THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

by **Renée Borio-Román**

It was truly a wonderful experience working with the 2009 Board in my capacity as President-Elect. This year I look forward to my term as President with great enthusiasm and optimism because I know that I will be working with many of the same devoted Circle members who generously gave their time last year to serve on the Board. Lori Colman, last year's President, will be serving as President-Elect this year, Giovana Boselli is returning as our Treasurer and Margarite Heintz Montez will be serving another term as our Program Director. This year we are very pleased to welcome Margorzata (Gosia) Darwin as our new Secretary and Agnes Meilhac will be taking over as the new editor of the Gotham. What I enjoyed most about working with last year's Board of Directors was our ability to resolve conflicts and reach a consensus quickly about important Circle matters. Consequently, we were able to see many of our goals for 2009 realized.

This year we hope to continue to attract interesting speakers to our meetings and provide members with useful conferences and more social and networking opportunities. We would like to attract new members and will be reaching out in particular to individuals who are just starting out in our field.

I would like to encourage all of our members to log on to our newly-designed website http://www.nyctranslators.org and to check it regularly for information about upcoming Circle events. Additionally, you will be receiving notices about events and other news information through your email accounts.

In anticipation of a great year, I strongly encourage all members to come out for our events and to also get involved in volunteer roles. The following committees are in need of chairs this year: the nominating committee, the membership committee and the finance committee. Please consider joining us to help make your organization a stronger and more vibrant one this year. If anyone is interested in getting involved in committee work please contact me at rborio@peopelpc.com. ■

Letter from outgoing President Lori Colman see page 4

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Please submit all contributions as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word format. Articles should be limited to 1500 words or less.

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The Gotham Translator accepts and welcomes contributions of articles about all aspects of translation and translator-related issues. These may include, but are not limited to, **specific translation problems** or **approaches to translation**, **legal issues**, and the **business of translation**. We also welcome **dictionary and hardware/software reviews** as well as **reviews of books, conferences and workshops**. Any ideas or leads on interesting stories and articles for which we may try to obtain reprint permissions are also welcome.

In general, articles and other submissions should be limited to around 1500 words. All text should be submitted as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word format. In case of previously published submissions, please advise us of this fact at the time of submission. ■

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BEHIND THE SCENES

The NYCT Hospitality Desk at ATA's 50th Conference

An interview with Edna Ditaranto, Chair of the Special ATA 2009 – NYCT Committee

Last year, the NYCT was involved as host chapter in a very special event, the ATA's 50th Annual Conference, which took place in New York City's Marriott Marquis Hotel on Times Square, putting the attendees at the epicenter of all action. The vibrant, intense atmosphere of Big Apple had definitely 'rubbed off' on the proceedings. Simply riding the glass-enclosed, high-speed elevators in the hotel's soaring 37-story atrium had most participants electrified to the core!

This was also true of our Circle members. They pulled together and showed real solidarity and support not only for our organization but also for their colleagues who had traveled from all over the country. The NYCT had been preparing for months in an effort to make the conference even more successful.

Edna Ditaranto spearheaded the Special ATA 2009 – NYCT Committee that brought all of the Circle's plans to fruition. The Gotham Translator asked Edna about her experience.

GOTHAM TRANSLATOR - When did you start looking for volunteers to help with the Circle's responsibilities as host chapter of the ATA Conference in NYC and how many months were you at work?

EDNA DITARANTO - The search started right after the Conference in Orlando in 2008, after a brief meeting the NYCT Board (with me as President) met with the incumbent President Nicholas Hartman. We didn't stop meeting until the last day of the Conference in New York.

GT - How many members came forward and became involved? Were you surprised at the turnout?

Edna Ditaranto (left) and Karina Greene

ED - We had about 50 members interested, but at the end we got 36 members who actually helped at the Conference.

GT - How often and where did you meet?

ED - We had about 6 meetings throughout the year (2009). And, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Milena Savova, from The New York University, for arranging a room free of charge for us to meet on two different occasions.

I also would like to thank Agnes Niemetz for letting us use the conference room where she works for us to meet – also on two different occasions.

GT - What were your goals and your most daunting task?

ED - Originally, beside the Hospitality Desk, we were working on a few Special interest tours for the ATA members. These tours would be at places where translation and interpretation services are used. However, ATA thought it would be a very huge task, and requested us not to pursue.

GT - What was it like to be actually working behind the hospitality desk of an event with so many participants?

ED - It was truly exciting and fun. I was a little disappointed though because people were all over 5 floors, and we got only ½ of the participants visiting us.

GT - Do any special memories of the event stand out in your mind? Any anecdotes?

ED - Not specifically. It was very nice to have almost every one who participated (those with the vest) plus some extras to pose for the photos.

GT - What kind of feedback did you receive from the ATA after the event was over?

