THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

by Rosene Zaros

We at the Gotham continue to be committed to serving you, our colleagues, by keeping you abreast of what is happening in the translator/interpreter community—the good, the bad, and even the downright ugly—and by providing you with a forum for the discussion of the issues that concern us. We began the year by questioning the structure of our professional organizations and what we might legitimately have a right to expect from them. The sad truth is that our industry has changed tremendously while our professional associations have not. One of the biggest concerns of the ATA (in fact, it is Purpose #1) is "to promote the recognition of the translation and interpretation professions". As we have said repeatedly, that goal has long since been achieved; however, it is very likely that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the increase in international political terrorism have had more to do with it than anything our professional organizations did.

The challenges we now face are myriad and they are very different from anything faced by translators in the past. Two years ago, in the wake of Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay, we used the 1961 experiments by Stanley Milgram, a Yale University psychologist, to stress the importance to translators of anti-torture resolutions. A decade ago, the idea of a need for an anti-torture resolution would have been inconceivable. The ATA, our parent association has traditionally tried to avoid anything controversial and has chosen to justify its position (or lack thereof) by stating that the American Translators Association does not become involved in political issues. We, at the Gotham, believe that these are humanitarian and legal issues and that we, as human beings, absolutely cannot ignore them, and if anything must become involved in them.

However, if one wants to argue that the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and the rise of political terrorism did not fully bring translators into the spotlight, then the issue of immigration certainly has. The press and much of the general public applauded the courage of Erik Camayd-Freixas in revealing the events that took place in a makeshift courtroom in Waterloo, Iowa after an ICE raid on the Agriprocessors kosher meatpacking plant in Postville, Iowa. The response from our professional organizations (ATA and NAJIT) was a little different—it was more of a non-response. After joining NAJIT and gaining access to their Listserv, I was able to contact Isabel Framer, Chair of the NAJIT Board of Directors, who told me that NAJIT had not issued a statement because their board of five had not reached a consensus and, thus, the opinions she expresse were personal rather than official. While she said that she personally feels that Camayd-Freixas did not reveal anything confidential and that he only told what he saw, she also stressed that it is important that interpreters

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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. The "Members' Voice" section of each issue is devoted to translations, stories, and poetry written by members.

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. We prefer unpublished contributions. In the case of previously published or simultaneous submissions, please advise us of this fact at the time of submission. ■

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A Word From The Editor (cont'd)

know that there is a code of ethics that both guides and protects them and that it is important to address concerns through the proper channels. My question was: "And, if those channels lead nowhere? What then?" Ms. Framer's response: "That's a good question."

There are many questions and there are no easy answers. Yet, the questions must be asked. Can strict adherence to a Code of Ethics become the equivalent of "just obeying orders"? The Milgram experiments taught us a lot about obedience and the power of authority. Subsequent studies by the psychologist Steven Sherman indicate that obedience to authority over the dictates of conscience is not inevitable and that education plays a profound role in altering behavior. When people have the opportunity to reflect on an issue before they are involved in it, they are more likely to behave in a moral and ethical fashion when they are faced with that issue in real life.

Rather than face the fact that translators (especially oral translators) frequently are working in a very difficult environment, an environment that is fraught with discrimination and prejudice where the concept of "traduttore-traditore" is alive and well, our professional organizations prefer to speak in platitudes if they speak at all. It is a disgrace and we deserve better.

In this edition, Bernie Bierman courageously addresses the "ATA mentality" and our President, Edna Ditaranto compares the situation to "David and Goliath". You will also find an article by Madeline Newman Rios which gives us another look at Postville and compares immigration proceedings today with those of twenty years ago. ■

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by **Edna Ditaranto**

Edna Ditaranto

Dear Members:

The good old Summer is coming quickly to an end once again. I hope you all have enjoyed the hot weather, basked in some rays, and had a chance to take a few days off from your busy lives to rest and recharge your batteries.

Your NYCT has been busy planning a few events for the remainder of 2008 (see notice about our Summer Picnic, and the Susana Greiss Annual Workshop, as well as our monthly meetings).

In this issue we are also publishing a section about the newly created and renewed Committees (see article inside). **I urge you all to participate** in one or more of them – you are part of the NYCT, and we need your help.

David & Goliath

As I write this month's President's message, I find myself in a quandary: Should I, as President of the NYCT, force my own opinion regarding humanitarian crime and ill-treatment of fellow translators and interpreters on to the membership, or should I just listen with a deaf ear to what comes to my attention, and just try to do my best to serve the Circle in other ways until the end of my mandate?

If I decide to do the first, how much can we, alone or as a group, do to change what is going on around us?

Some of you may be asking, "What is she talking about"?

Perhaps you have heard about the Arabic interpreter who was arrested under the allegation of conspiracy, or about the recently published New York Times article by Julia Preston regarding *Interpreting after the Largest ICE Raid in US History: A Personal Account*, by Erik Camayd-Freixas, Ph.D. Those interested in reading the essay, can easily find it through Google.

The *Gotham* has published a few articles in the past on the first of these issues. But the questions remain: Do we have enough power to fight the "evil forces" that threaten us? Should we even bother getting out of our comfort zone to try righting the wrong? If we yell as a group, will someone hear us, and if someone does, will they care?

