



THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

July/August 2004

A Publication of The New York Circle of Translators

Happy Birthday, NYCT!



Guylaine Laperrière
2004 NYCT President

Dear members, I hope you had a pleasant summer despite the capricious weather. For those of you who missed the summer party, don't worry – this issue of the *Gotham* will be devoted almost exclusively to the party and the celebration of the Circle's 25th year of existence. As such, we are publishing a brief history of the beginnings of the Circle, provided by some of our members who eagerly got up at the party to tell our new and "not-so-new" members how it all began. In this regard, special thanks to Eva Berry, who could not join us but who provided us with a text read by Lucien Morin. Thanks also go to Laurie Treuhaft, who

literally dug out from a storage room several documents related

to the early history of the Circle. Finally, we would like to thank the past presidents (Edna Ditaranto, Meg Shore, Teresa Waldes, Matilde Deferrari) who graced us by their presence and filled in the gaps by telling us how it all began.

There was indeed a lot to celebrate. Our organization counts more than 350 members, and new members join the Circle every month. Their enthusiasm at the party was evident. New and veteran members alike got up to sing, recite poetry, play guitar, and share texts that they'd written. Instead of our usual after-meeting discussions on word count and volume of words per day, we had an opportunity to enjoy words for what they are: the expression of culture, of a soul.

The atmosphere was lighthearted, and we all came to the conclusion that we need to do this again for the Christmas party! So performers, musicians, poets, singers, dancers and writers – be ready! We're counting on you!

As we celebrated our 25th year of existence, we also



took a moment to remember those who left us this year: Elizabeth Warburton, who translated for the UN for over 30 years, and past president Louis Korda, for whom Edna Ditaranto paid a very moving tribute.

Now, after a look back, a look forward. Half the year has already passed, but there are so many more things to accomplish. Our program director has already lined up great speakers for the coming

months. As always, we welcome your suggestions for articles for the next issue of the *Gotham*. In the meantime, we hope to see you at the September meeting. Make sure to consult the Web site! ■

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NYU Translation Conference – Global Security: Implications for Translation and Interpretation	2
Early Memories of NYCT	3
Le Pain Quotidien	4
NYCT Summer Party Photos	6
Circle News	11

New York University Translation Conference

“Global Security: Implications for Translation and Interpretation”

by Roxana Huhulea-Dinu

The first NYU translation conference took place in 2000 and was very well received by the translation community. This is why the latest NYU translation conference, which took place this past June, generated such excitement and anticipation.

As we each craft our translations in our individual offices, or as we interpret in various venues, we're often too caught up in the daily business of making a living to notice “the big picture.” It is this broader perspective, this global view of the translation world, that the NYU translation conference has offered us. With attendees and presenters from all over the U.S. and the world, the NYU conference offered a wide spectrum of points of view, some largely unexplored.

This year, unfortunately, I was able to attend only the first day of the conference, but I found it to be a very gratifying experience. The first session, “U.S. Public Diplomacy in



the Arab and Muslim World,” was presented by Ambassador Edward Djerejian. That presentation

offered first-hand insight into the current language capabilities of the foreign service, as well as its future needs. Djerejian's central idea was that the U.S. can no longer limit itself to intervention in international crises – it also must be able to communicate to various nations, in their own language, why it is intervening. While English is currently the international language of business, Americans need to learn foreign languages in order to better convey our message to other nations – a message as to who we are, our standards, values, and beliefs. This is especially true when it comes to America's relations with Arab nations.

The second session, “Speaking the Unspeakable: Interpreting for Survivors of Torture, War and Refugee Trauma,” was presented by Adeyinka M.A. Akinsulure-Smith. A psychologist working with victims of torture, Akinsulure-Smith presented a new perspective on the human rights situation worldwide, discussing the large number of torture victims and refugees in the world who seek shelter in New York. She also stressed that interpretation services are crucial for helping these people get their message across, heal, and start a new life here.

The following section, “Translation and Conflict Mediation,” included three presentations. The first two, by Marijana Nikolic and Nancy Schweda Nicholson, gave an overview of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, as well as the various interpretation and translation issues related to war crimes trials. The third presentation, “Global Turmoil and Translation and Interpretation in International Relations” by Frank Gomez, offered a fascinating look at how many languages are currently spoken in the world, at the population migrations that bring about cultural and linguistic changes, and at the challenges that translators will face in the new millennium.