ED - Oh, my! Plenty. Everyone was delighted with our services. The President, Nicholas Hartman, did specially thank the New York Circle of Translator for the excellent job we performed at the Hospitality Desk.

GT - Thank you Edna. None of this could have happened without your hard work, leadership and undeniable commitment to the Circle. ■

See next page for feedback from Hospitality Desk Volunteers

FEEDBACK FROM HOSPITALITY DESK VOLUNTEERS

The following are only a few excerpts of the many messages we have received from hospitality desk volunteers who worked at the conference…

We were like the honey of the Conference and attracted many people…

Laura I Brandkamp

It was amazing to see the amount and the quality of help that was given at the NYCT Hospitality Desk. From the moment I walked up to the hospitality desk to the moment I left my experience was, as always, great…

Ruben Diaz

I enjoyed working at the hospitality desk and was happy to be of help. And I think we were of help to a lot of people!...

Trudy Balch

Yes, we proved that the NYCT has what it takes to rock the place!! The new members who signed up during the conference were very excited to see the participation and dedication of the NYCT volunteers…

Karina Greene

The Circle is truly blessed to have such enthusiastic and dedicated people as its members…

Lori Colman

I'd like to add my thanks too, especially to Edna for her leadership. I enjoyed every minute of my experience at the H-Desk. I think we truly did our chapter and our town proud!…

May Wanhamid

It was great working with so many great NYCT members. It also proves that members still value the Circle and can come out for a cause…

Margarite Heintz Montez

It was great to be a part of it and I think we all did a great job there. I really enjoyed it, thanks to all of you as well…

Gina DeMarco

It was an honor to serve at the hospitality desk of the NYCT…

Katerina Paraskevas

I just want to echo my thanks for the opportunity to be a part of the NYCT desk…

Stacy Smith

Letter From Our Outgoing President and This Year's President-Elect

by Lori Colman

As the last quarter of my term in 2009 is now behind me, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support. In an organization like this, volunteering your time and your effort plays an integral role in its life, power, and energy. As President, I relied on that support to enable me to accomplish the things that helped make the Circle a well-known, well-respected entity in the translation community.

The fruits of volunteering have never been more evident than at the ATA's 50th Conference, held in November 2009, at the New York Marriott Marquis. The Circle came together to help at and with the Hospitality Desk and was a genuine source of information and guidance that was appreciated by attendees from all over the world. For that we should truly be proud! I have been extremely lucky to have had the support of many generous people. I wish to give you a very heartfelt "Thank You" for all you have done to facilitate my journey toward achieving the Circle's primary objectives.

I would like to request that you give the future Board the benefit of your time and experience and volunteer to provide them the tools to accomplish their goals as well. Whether it is as a member of a committee or a member of the Board, every contribution is greatly appreciated. Now that I have stressed the importance of volunteering and the positive impact it has, I would like to share some of the events and accomplishments that have taken and are taking place.

We are at the end of a long journey to a new, functional website that will further carry out our mission of reaching out to linguists and clients alike. The website will improve upon our "image" and will provide easier access to features including the ability to send out mass e-mails that will hopefully enhance the members' experiences. We were able to form a new Board of Directors and enjoyed a very successful Holiday/30th Anniversary Party.

Thank you once again for all your support. ■

NYCT Business Meeting: A Year In Review

review by **Agnes Meilhac**

The last NYCT Business Meeting took place on Thursday, January 28th, 2009. The meeting started with a welcome address from Renee Borio-Roman, last year's President-Elect who will be acting as President in 2010. Renee introduced our newly elected Secretary, Malgorzata (Gosia) Darwin and then reintroduced the remaining members of the Board.

The business conducted at the meeting included past President Lori Colman's report, a review of the Circle's goals for 2010, which was presented by Renee Borio-Roman, and the Treasurer's and Program Director's reports.

From the items discussed in these various reports, it became immediately clear that 2009 had been a significant year in the history of the NYCT. While the Circle seemed to be facing a few challenges at the start, its ultimate accomplishments far exceeded anyone's expectations.

Challenges and Achievements

Firstly, outstanding matters from the previous year, including the fate of the website, needed to be resolved. It was necessary to find a 100% reliable system for sending out mass e-mails and identify qualified members to run for offices, who would be willing to volunteer and serve the Circle.

Committees

The Nominating Committee chaired by

Lana Rachkovskaya was able to achieve this last goal, finding three, and not just one, candidates for one of the vacant positions this year – something that hasn't happened in a while.

On the whole, the Circle was able to maintain several committees in 2009, which increased member outreach and involvement. In addition to the Nominating Committee, the Circle's committees include, but are not limited to: the Publications Committee, the Membership Committee, the Public Relations Committee, etc.

The Mentoring Committee, which pairs linguists new to the field with seasoned professionals, helped mentor four Circle members in 2009. The mentoring agenda consisted of providing general advice on starting out in the translation industry, expanding existing business and available training, review of resumes and cover letters, and job referrals.