As I read the NYCT bylaws once again, Paragraph One of Article III – Purposes states, "*To advocate and promote the recognition of translating and interpreting as professions, and to defend and support the interests and concerns of professional translators and interpreters;*"

I feel I should at least make the attempt to bring these issues to your attention. Now, it is your reaction and opinion that should dictate our position as a group. ■

THE AMERICAN TRANSLATOR & INTERPRETER or THE FEW LIVING AND THE MANY UNDEAD

by **Bernie Bierman**

Friday, July 11, 2008, was a most interesting day for the small number of living interpreters and translators in the United States. (For the majority, or better put, the Undead, it was just another routine day in the mausoleums and around the gravestones.) On that day, *The New York Times* carried an article on Page One about an interpreter, a real live, breathing, thinking interpreter named Erik Camayd-Freixas. Now, it is not too often that a national and international newspaper like *The New York Times* carries a story about an interpreter or translator, let alone one that merits its Page One. Not only did an interpreter merit page one, he also got his photo into the column. Amazing. Truly amazing. But the amazing events didn't stop there. On Sunday, July 13, 2008 (one day before Bastille Day), our interpreter Erik Camayd-Freixas made it into a Times editorial. For those in our august profession who have not been afflicted with anencephaly, you might want to think about that: two "home runs" for an interpreter – page one of The New York Times and an editorial in the Sunday Times. (And you might even say three "home runs", if you consider the letter-to-the-editor from Madeline Newman Ríos, an interpreter in Claremont, CA, which was published in the Sunday New York Times on July 20, 2008.) But this remarkable amount of coverage didn't even stop there. There were news items in USA Today, the *Washington Post*, editorials in other regional newspapers, including the *Houston Chronicle*. And it went on even more. Our interpreter appeared on television (Univisión channels) and on July 24th he testified before a House Sub-Committee on Immigration. And if all of that still isn't enough, you might want to "Google" the name Erik Camayd-Freixas, and see what a mother lode of information comes up. Indeed, if no one knew what an interpreter or (oral) translator was or even heard of such an occupation, this one man certainly changed that. Except, or course, for The Undead, who in the netherworld that is the American translator and interpreter community evidently constitute the clear majority, or seemingly the clear majority. But make no mistake about it. The story of Professor Camayd-Freixas is not a story about publicity or public relations, as some of the Undead have tried to make it.

The Undisturbed Mausoleums

Within a day or two of *The New York Times* story about Erik Camayd-Freixas, a professor of Spanish at Florida International University and long-time court interpreter, the editor of the *Gotham Translator* sent out e-mails to some two score interpreters and translators asking for comments about the Camayd-Freixas story. She also sent out e-mails to officials of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators (NAJIT) and the American Translators Association (ATA). Undaunted by my warnings that she was knocking on the doors of mausoleums or otherwise tapping on gravestones, particularly in respect of these two latter-mentioned organizations, your editor proceeded to undertake her e-mailing with all due vim, vigor and vitality. The initial responses from individual translators or interpreters were certainly representative of voices coming from mausoleums.

Lillian Clementi wrote, "*I'm aware of Dr. Camayd-Freixas's essay and the NYT article, but I'm not qualified to comment since I have no interpreting experience and only the most theoretical knowledge of interpreter ethics.*"

Eta Trabing wrote, "*Sorry, no comment. I read the essay and was moved by it.*"

And so on and so forth came the comments from the graveyard.

Finally, in what was clearly a breath of life and a message of hope that the countryside of American translation and interpretation was not dotted with cemeteries and tombs, a letter was received from Edna Ditaranto, President of the

New York Circle of Translators. Ms. Ditaranto wrote, "*… I am not sure how much we can do (if we can do anything), except to have our voices heard. I have forwarded the essay (of Professor Camayd-Freixas) to the rest of the Board*", a statement to which Ms. Ditaranto has since added more passion and compassion (see her President's message in this edition of the *Gotham Translator*). Most of the NYCT Board members have remained in the reposing position in their respective coffins.

With NAJIT there was total silence. Isabel Framer, NAJIT's senior official became publicly mute after making a perfunctory statement to The New York Times that was incorporated into the July 11th front-page article. Ann Macfarlane, NAJIT's former Executive Director and a former president of the ATA responded to an e-mail request for comment by saying, "*Indeed I had not read Eric's original essay, and I very much appreciate your sending it to me. I suggest that you contact Isabel Framer, Chair of the Board of Directors of NAJIT. As you know, she is deeply involved in all such issues and always has good input on these topics. You are welcome to mention that I suggested that you contact her, if you like*".

Now that is something to behold. Here is a translator and interpreter, a former ATA president and NAJIT Executive Director, and she has absolutely nothing to say about what is arguably the biggest story to hit the translation and interpreting industry since the early 1990's when ATA and NAJIT (and other translator-interpreter organizations) were investigated by the Federal Trade Commission for purported antitrust violations.

But at least within the rank-and-file of the NAJIT community, the Undead were drowned out by a fairly lively debate – with some heated comments – that ensued on the organization's ListServ.

Notably, there were those who were ready to hang Mr. Camayd-Freixas for "ethical violations", and others who fancied themselves Vatican theologists, inundating their comments with words like "canons" and "relativism".

