - TIME TO FULFILL SOMEONE ELSE'S AMBITIONS?

By Slavica Zecevic

This is my last letter to you as President but, believe me, it is not the last you will hear from me. I'll be sticking around and will be a vigilant watchdog and participant in the Circle's future. If there is anything I have learned in the last two years, it is that it is just as important to have an active Board of Directors and to have active members. After all, it is the members who are the Circle, and the Circle and the Board are to serve the members.

It has been two years since I first served as Program Director and later as President of the Circle. At times, I was overwhelmed, frustrated, disappointed, but most of the time I was fascinated by you, members, and our mutual efforts to help ourselves and our organization. I would like to thank you for giving me a chance to grow with the Circle and helping me to recover from a blow that could have been devastating.

There were many small and big issues to be resolved. Two of them, of really great importance, were: the by-laws and the

website. These are two vital tools that must always be sound in order that our organization can function properly and prosper. In accordance with the suggestions of the ATA attorneys, our recent experience, and today's needs, the by-laws have been amended and are awaiting ATA approval. I anticipate that the approval will occur quickly, if it has not already happened.

Our outdated website is now in the process of being re-tooled and refined. The Webmaster, David Mintz, has been contracted to do the work on the website in three phases which are to be completed in 18 months or less. Phase one is just about completed and it won't be long before the members reap the benefits of these website modifications. I consider this our best investment. Our website is our face in the public eye and it is becoming more and more our modus operandi. However, I am afraid that my successor and soon to be president hasn't shown a willingness to let the website job be finished. In fact, the new presi-

dent has demonstrated a desire to figure out a way to stop the website project because she "wasn't involved" in the initial negotiations with David. I would be greatly disheartened if the website project were to be halted or if it were to be interfered with in any negative way. I strongly believe that such intrusion will postpone, if not destroy, our path to future opportunities, and will keep our business down.

Our organization "lives" in a region where only about 58% of the people speak English, while the rest, 42% speak

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Spanish, French, German, Hindi, Persian, Hungarian, Chinese, Japanese, Telugu, Polish, Serbian, Croatian, or Bulgarian, to name only a few. Are we going to neglect our services and defy our profession and let down these people who desperately need to communicate with each other at all levels of their lives? Our Government needs us to help those people without sufficient knowledge of English. Shall we ignore that? Shall we forget about our capacity to serve as educators, conveyers of communication, and the necessary links between these different cultures and let our ambition for power to lead us in making decisions?

I have yet another concern: there is

less and less interest in taking positions on the Board. The Circle cannot survive if you don't breathe into it your voluntary work and time. The Circle lives with us and it represents us. Is it really that difficult to give it a couple of your hours a month? Wouldn't it be great if we had several candidates running for the same position and had a real competitive election? The fact that anyone could come forward and, by merely placing their name on a ballot, be elected unopposed, is indicative of an organization crying for HELP, SOS, MAY-DAY, MAY-DAY. The Circle is all of you and it needs you to continue its wonderful journey. Think about it, please think about it. ■

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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

By Rosene Zaros

As 2005 draws to a close, it seems appropriate to look back, to rejoice in our successes, to analyze what went wrong in those endeavors that were not successful, and then, to look ahead to a new year. Although one could measure time from any point in time, the beginning of a new year is common ground for reminiscences and resolutions.

Although I gave up making New Year's Resolutions many years ago, this fall I found myself saying, "I will never ever do this or that again" to the extent that I now feel the necessity to "formalize" these vows. But, I hate to approach the New Year on such a negative note. As I analyzed the things that I swore never to do again, most of them involved taking on too much work and, as a result, neglecting all aspects of my personal life. When I think about the fragility and transience of life, the need to nurture relationships becomes increasingly important. I must keep these things in perspective.

It will always be a balancing act. Happiness is a choice. One can choose

to be happy in the face of all sorts of adversity or one can buckle and become morose and pathetic. It is a choice.

I am currently working on a novel by Philippe Delerm called *Le Bonheur: Tableaux et bavardages*, which I translated as *Happiness: Images and Echoes*. I would like to share a couple of passages from this book. The epigraph consists of two parts. The first is a passage from *Pieds nus dans l'aube* by Félix Leclerc:

When the family was gathered together around the table and the soup tureen was steaming, sometimes Mom would say:

"Stop drinking and talking for just a second."

We would obey.

Amused we used to look at one another, not understanding.

"It's to make you think about happiness," she would add.

We no longer felt like laughing.

—Félix Leclerc, *Barefoot at Dawn*

It is followed by:

Happiness is fragile. You are not an acrobat and you move forward ginger-

ly, a step at a time. The days pass, you are gliding on a wire, you don't look far ahead. If you look down, your head spins. Don't look. Below, all the birds are frozen in flight and all the humans are playing it safe. You walk a little taller, but happiness is difficult. You take a risk with each step. Meekly, you advance. Happiness is there with each risk. You are moving toward yourself; there is no end to the wire.