Web site

The Circle is particularly proud of launching its new webs site, which offers increased functionalities and a much sharper, crisper and more professional look. The new site is a wonderful informational and promotional tool that is easy to navigate. It will help enhance our image as a professional organization and hopefully attract new members.

Three major highlights in 2009

The NYCT helped run, along with the ATA, a Court Interpreting & Translation Seminar in Jersey City on April 25-26, 2009. This event was very well-attended and provided sessions geared toward a wide audience. The speaker from the Circle was Maria Esperanza Voltmer, a Court Interpreting teacher at NYU.

The NYCT also co-sponsored the very successful 3rd East Coast Regional Conference in June. The translator and interpreter development event featured a variety of speakers on a vast array of topics and was organized jointly with the National Capital Area Translators Association (NCATA) and the Delaware Valley Translators Association (DVTA) at La Salle University in Philadelphia, PA.

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Attendees were treated to interactive sessions, training workshops, networking opportunities and the ATA Certification Exam.

Last but not least, the NYCT was the host chapter at the 2009 ATA Conference in New York City. Thanks to Edna Ditaranto, who established a committee of dedicated volunteers, our presence at the Hospitality desk was both useful and helpful. Volunteers manning the desk in shifts distributed maps of NYC, Circle brochures, lists of restaurants, and general information that was of great assistance to all the conference attendees. We were also able to sell Circle themed T-shirts and signed on a number of new members.

Holiday party

The Holiday/30th Anniversary party was held at Garage Restaurant (99 7th Ave South) on December 5th. The event was well attended and a great success, with members enjoying the trendy location, food and drink. It provided a joyful, festive occasion to enjoy the friendships and support that the Circle is able to offer. The high spirits and conviviality among all those who attended were the crowning accomplishments of the Board members who had worked so hard on making the year a memorable experience.

Goals and planned events for 2010

Once again, we are well into a new year. The Circle has many goals and future plans for 2010. It intends to:

- continue work on and maintain the new website, making sure it is 100% user-friendly;
- celebrate the Circle's 30th Anniversary with a special Gotham Translator issue and possibly a scrapbook;
- establish an Advisory Committee, to be chaired by Edna Ditaranto and composed of former Board members, with the purpose of acting as guides and mentors for future Boards.
- continue to organize or co-sponsor conferences and workshops;
- continue to find engaging speakers for our meetings;
- get the Gotham Translator back on a regular publication schedule;
- help coordinate an ATA certification exam sitting in the city;
- provide social networking opportunities for our members.

This year's monthly meetings will feature speakers from the State Department and CIA amongst others. The NYCT will also hold 2 networking meetings (mixers).

With 2009 behind us, we are already moving swiftly ahead into the promise of a new year, full of challenges and opportunities! ■

ABOUT AGNES MEILHAC

Agnes Meilhac is a graduate of Ecole Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs (ESIT) in Paris, where she earned a degree in translation. She also holds a Master of Arts in German literature from University of Pennsylvania and a Master of Arts in French literature from New York University. In 1997, she started working full-time as a freelance translator in Paris, specializing in the cosmetics and beauty care industry. Over the past 13 years, she has translated for many leading companies in the field.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

by Agnes Meilhac

The year 2010 marks a special milestone for the NYCT: our organization turns 30 and is still going strong! It is very exciting for me to become the new editor of the Gotham Translator precisely at this point in time.

My personal goal is simple. As editor, I would like to help nurture the sense of continuity and community that has taken our organization this far. Part of my editorship is also going to involve making sure that the Gotham Translator delivers relevant and pertinent news and information to our members.

I am passionate about my work and truly enjoy being a language professional. I hope that the Gotham Translator will help indulge your passion for language as well.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Board of Directors for entrusing me with this position, our past and future contributors for sharing their knowledge with the rest of the Circle, and our readers for continuing to support us. ■

THE SOCIOLOGICAL TURN IN TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING STUDIES

The Fifth Biennial Conference of the American Translation & Interpreting Studies Association
New York University, April 22-24, 2010

NYU SCPS
SCHOOL OF CONTINUING & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

The American Translation & Interpreting Studies Association invites you to attend their fifth biennial conference, "ATISA V: The Sociological Turn in Translation and Interpreting Studies." The conference will be held on the campus of New York University in the heart of New York City on April 22-24, 2010.

ATISA encourages, supports, and furthers the study of translation and interpreting studies by disseminating knowledge and research relevant to all areas of language mediation, specifically translation and interpreting, regardless of discipline. Translation and interpreting studies here means the study of all forms of communication between languages, including translation, interpreting, localization, bilingual text revision, cross-cultural communication, and the various specializations, tools, and technologies involved in such activities. Presentations focusing on the act of communicating between human languages from a wide range of disciplines and methodologies, including translation studies, interpretation studies, applied linguistics, cognitive science, cultural studies, ethnology, sociology, anthropology, education, and other social sciences are welcomed. Presentations must follow the standards of scholarship of their respective disciplines, and they must show the connection of their work to Translation and Interpreting Studies.