However, the Undead clearly dominated in the American Translators Association. Jackie Noh, a member of the ATA Board of Directors told Gotham editor, Rosene Zaros, "*Thank you for your interest. ATA's PR committee is looking into this matter*". That was it for Ms. Noh. A nice, curt one-liner. From Alexandra Russell, another ATA Board member, Ms. Zaros received this comment: "*Thank you for your email and interest in these issues. The ATA Public Relations Committee is currently reviewing the article and preparing a response*". Well, at least this was a 2-liner. (Ms. Russell herself is a member of ATA's Public Relations Committee.)

The reaction to the Camayd-Freixas story

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CORRECTION TO THE MAY/JUNE 2008 GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

An article reviewing the NYCT May Meeting misspelled the surname of the guest speaker and also misstated his title. The correct name and title of our guest from the UN is: Stephen Sekel, Director of the Documentation Division of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

This fall we shall need to elect a new **President-Elect** for 2009. This is a one-year term leading to President for 2010.

Are you, or do you know, someone who would like to serve in this capacity?

If so, please contact Lana Rachkovskaya: lana@capitaltranslations.net

The Circle is growing and this is a wonderful opportunity to discover the benefits of getting active and getting involved.

The Few LIving and the Many Dead (cont'd)

by Marian S. Greenfield, former president of both the NYCT and ATA was certainly noteworthy. But before I delight you with her comments, I should point out that Ms. Greenfield and I share one thing in common: you see, my e-mail name is "supremo", a name that was "inspired" by a man who answered to the name of Juan José Rodríguez Francia, once upon a time the president of Paraguay. Ms. Greenfield's philosophy of governance and toleration for differing opinion are also inspired by another president of Paraguay: Alfredo Stroessner. Anyway, Ms. Greenfield's reaction to the page-one story about Professor Camayd-Freixas was: "*I brought this matter to the attention of the Board when it first came out in the Times and as I am no longer an officer of the association and thus have no standing to speak for it, I leave it to the Board to respond*". Alas, the poor Ms. Greenfield regrettably lost her ability to speak as an individual translator and a member of the human race. Anencephaly or another addition to the Undead?

But in the spirit of saving the best for last, we now come to the very august, revered and most serene president of the American Translators Association, Jiri Stejskal. However, before I talk about ATA's chief executive officer, I think it only fair to take a gander at his response to a request for comment about the Story on Page One starring Professor Erik Camayd-Freixas: "*I am working with the ATA Public Relations Committee to address this issue. I cannot commit additional time to engage in parallel efforts*".

I trust that the readers of this commentary will have noticed by now a "minor point", i.e., that the Erik Camayd-Freixas story is nothing more than a minor public relations annoyance in the ATA's scheme of things. I also trust that the readers will take due note that Mr. Stejskal has little time and/or patience for the editor of a newsletter that is a member of the family of ATA newsletters. So much for his "family values".

Tony Roder, a former director of the ATA described Mr. Stejskal to me as a "*schmendrick*", an eastern European word that roughly translates into "milquetoast", as in "Mr. Milquetoast". But having observed translatordom's supposed "Mr. Milquetoast" in action since the inception of his term in office, I would respectfully but nonetheless vehemently disagree with Mr. Roder. Our supreme leader, or if you prefer, the HTIC ("head translator-in-charge") is no milquetoast. Far from it. He is *lean and mean*. Clearly, if it weren't for the fact that this publication subscribes to what one may want to call "family values" (to which of course Mr. Stejskal does not) , I would add to "*lean and mean*" one of the most favorite words of another president, but this one a president of the United States: Harry S. Truman.

But let me not mince my words or even give the impression that I am so mincing. If Marian Greenfield's inspiration for governance and toleration of differing views comes from Paraguay's Alfredo Stroessner, the current ATA president's inspiration for governance and tolerance for diverse opinion derives from Soviet Czechoslovakia. Yes, Mr. Stejskal, you are a man whose style of governance and administration has all of the old Soviet trappings and characteristics: authoritarianism, arrogance, condescension, secretiveness and malignancy. And by no means have I overlooked censorship and suppression of dissenting views. No, "Commissar" Stejskal, you are not just lean and mean. You, sir, are an unmitigated menace. You, sir, are an outright disgrace to the free and open and highly

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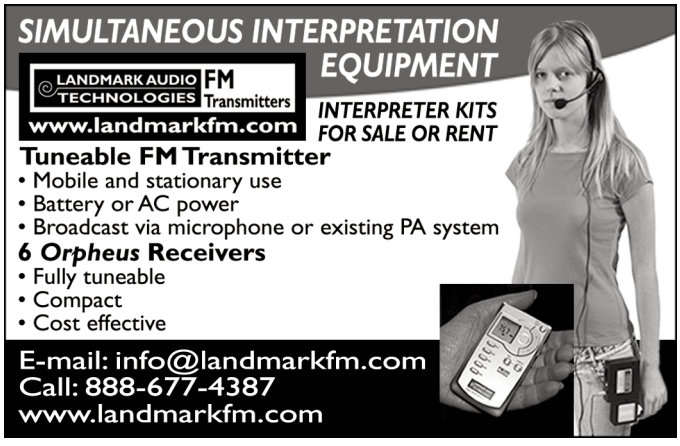

NEWLY ESTABLISHED NYCT COMMITTEES

Continuing Education Committee

Description: The Continuing Education Committee works closely with the Programs Committee to design and plan workshops, seminars, and other events that provide members with an opportunity to enhance and expand their knowledge and to further hone their craft.