The day closed with a very interesting plenary session, “Translation of Terrorism-Related Documents at the United Nations” by Eduardo Bauza.

This conference is the result of the efforts and dedication of Milena Savova, the director of NYU's Center for Foreign Languages and Translation, NYCT president Guylaine Laperrière, the planning committee members, and many other dedicated people. We will all be looking forward to the next such event, probably in 2008. ■

THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

Editor

Jason Fargo
editor@nyctranslators.org

Editorial Board

Trudy Balch
Marian Greenfield
Nancy Wright

Design and Layout

Bahl Graphics
kbahlmann@austin.rr.com

Printing

Mail Boxes, Etc. South Orange NJ
mailboxso@mindspring.com

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Early Memories of the New York Circle of Translators

by Courtney Searls-Ridge

Dear Friends and Colleagues in the NYCT,

Slavica has asked me to write to you about my early memories of the NYCT. I'm afraid that I do not remember the dates or chronology very well, but what follows are a few random memories from the late '70s and early '80s. (An earlier group, the New York Metropolitan Chapter of the ATA, was actually founded in the '60s, but that was way before my time.)

I first heard that there was a group of translators in New York sometime between 1976 and 1978, when I was working at the Language Lab on Madison Avenue. At that time, the group was more of a dinner club than anything else. As I recall, 10 to 15 translators met informally at different restaurants every couple of months. I attended regularly until I married and moved out of the city in 1981. After that, although I taught in the NYU program, I attended NYCT meetings only sporadically. I eventually moved to the Pacific Northwest in 1990.

The people I remember most from the very early days were Eva Berry, Bernie Bierman, Sandra Celt, Susan Gettes, Alex Gross, Jonathan Slater, Tom Snow, Charles Stern, and Steve Winfield. Dale Cunningham showed up from Philadelphia at least once, as I recall. Many others attended these informal dinner meetings, too, but the groups were cliquish, and I didn't get to know many of the others very well. In general, there was not much of an atmosphere of sharing information in those days.

A small group (Bernie, Jonathan, Tom, Alex, and I) would often hang around late into the night drinking and debating whether we would invest in dedicated word processors or personal computers. We had great fun together, but I doubt that our conversations contributed much to the greater cause of translators.

Eva Berry was the driving force of the organization in the early days, and I believe it was Eva who came up

with the original twin towers logo and the name "New York Circle of Translators." There was debate about the logo because some people thought that it too closely resembled the WPIX Channel 11 logo. But we voted on it, and I remember celebrating that night at someone's apartment (either Eva's or Charles'?)

In later years, the group became more formal, larger, and more influential in the translation community, due to the efforts of active members such as Liz Andrews, Susanna Greiss, Laurie Treuhaft, and Jim and Mary Ellen McConnell. For several years, the social high point was the annual picnic at Laurie's home. By this time, I seldom attended regular meetings, but I was impressed with the energy and dedication of the members in the '80s and '90s who helped the NYCT become the vibrant organization that it is today.

I wish you all a wonderful anniversary celebration! ■

NEW YORK CIRCLE OF TRANSLATORS

(212) 334-3060

2004 Board of Directors

Guylaine Laperrière, President

Home: (212)569-5471 Work: (212)998-7028
president@nyctranslators.org

Lisa Barocas Anderson, Secretary

Home: (212)567-0732
secretary@nyctranslators.org

Antje Katcher, Treasurer

Home/Work: (631)324-0589
treasurer@nyctranslators.org

Slavica Zecevic-Pralica, Program Director

Pager/Mobile: (201)218-4784
programdirector@nyctranslators.org

Committee Chairpersons

Teresa Waldes, ATA Certification

Work: (212)769-9411
twaldes@ix.netcom.com

Milena Savova, Continuing Education

Work: (212)998-7033
milena.savova@nyu.edu

Anne Witt-Greenberg, Mentoring

(516) 487-6128
trlegdoc@aol.com

Le Pain Quotidien

by Michelle Mead



Proust may have had his madeleines – my taste is much more basic. Nothing brings back stronger memories of my childhood than the wonderful smell of bread in a French boulangerie. As with most French families, my extended family saw freshly baked bread as a staple of every meal. There was always a spare child available to go down the winding stairs of my grandparents' Paris apartment to bring back bread. And such bread! If we were lucky, we could time our trips to just the moment when the baker would put the hot, crisp loaves into large wicker baskets to be hauled upstairs. Each type of bread was put in the appropriate rack – the round boule, the chunky batard, the famous baguette, and the skinny ficelle.