ATISA V promises to be an exciting conference where new ideas are generated, disciplinary boundaries are crossed, and research on all aspects of translation and interpreting, from cognition and social action to teaching and learning, is shared.

For more information and registration, visit www.scps.nyu.edu/translationconf2010

E-mail your questions to translationconf2010@nyu.edu.

ANNUAL NETA CONFERENCE IN BOSTON

The New England Translators Association (NETA) will holding is Annual Conference on Saturday, May 22, 2010, at Boston University.

This full day event features panels, talks and workshops on various topics on translation and interpreting field. The program is yet to be finalized but will include topics such as:

- literary translation
- business skills for freelancers
- medical interpreting
- how to get started in the field
- trends and tools in medical translation

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT
Tapani Ronni
Co-chair, NETA Conference committee
tapanironni@yahoo.com

Call For Contributions!

Special Commemorative 30th Anniversary Issue of the Gotham Translator

Year 2010 is set to be an important year for the Gotham Translator and the NYCT. It is, of course, our 30th anniversary – cause enough for celebration. We want to mark this milestone in a symbolic way: looking back at our past to rejoice in the future.

As part of the celebration, the Circle is planning a special issue of the Gotham Translator. We invite you to be a part of this commemorative issue by sending us memories of your experience.

We want to hear about the people, times, and events that made a real impression on you.

Please email agnes@beautyterm.com with your favorite memories and recollections, highlights of special events, clippings, funny stories and photos of the past 30 years!

Be a part of our history — be a part of the celebration!

GOTHAM'S MANY CITIES

Language Across Communities in New York

by Leonard Morin, New York City, August 2009

How cosmopolitan is New York City? Apparently more languages are spoken in London, but New York is still the multicultural mecca. To what degree do communities of different cultures that live and work geographically close to one another in the Big Apple actually communicate with each other? In this essay, I take a closer look at the dimensions and limitations of New York as the "world capital" and "melting pot." I also explore to what extent coexistence in New York leads to unity or divisions, and the role that language plays in that process. Furthermore, I discuss whether we can understand other countries through the immigrants that represent them among our population here.

English as a *lingua franca* facilitates communication, yet not everyone here speaks English. And, as is obvious to translators and interpreters, the concepts and shades of meaning of other languages, not to mention the cultural experiences of those who speak them, are often lost when foreign-language speakers switch to English.

Being fluent in Spanish has been a great asset to me, and having lived for an extended period in Latin America has proven just as valuable for understanding my Spanish-speaking neighbors. But these credentials don't necessarily give me a passport to live the Latin American experience in New York City. Although knowing that language improves my access to the respective cultures, many Latinos prefer to speak to me in English over Spanish, which in some cases is a barrier to communication. There is complex etiquette regarding when to use the language of non-native English speakers. In some cases, a higher standard will actually prevail for gringos speaking Spanish in New York than would apply to them speaking Spanish in Latin America, since the Spanish speaker can often change over to English here.

Chinese culture in New York is even more inscrutable to outsiders. Most everybody in New York eats at Chinese restaurants. But even those who shop in Chinatown every week and have thereby gained substantial knowledge of Chinese grocery items and cuisine will find the Chinese communities of our city impenetrable without thorough knowledge of Mandarin or Cantonese and having lived in Asia. Learning one of these languages, of course, could easily be a 10-year project, so just how close are we in fact to the experiences of Chinese New Yorkers as residents of our metropolis without their languages? What part of their country do they come from? What language do they speak? What social strata do they represent in their home country?

Although I do not know Chinese, my knowledge of Latin America, Spanish, and the Latin American cultures of New York City has taught me the answers to some of the same questions above as they pertain to Latinos, in and of themselves a vast and diverse group. For example, I know that after implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), there was a major influx of Mexican campesinos to New York City, mainly from the state of Puebla in south-central Mexico. I know that the Colombians who live in New York, who are a substantial population, especially in Queens, stand out with a large contingent from the urban middle class in Colombia. Traditionally, the Dominicans in New York City have predominantly come from the north of that country, and only more recently did generalized immigration from the rest of the country occur. Many Ecuadorians have immigrated to New York City in recent decades, most of whom come from the southern provinces of Azuay and Cañar.

We take information of this kind for granted about people from backgrounds similar to our own, but it can help us connect with our neighbors and colleagues. Natives of the respective linguistic backgrounds will be well aware of these and many more details.