Chairperson: Jordan Fox – jordanfox@earthlink.net

First task:

- Working in conjunction with the Program Committee, plan and develop the 1st Annual Susana Greiss Workshop, a 2-day seminar (Saturday and Sunday) to be held first week in October 2008 (and every year).

Future events:

- Plan and develop at least 2 workshops yearly.
- Plan a Regional Conference (East Coast ATA Chapters) – every 2 years

Mentoring Committee

Description: This committee orchestrates the pairing of linguists who are new to the field with seasoned professionals to create a symbiotic relationship wherein the mentor gleans satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment by sharing the benefit of his or her experience and the mentee is the recipient of great knowledge and expertise by someone who has a longstanding presence in the translation and interpreting field.

Chairperson: Lana Rachkovskaya - lana@capitaltranslations.net

Initiate the program, creating a list of willingly mentors, and matching them with mentees. We could follow ATA's mentoring structure.

Program Committee

Description: The Programs Committee is responsible for arranging for speakers, venues, and the other logistical aspects of New York Circle events. The committee will work with the Program Director to negotiate deals with restaurants and will also operate in conjunction with the Continuing Education Committee to arrange for programs that will afford members the chance to explore their interests and listen to a variety of perspectives. Help Program Director with monthly meetings and dinners; Summer BBQ; Holiday dinner.

Chairperson: Margarite Heintz Montez – mystymy_@excite.com

First task:

- Working in conjunction with the Continuing Education Committee, help plan and develop the 1st Annual Susana Greiss Workshop, a 2-day seminar (Saturday and Sunday) to be held first week in October 2008 (and every year).
- Help plan and develop at least 2 workshops yearly.

Future events:

- 30th Anniversary celebration – NYCT 2009
- Initiate the hosting of the 2009 ATA Annual Conference in New York City
- Organize Networking sessions where translators can meet translation companies and exchange contact information
- Plan a Regional Conference (East Coast ATA Chapters)

Finance Committee

Description: The Finance Committee will aid the Treasurer in maintaining and monitoring the Circle's finances. This includes but is not limited to conducting fundraisers, workshop and event fees, and keeping track of members' dues. Help plan and develop means of raising funds for future events for the benefit of the membership.

Chairperson: Giovana Boselli - gboselli@gmail.com

Nominating Committee

Description: The Nominating Committee is responsible for finding and contacting members who are qualified to fill any vacant positions on the Board of the Circle (i.e., members who are in ATA and, for President and President-Elect are Active members of ATA). It will also accept nominations from Circle members and will ultimately present a slate of candidates to the Board for approval.

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NYCT Committees (cont'd)

Chairperson: Lana Rachkovskaya - lana@capitaltranslations.net

First task:

- Initialize search for 2009 President-elect and Treasurer.

Membership Committee

Description: The goal of the Membership Committee is to attract new members, retain current members, and attract lapsed members. The committee will be there to answer questions about the Circle and will explain the benefits of membership. The duties would include sending out informational materials about the various membership types, reminding previous members about the virtues of the Circle, etc

Chairperson: Nicole Lisa – nltranslation@yahoo.com.

First tasks:

- Revise (and modify, if needed), with the help of the Publication Committee, the existing Membership brochure.
- Make contact with and distribute membership brochure to Colleges and Universities that offer translation and interpretation studies in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.
- Make contact with and distribute membership brochure to translation companies and institutions in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Publications Committee

Description: The Publications Committee will facilitate the production and distribution of promotional materials for the Circle such as the brochure and will assist with the Gotham. Members of this committee will also help in compiling and organizing the materials for the print directory.

Chairperson: Rosene Zaros - zarosr@hotmail.com

First tasks:

- Revise (and modify, if needed), with the help of the Membership Committee, the existing Membership brochure.
- Help revise NYCT Web content for new website.
- Revise existing NYCT Guide.
- Help Marketing and Public Relation Committee create a brochure to increase the awareness of the NYCT existence to business and organizations in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Honors & Awards Committee

Description: The Honors & Awards Committee oversees the granting of the financial and honor awards that the Circle offers to its members (such as Honorary Lifetime Membership and the Stern Award). It will be in charge of calling for nominations from the membership and will produce a list of candidates for the awards for the Board.

Chairperson: Laurie Treuhaft - treuhaft@un.org [Open only to Past NYCT Presidents]

First tasks:

- Initiate search for the next Charles Stern Award Recipient(s).
- Initiate search for the next NYCT Honorary Member to present to Board

ATA Certification Committee

Description: This committee is responsible for scheduling a sitting of the ATA Certification exam and for providing proctors for this exam. Members of the Committee will work directly with the ATA.

Chairpreson: Edna DiTaranto – edna@port-trans-specialists.com

Be an ATA liaison, in conjunction with the Program Committee, to set up at least one ATA Certification Sitting yearly.