Our favorite shop was two doors down from my grandparents' apartment on the rue Gassendi. There is an old, faded picture of my brother Eric and me with a friend of the family, Monsieur Ricardot, who is wearing a shop-keeper's white blouson and a beret. I am two years old; Eric is almost six. Eric is old enough to be sent for bread, running down the stairs two at a time, holding on to the railing. I am too young to be of much use, but this has its advantages. I am given the crusty end of the baguette to chew on, to keep me quiet. The prospect of keeping me quiet still seems possible at this age.

The bread is taken into the kitchen. My grandmother, Mamie, takes out a knife and cuts the loaf, breadcrumbs flying everywhere. If it is a batard, she slices it with the knife coming toward, not away, from herself. This goes against everything my brother and I have been told, so it is therefore exotic and daring. The bread is put in a basket lined with an old napkin, usually one which has been mended and remended. The basket is not heavy and is one of the few things I am allowed to help put on the table. During the meal, if the bread supply runs low, a woman will wordlessly get up from the table, pick up the basket in passing, and repair to the kitchen to cut more bread. As vital a task as this would never be entrusted to a man. While men may drive cars, shoot guns, and operate heavy machinery, it is assumed that no man would be safe left on his own in the kitchen with a bread knife.

*We are told that there are countries where
people do not dunk bread, and decide
never to visit or live in any of them.*

Mamie's soup is thick, nourishing, and wonderfully homemade. This is soup to dream about! Eric and I squabble about which one of us will be allowed to turn the handle of the old metal grinder used to puree the soup. Large ladles of soup are put into the grinder, and the liquid sloshes through the filters as we turn the handle around and around. In the end, we cover our ears to hide from the sound of metal grinding against metal. If the soup is too thin, my grandmother takes out a box of tiny noodles, and throws them into the pot, like a farmer sowing seeds in a fertile field.

The table has been set with great care, with Mamie's silverware gleaming on the table. I know I will never think of myself as a grown-up lady until I have my own silverware like hers. Large linen napkins, each with its own napkin ring, are rolled up and placed by the side of each plate. Each family member has his own napkin ring, and each ring comes with a story. Mine has a pretty lady from Brittany with a huge lacy coif on her head. My brother's has a sailboat coming into port. It is as unheard of to take someone else's napkin as it would be to wear their underwear.

Round and round, the bread basket is passed. Chunks of bread are broken into small pieces and put into the soup, making it impossibly thick. Our soup spoons are so big we can barely hold them. As each new course arrives, we dunk our bread into the sauces, wiping our plates clean. We are told that there are countries where people do not dunk

bread, and decide never to visit or live in any of them. Americans, we are told, are good-natured but have no manners. Their saving grace is that they are brave and generous. Americans were never taught to use silverware – they can only eat food you can eat with your fingers. We do not pray before meals – it is considered a Protestant affectation, mostly used to make up for bad cooking.

Conversation washes over us – animated conversation punctuated by facial grimaces and waving hands. As children, we speak when we are spoken to, which seems quite normal to us. The adults are so entertaining, we know that nothing we could say could measure up. Some day it will be our turn – we will be grown-ups and have open-mouthed children hanging on every word. Until then, we know our places.

No topic is too sordid, too gruesome, or too controversial to be discussed at the table in front of children. Years later, I would be astounded that certain subjects were considered “unfit for dinnertime conversation” in other homes. Murder and mayhem went along with the mayonnaise. It never seemed strange to us that the intricacies of major surgery and marital misery were discussed along with the weather and the Tour de France. Or that we might discuss someone’s liver problems while eating, well, liver!