The activism that I have done on the issue of the free trade agreements between the United States and Latin America has greatly contributed to my familiarity with the Latino communities in New York City. Like any political organizing, this effort has been an arduous process. But it has taught me a lot. It has led me to believe that understanding our multifaceted city is a monumental task, an endeavor longer than life. An obvious hurdle that I have faced at times is the mistrust among some Latino activists vis-à-vis gringos.

But I understand now that this is just one

of many divisions, and being a gringo doesn't make me special. One archetypal division that exists within the Latin subcontinent and is perhaps felt more acutely in New York is that between the Caribbean and the mainland. But divisions within the Colombian community and divisions within the Dominican community are notorious – not to speak of the rifts between the first and second generations, between those who prefer Spanish and those who prefer English within the Latino communities.

This brings me to another rift: that between the adopted country and the country left behind. Manhattan's Chinatown, as I understand it, is a country of its own. As immigrants inevitably distance themselves from their homelands, both geographically and mentally, their culture adapts, even if they never actually assimilate to "American culture." Their culture transforms into a new culture distinct to New York City, a subculture that does not exist in their home country.

Since Dutch speakers usually cannot tell that I'm a non-native, they almost always speak to me in Dutch and treat me like an insider. This allows me to more directly share their experiences, but they also lead a lifestyle that is intrinsically linked to the U.S. When I speak to Dutch and Germans in the U.S. in their own languages, I often feel like they are allowing me to partake in their adventure, since they usually live in this country for excitement and for professional development as opposed to out of economic or political necessity.

My experience has been that bilingualism is a myth, which suggests that having a foot in both worlds is virtually impossible. It appears that as Latin American immigrants gain command of the English language, their fluency in Spanish deteriorates. The few who maintain a level of proficiency close to perfection virtually never have native command of English. I can think of perhaps one or two truly bilingual individuals that I have met in my lifetime – at least as far as I knew both of their languages. There are those who use Spanglish, but that can be considered as much a weakness as a strength. Speakers of this hybrid appear to draw on vocabulary from one language because they lack it in the other. In the end, Spanglish will never rival the refinement and precision of Spanish or English.

Of course when it comes to different cultures understanding one another, there is an even more fundamental issue than language: the willingness to accept other cultures and ethnicities at all. Despite our country and especially our city having a rich tradition of immigration that persists to this day, we also have a legacy of racial, ethnic, and sectarian intolerance and violence. One doesn't have to dig too deep into our past to find examples. Let alone the South's hooded Klansmen, New York City abounds with examples of police violence against African-Americans, Africans, and Latinos. Two recent examples of many are the cases of Amadou Diallo and Sean Bell. There are also more than enough examples of hate crimes against Jews and Chinese. The case of Ali Kamara, a Black Muslim from Liberia, attacked for racial motives on Staten Island on the election night of our first African American president, aptly captures this duality of diversity and bigotry. The intolerance of Islam by American fundamentalist religious groups has led to repression and discrimination of Muslims here at home, not to mention that it's driving our wars in the Middle East and has been shaping our image abroad, particularly under the Bush administration.

When I have spoken to Canadians about New York's so-called melting pot, they have insisted that Toronto and Montréal are both more authentic melting pots than ours, since the varied cultures of those cities interact much more, and the Canadians receive immigrants with open arms. In the U.S., we do not have real integration. I have found it hard to refute this argument. Nonetheless, I see beauty in the autonomy of our city's cultures. There is something fascinating about the fact that Salsa artists and New Yorkers Héctor Lavoe and Henri Fiol – veritable heroes in much of Latin America and the Caribbean – at least until recently went unnoticed to most New Yorkers. Some say that Salsa was born in New York.

To me, Salsa in New York and the culture behind it that created it represent one of the many cities that co-inhabit Gotham while largely remaining strangers to one another, almost as though the lack of communication in this case foments culture. We are fortunate to live in a city where such disparate realities can coexist. Yet, I believe that it couldn't hurt for us, as New Yorkers and as Americans, to recognize that there are cultures and realities that are not present within the boundaries of our city or our country. Just because we have such a wide spectrum of cultures here does not mean that there is no other world beyond New York or the U.S. And, as I said, I don't believe that any New Yorker is capable of experiencing the cultures of every ethnicity present in the city in their entirety. We as linguists ought to be the first to understand that. ■

ABOUT LEONARD MORIN

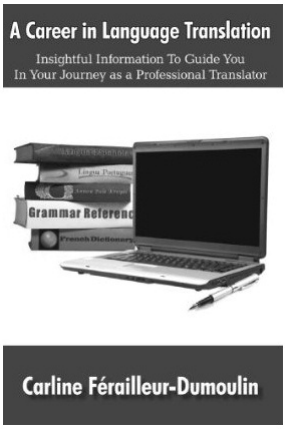
Leonard Morin translates Dutch, Spanish, and German into English. He interprets between Spanish and English as well as between Dutch and English. He resides in New York and has lived in the Netherlands, Ecuador, and Germany.