Marketing and Public Relation Committee

Description: In an effort to create and/or increase awareness about NYCT and the translation profession as a whole, create brochures for distribution to lawyers, companies and institutions as often as possible (marketing) in the tri-state area, and answer calls from the media regarding the translating and interpreting profession. Additionally, contact schools in the tri-state area and introducing them to NYCT as a language resource.

Chairperson: A.J. Elterman - ajelterman@mindspring.com

First tasks:

- Create, with the help of the Publication Committee, a brochure to increase awareness of the NYCT existence to business and organizations in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.
- Make contact with, and distribute brochure to, companies and organizations that use translators and interpreters services in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING

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ANOTHER LOOK AT POSTVILLE

by **Madeline Newman Ríos**

In May 2008, twenty-six Federal Court interpreters were sent to the National Cattle Congress grounds of Waterloo, Iowa to participate in the criminal prosecution proceedings against more than 300 workers arrested in an ICE raid in the small northeastern Iowa town of Postville. For many of my colleagues, it was the first time that they had witnessed the persecution of immigrants in such a raw form. Some were in shock simply by seeing that the overwhelming majority of those arrested were Mayan from Guatemala, whose only "criminal" activity in the country was an alleged paper crime exclusively aimed at getting a job in an abusive labor setting. Four Ukrainians and 93 Mexicans arrested had their own heart-wrenching stories to tell. Twelve of those arrested were juveniles.

Over the following days, some of the interpreters came to realize that a federal lawsuit had been filed against the defendants' employer, Agriprocessors (the largest kosher meat packing plant in the U.S.), on the grounds of labor violations more than a year earlier, in March 2007. ICE began its investigation of the plants' workers at nearly the same time. Others began to analyze the government's prosecution strategy in the case, which originally charged the defendants with "aggravated identity theft." In almost all of the cases, no factual basis whatsoever was documented for such a count. Yet it served as a successful tactic to threaten the defendants into accepting 5-month sentences for the lesser crime of "social security fraud." Not even the judge could lower the sentence for fear of exposing the defendants to even longer incarceration times.

Meanwhile, the town of Postville was literally gutted, immediately losing 1/3 of its population. The town's children started having nightmares that all of their parents would be hauled away. They had not learned to distinguish between "Latino" and "white." They just noticed that nearly a third of the seats in the elementary school were suddenly empty. St. Bridget's Catholic Church became a shelter as hundreds fled from their homes to sleep on the church pews and floor.

While news of the Postville raid hit much of the interpreter community like a pail of cold water, for others it simply wrote one more horrific chapter in a tale of discrimination under color of law to which many of our communities have been subject over more than a century. Asian Americans could easily document such discrimination back to the mid eighteen hundreds, with the advent of Chinese miners' taxes, lynching campaigns, the extension of miscegenation laws, and the eventual development of the first U.S. immigration law, namely the Chinese Exclusion Act. Asians today are much targeted by anti-immigrant law and culture.

In my own experience working in the garment industry of Los Angeles in the early 1970's I came in contact on a nearly daily basis with the effects of marginalization fed by US immigration policy. In Chinatown, every factory had its own elderly woman, or Ah Mo, sewing buttons on by hand for about 25 cents an hour, and no one earned more than half of minimum wage. In downtown Los Angeles, fear of deportation was constantly on the minds of my fellow workers. Tales of being held at gunpoint by a coyote alien smuggler would dot lunchtime conversations. Central Americans would relate long journeys over mountain ranges or even loved ones left behind who died of dehydration crossing the Arizona desert one July. The single good hiding spot in the factory basement would be earmarked for a pregnant woman to take refuge when the inevitable INS raid became a reality. Breaktime turned into free accent reduction and geography lessons given by workers from Mexico to Central Americans, so that they could pass as residents of Sahuayo, Michoacán with the American officials. Once deported to Tijuana, the Mexican women would do all the talking to the smugglers to protect Salvadorans and Guatemalans from the coyotes themselves. In those days, deportations were indeed a short interruption in the lives and employment of the workers, but the trip home was still a sufficient ritual of terror to remind them of their place in US society.

In a sense, those were the "good old days." At least there were avenues through which most immigrants could eventually legalize. At the time, U.S. law allowed minors to petition for their parents to legally immigrate into the U.S. That provision tended to encourage family unity and was also great for the local hospital budget. County-USC hospital, known by the com-

munity as Hospital General, would charge double the going rate for childbirth as any other hospital in town, but at least you didn't have to pay it up front. Since the bill had to be paid before filing for legal residency —to avoid being classified as being "likely to become a public charge"— everyone would pay it in full, without complaining that they were, in fact, being gouged. Even the suspension of deportation provisions were more humane, allowing discretion to immigration judges to avoid breaking up families when the evidence showed such discretion to be well founded.