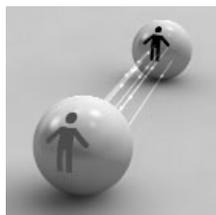
As I look back over the months since I assumed the editorship of the Gotham, I have had the opportunity to see and participate in the progress of the NYCT. I feel a resurgence of energy as we enter a New Year. I retrace the journey – a year is surely a journey – with Slavica, who did so very much to revitalize the Circle and I look ahead to working with Margaret, with the hope that we can continue to provide you, our readers, with articles that are both informational and inspiring and that you, our readers will become more involved in an ongoing dialogue that can affect all of us. ■

SEMINAR REVIEW

by Elisabeth Ranhe, Program Director, NYCT

Translators and Interpreters had the opportunity to attend a remarkable seminar on Saturday, December 3, 2005 at the Woolworth Building in Manhattan.

The first session, presented by James Nolan, Deputy Director of the Interpretation, Meetings & Publishing Division at the United Nations Headquarters, focused on techniques for simultaneous interpretation at UN conferences. The audio and visual aids he used enabled him to go over the interpretation of an entire speech sided by his own suggestions, which involved reformulation and compression of the original statements, without affecting the message at all.



Additionally, Mr. Nolan stressed "practice" as the most relevant means of achieving success at interpreting for the United Nations. Hence, his book "Interpretation Techniques and Exercises". Participants had a chance to peruse the book, which is available on the Internet.

Last but not least, Mr. Nolan remarked about the importance of sounds when we translate a speech. He told attendees about his experience as a participant in a contest sponsored by The Connecticut Chapter of the Alliance Française. The challenge was to produce the best French translation of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. All of the entries were beautiful, and one was judged better than the rest, but the contest was ultimately

declared a failure. Mr. Nolan felt that

"...it was because, no matter how faithfully the words and style were rendered, no one succeeded in reproducing the sheer majesty of that short but flawless music that was behind the Gettysburg Address".

In the next sequence, Wayles Browne began his presentation by calling translators' and interpreters' attention to the patterns that are to be observed in the source language and taken into consideration in the process of translation into the target language. They are patterns of sounds, patterns of syllables, patterns of accents, patterns of grammatical forms,

patterns of sentences, patterns of vocabulary items, patterns of ideas, and more.

Mr. Browne gave examples of these patterns in literary translations and attendees were challenged to verbally translate a few verses taking such patterns into consideration. Mr. Browne, who is an Associate Professor of Linguistics at Cornell University, encouraged the attendees to take a look the book *Le Ton Beau de Marot: In Praise of the Music of Language*, and other books by the cognitive scientist, Douglas Hofstadter.

George Fletcher, Ed.D., adjunct associate professor of translation at NYU, a certified translator and President of Globe
(continued on next page)

A NOTE ON THE NYCT NOVEMBER MEETING

by Elisabeth Ranhe

The November meeting of the New York Circle of Translators was held on Tuesday, November 15 at Stark's Veranda restaurant. We had three guest speakers: Martin Cross, Jordan Fox, and Marian Greenfield.

Martin Cross, who studied patent law and founded Patent Translations Inc., began the meeting by giving attendees good examples language that is specific to patents. He also had a handout with a list of websites that translators can visit to learn more about translating patents.

Jordan Fox, the now-certified Federal Court Interpreter who was also our guest speaker in October, gave us an overview

of the ATA Mentoring Program along with a review of the session on Mentoring that he attended at the ATA Conference in Seattle in November. He illustrated the description of the program with his own experience as a mentee of Susana Greiss.

Marian Greenfield, President of the American Translators Association, talked about various sessions of the last ATA Conference in Seattle and the geographic beauty of that area.

After the presentations, many of those attending the meeting enjoyed dinner together at the Stark and chatted until around 9:30. ■

Language Services, Inc., spoke to a sizeable number of participants after a lunch break. His presentation was on The Translation of Foreign Educational Credentials (all languages). The core of his presentation was the role of the translator of educational credentials in comparison with that of the evaluator of educational credentials. Certain choices of words that translators have been making for the description of courses may make the job of evaluators more difficult and should be avoided. Among the examples given was "High School", which should appear as "Secondary School" instead. This is due to the differences in programs from one country to another. Mr. Fletcher's presentation was also very interactive and summary handouts made its specifics very clear. ■

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Language is "slippery" and many problems arise from misunderstandings as to how words are used and, ultimately, as to the intent of the author. We must attempt to be precise and, to paraphrase the words of Humpty Dumpty, to say exactly what we mean to say, no more no less. . .

We received the following letter which continues the dialogue begun in our October issue.

To the editor:

I would like to point out a misrepresentation in Judith Kenigson Kristy's letter in the November 2005 Gotham. In paragraph 2 of her response to and rebuttal of my article ("Occupational Hazards," October 2005 Gotham), Ms. Kenigson Kristy quotes me, saying that I am "quoting [Maya] Hess." In fact, and this is an essential difference, I was not quoting Hess but giving my interpretation of Hess's presentation to the Circle. The statement that the ATA has been "cowardly and evasive" in its response to the case of Mohamed Yousry (and Ms. Kenigson Kristy misspells his name throughout her letter) is my phrase, my interpretation of Ms. Hess's presentation. I stand by my statement and take full responsibility for it, but I would never put my words into someone else's mouth.