BOOK REVIEW

A Career in Language Translation: Insightful Information to Guide You In Your Journey as a Professional Translator BY CARLINE FÉRAILLEUR-DUMOULIN

review by **Renée Borio-Román**

Circle member Carline Férailleur-Dumoulin has a new book out that aims to help new translators get started in the field as well as pass along useful information to those of us already working in the translation industry. Férailleur-Dumoulin is the founder and president of CF Professional Translations, LLC, based in Atlanta, GA.



The first chapter of her book is devoted to an introduction to the profession. She begins with a brief history of translation, an overview of training, an explanation of what it means for a translator to be certified and accredited and what it means for an interpreter to become certified and registered. She ends the chapter with a overview of career opportunities in the field.

Chapter Two provides readers with a process to assess their own skills and level of preparedness for entering the profession. She goes on to review some useful software packages and suggests basic equipment and tools that translators should acquire before setting up shop. I found it particularly helpful that she provides websites for all of the software programs that she recommends, cutting out the research for the reader.

In Chapter Three she discusses marketing one's services as a freelancer. Again she provides a number of helpful websites that would certainly serve as a good point of departure for someone hoping to get started as a translator. She also provides good advice on creating a translation-oriented resume . In fact the book's appendix includes a sample purchase order, a sample invoice, a resume and business cards.

Chapter 4 is devoted to legal aspects involved in operating as a translator and Chapter 5 provides tips on running a translation company.

Although much of the information contained in the first few chapters of this book can be found in other books and articles on the subject of getting started in the translation field, what sets this book apart is the wealth of reference material provided. The last chapter includes a comprehensive list of all the major translation and interpretation organizations throughout the world, a list of suggested dictionaries and useful websites, and a list of distributors of translation-oriented books. At the end of the book, Férailleur-Dumoulin also provides a list of various schools and universities around the world that offer studies and training in the fields of translation and interpreting. It would be a useful tool for a student who wishes to study translation or interpreting abroad or here in the United States to gather information on several different programs.

Although much of the information contained in the first few chapters of this book can be found in other books and articles on the subject of getting started in the translation field, what sets this book apart is the wealth of reference material provided.

This book would be a practical addition to the list of books required for introductory courses on translation or interpreting. It would also be particularly useful to professionals who are seeking to expand their business abroad.

A Career in Language Translation is available in hard and soft cover. To purchase copies of the book, you can contact the publisher Author House at 1-888-280-7715 or order through Intrans Book Service (www.intransbooks.com). Soft cover ISBN 978-1-4389-4422-7 Hard cover 978-14389-4423-4. ■

DID YOU KNOW?

The Language Services Industry Rallies to Support the Haiti Relief Effort

by Agnes Meilhac

On January 12, 2010, a devastating earthquake struck the nation of Haiti, causing unprecedented damage inside and around the capital city of Port-au-Prince.

Here are some of the ways in which linguists, language professionals and computer scientists have helped provide linguistic resources to assist disaster relief workers:

- A free Haitian Creole iPhone application was made available by Transparent Language in support of the disaster relief efforts in Haiti. The mobile phrasebook feature allows any iPhone or iPod Touch users deploying in the relief effort to search for words and emergency phrases in English or in Haitian Creole.
- Worldwide leader in hand-held translation devices ECTACO, Inc. released the first English-Haitian Creole Speech-to-Speech Medical translator. The device was initially requested by the Department of Defense to be developed for translation use by the military but has subsequently been used by law enforcement, medical and Homeland Security agencies throughout the US. Users simply speak into the device in English and it responds with an audible translation in Haitian Creole based on the recognition of its Audio Phrasebook.
- Dallas-based T-System, the leading provider of clinically accepted emergency department documentation solutions, supplied free bilingual medical documentation and triage forms for emergency personnel to help minimize language challenges.
- Many telephone interpreting companies have been offering free interpreting services to aid organizations involved in relief efforts and loved ones searching for the missing.
- Carnegie Mellon linguist Jeff Allen developed an English/Creole speech and text translation system in the 1990's. He collected data for nine months, which was then translated in-house over a period of two years. On January 21, Carnegie Mellon made the data public, putting 13,000 parallel sentences and 35,000 parallel terms on its web site. This prompted Microsoft Research to add Haitian Creole to its web-based translation service – Microsoft Translator - within just five days instead of months, incorporating disaster specific words and phrases to the database. Microsoft continues to regularly update the system.
- The non-profit association Translators Without Borders, which provides free translation services for humanitarian agencies including Doctors Without Borders/Medecins sans frontiers and Medecins du monde, met with an explosion of interest in the wake of the earthquake in Haiti. More than 1,000 Haitian Creole speakers volunteered their translation services to the Paris-based group, which is also distributing an English/Creole triage dictionary.
- The American Translators Association works with the American Red Cross (ARC) to develop a nationwide network of emergency volunteer interpreters. ATA recruits volunteers from its membership to serve as interpreters in crisis situations. Participants receive training in disaster services from the American Red Cross.
- The American Red Cross also has a long-standing partnership with the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT). Because of their prior collaboration in major disaster response operations, NAJIT was asked to coordinate the recruitment of interpreters for the Red Cross Haiti Relief Effort.