By the 1980's, war refugees from Central America began to populate our town in earnest, bringing with them horrific tales of massacres and scorched earth policies that wiped entire towns off the map. During presentations at churches and universities, they gave testimony to overwhelming tales of mass torture/murder taking place in their country. Salvadorans would give detailed accounts of massacres and the torture of political prisoners. The Guatemalans didn't have any cases of political prisoners to recount; 50,000 of their people were simply hauled away and "disappeared;" their bodies were never found. Another 250,000 were rape-murdered, burned alive, had their skulls bashed in, or were brutally killed in other ways as part of an extermination campaign, then dumped into mass graves that still litter the countryside. Despite this reality, only 2% of Salvadoran and 1% of Guatemalan asylum applications to the U.S. immigration service were ever granted. Our government continued to support these countries' dictatorships, sometimes overtly, sometimes covertly, and immigration policy towards the refugees reflected that complicity. Today, Guatemalan Mayans estimate that their ethnic group has the highest rate of "illegal" status of any nationality in the U.S. This is part of what the interpreters for the Postville raid were able to sense as they interpreted at the cattle grounds, even though most were not aware of the historical details.

In 1987, a new immigration law was passed, somewhat cynically known as the "amnesty" act. Although some 3 million persons were able to legalize their status under its provisions, a number of repressive features were added to the law, making it increasingly difficult to immigrate into the country and creating even harsher conditions for future immigrants. One of those provisions was "employer sanctions," designed to further marginalize immigrant workers economically, on account of which the use of false documents became essential to survival for millions of immigrants. The "Amnesty" significantly contributed to preventing immigrants from regularizing their status. Today, some 12 million persons are classified as illegal by our government, several times as many as in 1987.

Presently in the immigrant community, undocumented students have their families deported if they lobby for the DREAM Act to legalize children brought into the country at an early age, or graduate with a degree in engineering only to work as gardeners. Certain majority Latino cities are constantly plagued with checkpoints to catch mothers driving without a license as they pick their children up from school or day laborers returning from work in the afternoons. Posters of the state of Arizona are available, filled with thousands of red dots, each representing a human being who literally turned into an unrecognizable piece of charcoal while attempting to cross the desert. All of this sums up to a pattern of persecution of displaced persons who have fled into our country from repression, genocide, and unfair trade agreements such as the 1994 NAFTA agreement. Indeed, the affected community is increasingly insisting that they be treated as unrecognized, displaced persons, challenging the law itself as unconscionable.

In Guatemala, the Postville raid is far from forgotten. Mainstream newspapers are starting to report denunciations of incarcerated women being tied by their feet and of meals that the detainees are comparing to dog food. Families dependent upon those now incarcerated are facing severe malnutrition, debts that they are unable to pay, and loss of their property.

The interpreters in Iowa, witnessing the tip of an iceberg of inhumanity, responded in basic human terms, recognizing the dignity of those who were caught up in the raid. Erik Camayd-Freixas and all those who have spoken out anonymously to what they witnessed there are much thanked by the community for their ethical response to an unethical situation. ■

Please Note: Donations to aid the Postville families are still being requested.

They can be sent to:
St. Bridget's Hispanic Fund
c/o Sister Mary McCauley
P.O. Box 369
Postville, IA 52162

EXPANDING YOUR FREELANCE BUSINESS

by Rachel Lauber

Marian Greenfield, a freelance translator with over 20 years of experience, teamed up with Kerry Modla, Managing Director of KLM Global Group, LLC (her own translation and consulting firm), to show participants, in a step by step approach, how to become independent contractors or how to start their own translation companies. Both women are exceedingly entrepreneurial, and their respective success made the workshop morning session enriching and highly informative.

Their presentation was packed with useful tips and tools for those wishing to be successfully self-employed – too much to cover in this short article. Here are just some of the highlights from this valuable seminar:

- Whether you are a freelance translator or wish to expand your business into a company, find someone to be your "personal geek." That is, hire a virtual information technology (IT) expert to help keep your IT systems running efficiently and to be available whenever there is a problem. There is software that you can purchase that will allow you to log this person into your network remotely.
- Women who are U.S. citizens or legal residents and own at least 51% of their enterprise should consider being certified as a "WBE," or Women's Business Enterprise. This will give you privileged access to contracts with government agencies and certain large corporations that have pledged to grant a percentage of their business to vendors owned by women or minorities. Find out more at www.wbenc.org.
- One of the keys to success as a self-employed individual is to set specific goals for yourself. Ask yourself: "Where do I want to be in five years? What do I want to earn in year one, year two, year three, etc.?" The more explicit and quantifiable your goal is, the more likely you are to achieve it.
- If you are working from home, it is important to create boundaries – both with family members and in your own mind. For example, if you have trouble sitting down to work first thing in the morning, go out for a walk and sit down to work when you get back. This practice can help you to distinguish between home – the place where you just showered and ate breakfast – and work – the office from which you will be conducting your business.
- On the IT front, Ms. Greenfield and Ms. Modla had many helpful tips.
- It is important to have a good OCR program for converting certain types of text for use in TRADOS or for faxing documents. Both OmniPage and Abbbyfinereader were mentioned.
- Backing up your files is also critical in case of an IT systems failure. Mozy.com was suggested as a way to back up your files (to the internet) every night.
- If you truly want to be regarded as a professional by clients and vendors, you need to have your own domain name. E-mail addresses that read "@verizon.net" or "@netscape.net," for example do not carry the same cache as "@klmglobalgroup.com."
- Never tell your clients that you only work from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. "because that is when my kids are in school." It's unprofessional. When you are self-employed you are your own "front office." In other words, clients do not need to know your work hours. Set up your call forwarding and have your PDA device with you at all times. Remember – clients will view you in whatever manner you present yourself.
- Another key to success: choose your "verticals," or specializations. Translation companies may prefer to use translators who specialize, and this is a more successful strategy for a freelance translator than trying to be a jack of all trades—or languages.
- Finally, market yourself, market yourself, market yourself!