*Sincerely,
Marguerite Shore ■*

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CIRCLE NEWS

■ THE NYCT BOARD AWARDS TWO LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS

The NYCT Board awarded a Lifetime Membership to two of its distinguished members:

Eva Berry Gruby for her exceptional role in founding the Circle and Deborah A. Folaron for her exceptional work as Program Director.



■ BLAST FROM THE PAST

Back in 1986 The Circle published a brochure entitled *"We Are the New York Circle of Translators"*. This pleasant trip to the past provides information on the history of the Circle and its members, meetings, workshops, accreditation, newsletter (The Gotham Translator), dinners, affiliations with the business communi-

ty, directory and New York Circle Telephone, special events, and membership and voting. The brochure was an 8-1/2 x 17 fold-out printed on a grayish paper with dark brown print. Back then the monthly meetings were held at the Loeb Student Center of New York University, social events were held in the elegant wood-paneled guildhall of St. Thomas' Church on Fifth Avenue, and there were lawn parties, picnics, and Argentine "asado". Annual membership dues were \$15. The pamphlet-brochure is lavishly embellished with pictures of members partaking in meetings and social events. Believe it or not some of those original members, while still being young, are still around. Why don't we have something like that today?

■ A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL

by Jordan Fox



On December 11, the NYCT had its annual holiday party at Le Petit Auberge in downtown Manhattan. Twenty-eight members showed up to see and be seen at this glamorous French restaurant. The first order of the day was President-elect Margaret Altieri's gift to Slavica on behalf of the Circle members for her

devotion and hard work. The gift was a beautiful scarf. Afterwards, we all enjoyed a three-course meal which, in my case, included a very tender salmon in dill sauce.

Then the entertainment began with Rosene Zaros reading a passage about happiness from a book by Philippe Delerm that she is translating. Michelle Mead followed with an entertaining short story about growing up in a small southern town with a smart and sassy French mother. Last but not least, Lisa LaPlante sang a Christmas Carol to get us into the holiday spirit. After our little luncheon and that glass of Muscadet, I know I was. I just hope I don't have to keep drinking to keep it up!

■ MARK YOUR CALENDAR



The NYCT Board's Annual Meeting will hopefully be at the Stark's Veranda restaurant on January 17th or 24th. We are waiting for the confirmation. We would like you to be with us when the new Board Members take over for the old ones. We will send you more details shortly.



■ LIFETIME MEMBER RECOVERING FROM FALL

Our dear friend Susana Greiss is resting and in therapy for a neck fracture sustained in a fall in her home in late November. You can send her a card or a note at:

Queens Boulevard Extended Care
61-11 Queens Boulevard, Room 350b
Woodside, NY 11377

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- Cassell's New Compact German Dictionary, German-English, English-German, 1973, paperback\$2
- Stanley Jablonski, Russian-English Medical Dictionary, 1958, hardcover\$4
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- French-English & English-French Dictionary of Technical Terms and Phrases, Volumes I and II, 1965, hardcover.....\$8
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- The Pocket Oxford Dictionary, 1934, hardcover\$3
- The Pocket Dictionary of American Slang, 1967, paperback\$2
- H. W. Fowler, A Dictionary of Modern English Usage, 1958, hardcover\$4
- The King's English, 1958, hardcover\$3
- Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, 1966, hardcover\$5
- Standard Universal Dictionary, 1941, hardcover\$5
- The Oxford Universal Dictionary, 1933, hardcover\$6

Russian

- Педагогический словарь – том первый - том второй – Академия педагогических наук РСФСР, 1961, hardcover\$8
- Словар сокращений Руского языка, 1963, hardcover.....\$3
- С. И. Ожегов, Словар Русского языка, 1968, hardcover\$5

French

- LAROUSSE, Dictionnaire des Synonymes, 1947, hardcover.....\$4

MISCELLANEOUS

- Etienneble, Parlez-vous Francais?, 1964, paperback\$2
- 201 Spanish Verbs fully conjugated in all the tenses, 1963, paperback\$2
- French Grammar Review, 1934, hardcover\$3
- The Modern Researcher, 1957, hardcover\$3
- Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 1967, paperback.....\$2
- The Elements of Style, 1959, hardcover\$3
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NYCT members work in a variety of languages and specialties. Our members are committed to the exchange of ideas and mutual support. One of our goals is to educate the general public about the professional nature of interpreting and translating.

NYCT members enjoy the following benefits:

- Free monthly meetings featuring speakers on all aspects of the translation profession
- Networking opportunities at monthly dinners and annual holiday party
- Professional development workshops and seminars
- Subscription to our newsletter, The Gotham Translator
- Listings in the NYCT Online Membership Directory and the annual NYCT printed Membership Directory
- Referrals (if you indicate that you accept them, existing members may direct work requests to you or clients may contact you directly)

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