If you have volunteered your services to help bridge the language gap in this recent crisis, please tell us about your experience. The Gotham Translator wants to hear from you! ■

NYCT FEBRUARY MEETING

Tips for Passing the ATA Certification Exam

review by Vajra Kilgour

At the monthly meeting of the NYCT on February 11, Eileen Brockbank and Edna Ditaranto gave a very helpful presentation about the ATA certification exam for those of us who are thinking of taking it. The exam consists of three passages of about 225 to 275 words each, two of which must be translated. One of the three is a general passage, which everyone must translate. The other two are passages in specialized fields under the general heading of either technical/scientific/medical or financial/political/legal: you can choose whichever one of them you feel most confident about translating.

As Eileen and Edna explained, the grading system is based on how seriously an error impacts a translation, with a low score or no score for minor errors that any editor can fix or that have little or no impact on the meaning of the passage and a high score—up to 16 points—for a translating error that renders the text unusable. What we're looking for is a low score: 18 or more points is a failing grade.

The test must be handwritten, which for most people means rethinking their whole approach to translation: rather than diving right in, as we have the luxury of doing on our computers, it's a better idea to read both the accompanying instructions and the entire text before setting anything down—and then thinking through each sentence before committing it to paper (although obviously you can make corrections, legibility will count). The final text should be in finished form, without asking the grader to make choices for you: if you had a question about whether this word or that is better and put them both in at some point, choose one and cross out the other before handing in your test—you'll get marked down for an ambiguity or indecision of that kind.

> The ATA certification exam will be given in New York City on May 8, 2010, from 9 am to 2 pm at New York University. For more information, contact the ATA at 703-683-6100 or check the web at www.atanet.org.

Bring your favorite general and specialized bilingual dictionaries, but don't get bogged down in them to the detriment of your overall understanding of the text, and bear in mind that you don't have an unlimited amount of time to consult them. A monolingual dictionary in your target language is indispensable—it's the only spell check there is for a handwritten text! You will not have access to the Internet or any electronic device, but all of the passages in the exam have been chosen especially so that they can be translated without recourse to the Internet.

The exam is proctored and is essentially on the honor system, which means that you can leave the room for a coffee break or change of scene—and you might want to take a break at some point in order to come back to your translations with a clearer perspective (bearing in mind the time constraints, of course).

If you can, it's an excellent idea to take a practice exam. Practice exams are available from the ATA at a rate of $50 per passage—and if the practice exam reveals that you probably won't pass the real thing, you'll have saved a considerable sum (the actual exam costs $300).

The ATA certification exam will be given in New York City on May 8, 2010, from 9 am to 2 pm at New York University. For more information about the exam, to apply to take it, or to order a practice exam, contact the ATA at 703-683-6100 or check the web at www.atanet.org and click on the tab for certification. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vajra Kilgour is a freelance translator and interpreter working in English and Spanish who specializes in art history, social issues, and health.

RAISING AWARENESS

School Outreach — Why Do It?

by Agnes Meilhac

The American Translators Association encourages its members to undertake school outreach initiatives. In short, it wants you to make a visit to your local school to spread the word about our profession. Why?

It's all about raising awareness of our work and helping prepare the next generation of translators and interpreters. The more we do to teach today's kids about our field, the more likely they will appreciate our services in the future.

The ATA has prepared a truly helpful collection of presentation resource materials that can be used for guidance. You can read all about what to say and how to say it depending on the age group you are addressing: elementary, middle, high school or college/graduate students.

My personal experience with school outreach was great. Despite some early misgivings, I was truly happy to have volunteered as a presenter at the International Business Careers Day at Smithtown High School (NY) on December 1st, 2009. Organized by the Smithtown Schools Industry Advisory Board, the program was intended to encourage students in the Business and Language areas by providing information on career options that integrate the knowledge of a second language with business expertise.

The invited guests included, among others, representatives from MTV Networks, Motorla, MetLfie, Holiday Inn Express and three translation agencies. I was there to represent freelance translators.

The event was a series of roundtables, with presenters manning individual 'stations' displaying brochures, pamphlets and other information about their business. The students proceeded from table to table, in groups of 6 or 8, to gather information and interview representatives for 15 to 20 minutes. The information they managed to obtain was to be presented to their classmates the following day.

I arrived with a stack of pamphlets from different schools around the US offering certificates or degrees in translation. My collection came form the ATA's 50th Annual Conference, which I attended at the end of October. I had information about Monterey Institute of International Studies, Kent State University, New York University, University of Wisconsin and Hunter College.