Project Management Workshop

Leah Ruggiero, a freelance project manager with over ten years of industry experience, provided a thorough overview of how a project manager supervises a translation project from beginning to end. As well as providing project managers with tools to help manage their time more effectively, the workshop afforded translators a greater understanding of the demanding role of project manager.

Time, cost and resources form a relationship integral to a project manager's job. The more time one has for a project, the fewer resources one requires and the lower the outsourcing cost. The reverse is also true. A project manager must balance providing quality work with meeting a client's demand for fast turnaround and low price.

Ms. Ruggiero took us through each phase of a translation project: initiation, planning, execution, monitoring and controlling, and closure. For each phase she incorporated a role-playing exercise in order to demonstrate the challenges that arise throughout the process. The initial contact with the client is critical for establishing the basic parameters and scope of the project and for managing client expectations. One participant recommended using a standard questionnaire for clients to make sure that nothing is omitted.

The planning phase is the most involved. Ms. Ruggiero mentioned helpful tools such as a GANTT chart, which is a visual representation of a project's timeline and its overlapping deadlines or milestones. A "WISA," or "What if Situation Analysis," may also be helpful at this stage.

During the execution phase, conflicts may arise between translator and editor/proofreader: How should a project manager handle these two members of the team when they disagree about the quality of the translation? Most of the project managers in the room felt that clarification could be achieved most easily when the translator and editor/proofreader were allowed to communicate directly. In the initial negotiation process with the translation agency, it is also advisable for a translator to ask whether he/she will be expected to review the editor's changes.

The final, or closure, phase of the project has its own challenges. For example, determining whether the agency or the client should pay for cost overruns requires one to balance blame or fault with the nuances of the client relationship: How important is this client? Will absorbing the cost overruns on this project make a long-term and more lucrative relationship with this client likely? This phase is also a good time to record both positive and negative experiences for the benefit of one's colleagues within the agency: Was a particular translator very good, and should we keep her in mind for future projects? Are there "best practices" that we can implement to facilitate this and other relationships going forward?

Finally, no project management workshop would be complete without a discussion of time and stress management. Ms. Ruggiero referred to the Pareto Principle. Pareto, an Italian economist, was referring to Italy's economy when he said that 80% of the country's wealth was in the hands of 20% of its people. However, the project management profession has modified the principle to provide a framework for time management. A project manager should be spending 70-80% of his/her time on only the most important 10-20% of his/her discrete tasks. In other words, don't sweat the small stuff.

Stress management is made easier by good time management. Nonetheless, a project manager's hours are long and the stresses of the job are high. Making time for one's personal life and relationships is challenging but necessary if one is to avoid physical and mental burn out. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rachel Lauber is a freelance translator and President of REL Translations & Turkish to English Business Services, LLC. She spent nearly ten years as an equity research analyst in the investment management profession, mostly covering the health care sector. She also has an MA from the University of Chicago in Byzantine History. Her language pairs include Turkish, French and Italian to English.

The Few LIving and the Many Dead (cont'd)

diverse profession of translation (oral and written). You, "Commissar" Stejskal. are a cancer that is growing in and on the American Translators Association.

And you, sir, who insist and warn that the American Translators Association must remain a non-political entity, have been the most political of all ATA presidents (save perhaps for your immediate predecessor), and you have executed your politics and political will with all the subterfuge that is so characteristic of an addict to authoritarianism. Indeed, sir, you have done a marvelous job of covering up who you are, what you are and what you really believe.

In an organization in which distrust and mistrust of translation agencies is so thick that one can cut it with a knife, you have managed in that almost-patented secretive manner of yours to avoid any mention of what you really do in the translation industry and what your real associations are. Well, "Commissar" Stejskal, I'm sure you won't mind if I open the closet door and let a little fresh air in. You are the owner of a major translation agency in Pennsylvania, a translation agency that counts numerous United States government agencies among its clients, agencies such as the Homeland Security Agency, the FBI, the United States Army, the Internal Revenue Service, units of the Federal Court System. Should I continue, Mr. Stejskal? The list would indeed be most instructive and enlightening to the members of the ATA and the translation-interpreting community-at-large.

Of course, with a clientele like that it is little wonder why you were so uncomfortable about having the ATA enact an anti-torture resolution; of course, with a clientele like that, it might be very dangerous to your business health to say a word, or even make a burp, about the Erik Camayd-Freixas story. You say that the ATA's Public Relations Committee will issue a statement on the Camayd-Freixas story? Come, come, "Commissar", you surely can do better than that. There will be no statement from the PR Committee for the simple reason that you are the boy who is personally handling the Erik Camayd-Freixas story, or perhaps more accurately you and the three marionettes who constitute what you call an "Executive Committee", but which in reality is nothing more than a clone of the old Soviet Politburo. There will be no statement from anyone in the ATA about the Camayd-Freixas story, other than perhaps one condemning this brave and courageous man for his "ethical violations"; there will be no statement because you don't want to jeopardize your business interests. And the business interests of Jiri Stejskal and those of the American Translators Association most certainly appear to be one and the same. In fact, I'll go one step more: there won't even be a discussion of the Camayd-Freixas story within the ATA for the simple reason that people like you detest open and frank and honest discussion…SIR.