The bread basket appears, refilled, along with a platter of assorted cheeses. There is always a hunk of Swiss cheese or Port Salut, mild enough to be enjoyed by children. As a baby, I show a taste for bleu cheese, an exoticism which the family feels indicates that I will grow up to be trouble. Eric and I hold our noses at the presence of a particularly stinky cheese which smells remarkably like the inside of my grandmother’s old slippers.

Finally, even the most famished family member pushes his plate away. The tablecloth, covered in breadcrumbs, is stained here and there with spilled wine and sauce. Men discreetly loosen their belts, and children can barely keep their eyes open and their chins out of their plates. My grandmother glows with pleasure, basking in the warmth of compliments. Slowly, the grown-ups rise from the table. The women stack plates and tidy up. No one is in a hurry to break the spell. Years later, I would be shocked to hear someone comparing the meal after my grandfather’s funeral with my cousin Nina’s wedding reception, but by that time, I had spent many years in Anglo-Saxon countries, absorbing their habits and changing my perspective. A perspective refound, fortunately, each morning when I dunk a bit of bread in my morning coffee. ■



**September 30 is
International Translation Day!**

Attention

If you’ve ever received an e-mail from programdirector@nyctranslators.org, please be advised that that e-mail did not in fact come from the NYCT program director.

Program director Slavica Zecevic-Pralica uses her own private e-mail address, which is zigfrid@aol.com, to answer all e-mails sent to programdirector@nyctranslators.org.

So please disregard all e-mails sent by programdirector@nyctranslators.org.

Thanks!

**Do you know someone who'd
like to advertise in
The Gotham Translator?**

The newsletter is published six times a year and reaches a circulation of approximately 350-400.

Our ad rates are as follows:

- Full page (7.5"x10") \$150
- 1/2-page (7.5"x4.75") \$80
- 1/4-page (3.5"x4.75") \$40
- 1/8-page (3.5"x2.25") \$20

Please note: All prices are for black-and-white, camera-ready copy.

To place an ad, please contact editor Jason Fargo at editor@nyctranslators.org no later than 30 days prior to the desired issue's publication date. Publication dates are Feb. 1, April 1, June 1, Aug. 15, Oct. 1, and Dec. 1.

SUMMER Party Pics!

Former NYCT president Edna Ditaranto and Laurie Treuhaff



Michelle Mead shares her thoughts on the joys of French bread



SUMMER Party Pics!

NYCT president Guylaine Laperrière with Edna Ditaranto, Laurie Treuhaff, Matilde Deferrari, Teresa Waldes, and Meg Shore



Gloria Barragán reads a poem to the attendees

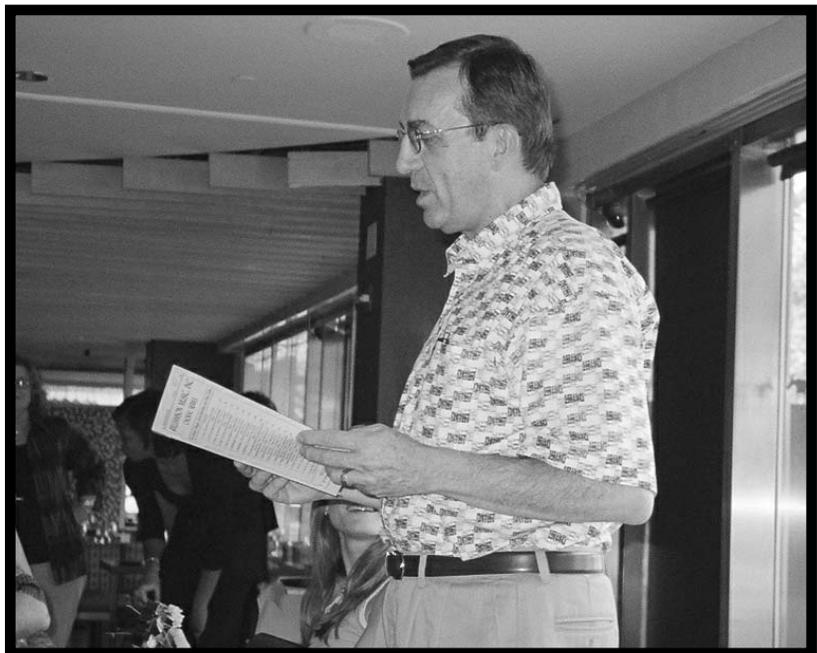


SUMMER Party Pics!