But, none of the students I met had considered studying translation in and for itself. Some were planning on going to Germany to study engineering; one was poised to attend the Fashion Institute of Technology and wanted to know how the knowledge of Italian and French would help her in that area; another talked about his plans to train as an air traffic controller and the necessity to have at least a cursory ability to communicate with pilots in many different languages… Most seemed to be the typical high school kids, not yet completely sure of what they wanted to do with the rest of their lives.

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Although the students had at their disposal a list of sample questions, they were quick to come up with their own. It was clearly important to lead into the questions with an interesting introduction, explaining exactly who I was, what languages I work with and what my work consisted of. The students liked to hear about how I became interested in languages and what made me decide to become a translator. I tried to describe my working conditions, a typical work day (with all the pros and cons of toiling away in a home office) and my tools of the trade: hardware, software, dictionaries, terminology databases, the Internet, email, fax, etc.

The key messages to convey were:

- translation and interpreting require different skills, one being a written and the other a spoken form of translation;
- additional training is necessary and simply being bilingual is not enough to become established as a translator;
- translation is not about word-for-word substitution but about rendering the meaning of a message within the context in which it was written;
- machine translation is not about to replace human translators.

As an example of some of the complexities involved in translation, I asked the students to consider the seemingly uncontroversial question of translating *hello* into French. I explained that, although English does not distinguish between the word used when greeting someone face to face and that used when answering the phone, the French does make that distinction. The French *hallo* can be used as a telephonic greeting only. The other possible French translations would be *ça va?*, a brief form of greeting often used in informal situations, and *salut* another common form of greeting used equally on arrival and departure (whereas the English *hello* can only be used in the specific context of arrival).

Introducing this type of example into the conversation seemed to bring the message home. The students also laughed at another little anecdote I had drawn from reality: a pet grooming salon in my home town briefly calling itself 'Le Petit Pet', with the obviously hilarious implications for French-speakers, before switching to the less confusion-prone 'Unleashed'.

So what did I learn from my participation in this school outreach program? Most importantly, I found out that I loved talking to young people at the cusp of their future about what I do. It was a great way to gain a sense of helping improve the knowledge and awareness of our profession. It also forced me to think in terms of how I could best present information at my fingertips in simple, understandable terms. It is crucial to hone the public perception of written and oral translation as a professional and serious field of business; starting with the younger generations is a powerful step in reaching out. ■

CIRCLE NEWS

NYC MEETINGS

All meetings start at 6 :30 PM and end at 8:00 PM with dinner at a nearby restaurant. Check website for details. Please e-mail the Program Director at NYCTProgramDirector@gmail.com if you plan to attend a meeting.

Future meetings:

March 9th, 2010 - Invited speaker from the State Department
April mixer - Check website for further details
May 19th, 2010 - Invited speaker from the CIA

ATA CERTIFICATION

The New York Circle of Translators will be holding its Annual ATA Certification Exam as follows:

When: May 8, 2010 - 10:00AM - 1:00AM

Where: New York University
Woolworth Building
Room 230
15 Barclay Street
New York, NY

The room is being provided by New York University, School of Continuing and Professional Studies, Dr. Milena Savova.

Candidates must contact the ATA directly to register.

Please arrive at least 1/2 hour before beginning of exam.

TERMINOLOGY HIGHLIGHTS

TERMIUM Plus® is the Government of Canada's terminology and linguistic data bank.

One of the largest linguistic data banks in the world and a product of 30 years of research and development, TERMIUM Plus® provides English, French or Spanish terminology spanning nearly every field of human knowledge: administration, computers, environment, medicine, agriculture, industry, sports and the arts.

This is an outstanding information source for anyone working with languages.

Once available only to employees of the Government of Canada and to subscribers, TERMIUM Plus®has been available online free of charge since October 8, 2009.

TERMIUM Plus® records are written by language professionals working for the Translation Bureau of the Government of Canada. They are updated by 40 terminologists, who make about 100,000 modifications annually (creating new records, deleting outdated data, expanding the existing base).

The data bank has almost four million general and specialized terms in English, French and Spanish. It contains definitions, context, examples of usage and phraseological units. It is also a goldmine of abbreviations, acronyms, synonyms, geographical names, and a wide range of official titles (including names of national and international organizations, statutes and programs).

Users can perform word-combination or full text searches using key words. They can also consult 14 different writing and translation tools with advice on style and usage issues in French, English and Spanish.

Access to TERMIUM Plus is provided by the Language Portal of Canada, a web site showcasing Canadian expertise in the area of language. In addition to giving free access to language tools online, the site also features articles and writing tips, word games and exercises, a collection of links to language-related works and sites, and much more…http://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/index-eng.php

The NYCT Holiday/30th Anniversary party was held at Garage Restaurant on December 5th

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!

THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

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