But if anything has been accomplished by Mr. Camayd-Freixas with respect to the ATA, it is that you are now out of the closet. And I would add as a final note that you have been very fortunate so far to have had a rubber-stamp "Politburo" and a compliant and totally disinterested Board of Directors (save for one or two who have shown some signs of life and independence). But eventually people like you, "Commissar" Stejskal, fall; you fall from the weight of your own authoritarianism, arrogance, condescension, secretiveness and malignancy, as did the nation that so obviously inspired your view of governance and human relations.

The Realities faced by the Living

It is truly a remarkable contrast. We have from the side of the living, the president of the NYCT who cries out "We must make our voices heard", and from the side of the Undead, we have the president of the ATA who regurgitates, "Keep your mouths shut".

And what precisely did Erik Camayd-Freixas do? Did he in the words of Prefect Louis Renault of Casablanca, "Abscond with the church funds?". Did he molest a 10-year old child or insinuate in his now celebrated essay that the late J. Christ of Nazareth was a homosexual? Or did he do something far worse than all of that, something so terrible that it has sent officials of NAJIT and ATA scurrying for shelter, or better said, the mausoleums.

Actually, Professor Camayd-Freixas did many things, and one of those many things was to remind us – the living – that the profession of translation, both oral and written, is facing a new world of realities. Through no doing of our own, we have been taken from deep below the stage and brought up and placed if not precisely at stage center, then certainly at stage right or stage left.

The new world of geopolitics and the institution of international political terrorism have brought the translation profession (both the written and oral branches) face-to-face with some ugly realities. Back in the early 1990's, Tom Snow, one of the people instrumental in helping to found the New York Circle of Translators, talked about the possibility of oral translators being involved in or coming face-to-face with torture. We laughed at Tom. We said he was far too imaginative. Some called him a "kook". I asked him if he had been smoking something other than his cigarettes. But in the ultimate, it was Tom Snow who was very much on target and the rest of us blind.

In the early 1990's, no one in our business could ever imagine the veritable explosion

in immigration, particularly the immigration of millions (with and without documents) from Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America. No one in the oral branch of translation in the early 1990's could imagine the demands that would be placed upon practitioners of that branch of the profession in some 15 years.

And when those realities began to surface and those demands increased in intensity, organizations like NAJIT and ATA preferred to ignore them, calling them "political" as an excuse for dismissal. It was far easier to continue feeding these practitioners a diet of theoretical and esoteric food.

What Erik Camayd-Freixas did was not just about putting the words interpreter or translator on page one. Contrary to the thinking of NAJIT and ATA, this is not a public relations game. It has absolutely nothing to do with public relations (at least the Washington, DC or Madison Avenue brand). What Professor Camayd-Freixas did, among many, many other things, was to make it crystal clear to us that today's oral interpreter is the combat infantryman of our profession, the person who must daily face a barrage of rifle fire, mortar fire, exploding grenades, the person who must live and cope with the dirt and grime of the trenches. If organizations like NAJIT and ATA which purport to support them, fail in that support – and thus far they have failed miserably – then as Professor Camayd-Freixas told me, "they will become irrelevant". They will truly be The Undead.

Good day, good afternoon, good evening, good night and good luck. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bernie Bierman is the author of "A Translator-Warrior Speaks: A Personal History of the American Translators Association, 1959-1971". He was managing editor of "Translation News" from 1989 to 1995, and has written close to 300 articles dealing with the U.S. translation industry.

CIRCLE NEWS

■ NYCT SEPTEMBER MEETING

Check email and website for details.

■ 1ST ANNUAL SUSANA GREISS WORKSHOP

Jordan Fox and the Education Committee are in the midst of plans for our two-day (Saturday and Sunday) workshop which will take place the first week of October, 2008. Watch for details.

■ AMERICAN LITERARY TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION 31ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Date: October 15-18, 2008
Where: Minneapolis, MN
Info: www.literarytranslators.org

■ AMERICAN TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION 49TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Date: November 5-8, 2008
Where: Orlando, FL
Info: www.atanet.org/conf/2008

■ NYCT ANNUAL PICNIC

Good Food, Good Friends, Great Fun – Great Networking Opportunity

Date: Sunday, August 24, 2008

Time: 1:00 PM

Where: Marian Greenfield's home
2619 Holly Avenue
South Plainfield, NJ 07080

Phone: 908-561-7590

Advance Registration
Adults: $20, Children: $10

Payment on Site

Adults: $25, Children: $10

Please make check payable to New York Circle of Translators and mail by August 20, 2008 to:

Edna Ditaranto
NYCT President
298 Wedgewood Drive
Paramus, NJ 07652

Please make reservation by sending an email to our Program Director, Margarite Heintz Montez at mystymy_@excite.com

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)

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