Elisabeth Ranhe sings a bossa nova with Samantha Catalano on guitar



Lucien Morin sings "Some Enchanted Evening"



SUMMER Party Pics!

Some NYCT members enjoy the performance of a colleague



Laurie Treuhaff introduces one of her daughters to the joys of translation



SUMMER Party Pics!

**Members observe a moment of
silence for NYCT colleagues
who recently passed away**



Fouad Kheir takes it all in



CIRCLE NEWS

September Meeting Wednesday, September 15, 6:30PM

In response to the survey, many of you expressed a wish to have Robert Joe Lee, court executive in the Language Services Section of the Administrative Office of the Courts, as our guest lecturer. Your wish has been granted!

Robert Joe Lee has accepted our invitation to speak, and he will provide a lecture covering the following areas:

- Credentialing requirements for court interpreters and legal translators
- Professional codes of conduct for court interpreters
- Finding work as a court interpreter
- New Jersey's program for providing equal access to courts for linguistic minorities

There will be a period for questions and answers after the presentation.

Robert Joe Lee has been the manager of the court interpreting program for the New Jersey Judiciary since the program's inception in December 1985. For almost 20 years, he has coordinated the development of numerous policies for court interpreting and legal translation. Lee's work has involved the creation of administrative programs such as statistical reporting systems, the development of court interpreting tests in numerous languages, and the establishment of a legal translating test for Spanish-English. He has served on numerous boards and committees for programs with a national focus. In 1995, he helped form the Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification; since then, he's served as chair of its technical committee.

Lee holds a M.Div. and a Th.M. degree from Princeton Theological Seminary, as well as an M.A. from the Rutgers University Graduate School of Criminal Justice. In addition,



tion, he has completed all of the coursework for the M.Ed. in Language Education at the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education.

After the meeting, please join us for dinner. The tables are set for us at The Lemon Restaurant, 230 Park Ave. South. Time: 8:00 PM. Dinner is \$33.00 per plate (tax, tip, and a glass of house red or white wine included). Please reserve for this event by e-mailing programdirector@nyctranslators.org. If you fail to make a reservation,

it's possible that the restaurant may not be able to accommodate you.

NOTE: Our apology to those who celebrate Rosh Hashanah. We didn't plan or want to have the meeting during the holiday, but September 15 was the only available day. Thank you for your understanding, and have a joyous and healthy New Year.

October Meeting Tuesday, October 19, 6:30PM

In October, we will offer a recap of the ATA conference in Toronto. If you were there, please come and share your experience. If you missed the conference this year, come and hear first-hand reports on the sessions and other doings from your fellow NYCT members.

After the meeting, please join us for dinner. We'll reconvene at the Vietnamese restaurant L'Annam, which is just a few blocks away from the meeting site at 121 University Place (east side, corner of 13th). Time: 8:00 PM. Dinner is \$25.00 per plate (tax and tip included), with individual drinks paid for separately. Please reserve for the meal by e-mailing programdirector@nyctranslators.org. If you fail to make a reservation, it's possible that the restaurant may not be able to accommodate you.

Location

Both meetings will be held at The Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Avenue, 2nd Floor (east side of Fifth Ave. between 15th and 16th Streets). Please note that for security reasons all visitors to The Foundation Center must be registered 24 hours in advance. E-mail programdirector@nyctranslators.org if you plan to attend the meeting, and your registration will be confirmed. By the way, the meetings are free of charge. Article IV, By-Laws of the NYCT, states that "All members shall have the right to attend and vote at any general meetings of the Circle..."

We hope that you'll find the time to join us at both events. Thanks!

THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR



The New York Circle of Translators (NYCT) is a New York State not-for-profit corporation grouping independent translators and interpreters as well as companies and organizations. It is a chapter of the American Translators Association (ATA) which is, in turn, an affiliate of the International Federation of Translators (FIT).

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)

Visit us at www.nyctranslators.org and join online!

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PO Box 4051
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163-4051