



# THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

May/June 2003

A Publication of The New York Circle of Translators

## Bidding you “so long” but not “farewell” ....

For the past two and a half years I have had the immeasurable pleasure of serving you as Program Director on the New York Circle of Translators board. This time has been an extremely enriching one for me personally and professionally. Working with so many of you on different levels and in many diverse situations has reinforced my belief that the profession we have chosen is indeed one of the most diverse, exciting, challenging and rewarding ones that could possibly exist!

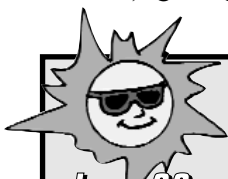


The experience, dedication, wisdom and passion you all bring to the field have been constant sources of inspiration for me as I've explored avenues for different speaker presentations, workshops and seminars. Likewise, the tips and suggestions for trying out new culinary domains have been most welcome when, as a relative newcomer to the City when I began my term, I was mesmerized by the seemingly endless labyrinth of different restaurants and neighborhoods!

In our era of commonplace e-mail and Web communications (and my love for things technology-related is well known!), getting to meet you face-to-face and know you

personally has been without a doubt one of the most rewarding aspects of this position. Our membership indeed reflects the wonderful diversity of the City and the world, and every encounter has been a memorable one to be cherished. Greeting new members, working with those of you who have been involved with the Circle for longer periods of time, and seeing such pillars of our translation and interpreting community receive prestigious prizes of honor have been immensely gratifying. My greatest hope is that you will continue to attend the monthly events, provide suggestions and feedback, and in so doing participate in an organization that truly is for you, and which reflects your professional needs and goals.

Admittedly, it is a somewhat bittersweet feeling I have as I resign from my position and leave New York City to take on new responsibilities as a full-time professor in the Translation Program of Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. Exciting because it is what I have aspired to after several years of graduate school, and sad because I will sorely miss all the friends, colleagues and acquaintances I have made while here. To you I express my most heartfelt thank you for the opportunity you gave me to serve in the capacity as Program Director, and to the members of each Board I have been so fortunate to serve with, my untold gratitude. "So Long! A la prochaine!" - till we meet again. ■



### Come to the *Alfresco Summer Party!*

**June 26**

Let's welcome summer together at one of our favorite haunts: the charming outdoor garden at Dolphin's Restaurant, 35 Cooper Square (between 5th and 6th Streets). The date is Thursday, June 26. Join your colleagues at 6:00 p.m. for drinks and some networking/socializing, followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. Dinner is \$35 per plate (this price includes a glass of wine or a soft drink, tax and tip). Please preregister for the dinner by e-mailing Renée Borio-Román at [rborio@peoplepc.com](mailto:rborio@peoplepc.com) or calling (212)334-3060. We look forward to seeing you!

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Voices That Must Be Heard .....	2
Letter from the Editor .....	3
Spanish for Dermatologists .....	4
Ethics in the Doctor's Office .....	5
In-Person Marketing Skills .....	8
Circle News .....	10
March NYCT Meeting .....	11

# Voices That Must Be Heard

by Ilana Miller

For many New Yorkers, the city's three major dailies are their staple source of news. But as anyone who lives, has visited, or even seen New York in the movies should know, three mainstream papers are not sufficient to really cover this diverse city. On nearly every corner is a different community, with its own culture, traditions, concerns, and, in many cases, a predominant language other than English. In order to keep abreast of issues specific to their community—many immigrants publish their own newspapers.

New York City is home to more than 300 ethnic, immigrant and community publications. Some have wide distribution and broad editorial content, like the leading Spanish-language dailies *Hoy* and *El Diario*, and some have a much closer focus, like Spanish-language East Harlem-based *Siempre*. But all have one thing in common—they have insight into their community like no English-language reporter who covers many communities could have.

Forty percent of New Yorkers are immigrants, and their stories need to cross community borders and language barriers. That is why the Independent Press Association-New York, a non-profit organization, decided to amplify the concerns of New York's immigrant communities through a news digest of the best of those papers, *Voices That Must Be Heard* ([www.indypress-ny.org](http://www.indypress-ny.org)). Via a weekly email newsletter and website, IPA-New York circulates articles from New York's immigrant press to thousands of subscribers in the mainstream media, ethnic and

immigrant media, nonprofit organizations, government offices, as well as interested individuals.

And this is where you come in. Most New Yorkers can't access these papers, not only because they're occasionally hard to find, but many of us can't read them: more than 60 percent are written in a language other than English. With newspapers in Albanian to Yiddish, we need translators for over 25 languages to cover the news from every immigrant and ethnic group.

Translators for *Voices* are like tenacious journalists. Every week they canvass the papers for *Voices* material. After reading through our translator handbook, and signing the contract, each translator receives a list of ethnic and immigrant publications in their language pair(s). In many cases, the publications are available online, are free in stores, places of worship or businesses, or, occasionally, we can arrange a complimentary subscription to a paper we frequently use.

Reading through a few issues of *Voices* is the best way to discover what type of articles we reprint. We like hard-hitting news stories or features about issues pertinent to New York's immigrant communities. Edition 47 featured stories from the *Pakistan Post* about the impact of the Immigration and Naturalization Service's registrations on Pakistani nationals. Rehan Ansari, one of our Urdu translators, found an article about how businesses on Coney Island Avenue are suffering as a result of Pakistanis fleeing the country, seeking asylum in Canada. We want stories that offer a unique perspective—if you've already read it in the *New York Times*, we generally don't want it.

Every Thursday, our translators email their pitches. An emailed pitch should include: the headline, the date, a byline (stories must be written by a New York-based writer for that publication; reprints and wire stories are not acceptable), and a two sentence summary of the article. Though most of our stories are specific to New York immigrants, occasionally we'll publish a national or international perspective, such as an editorial from the *Russian Bazaar*, a weekly Russian-language paper, about the hostage crisis in a Moscow theater last October.

Ari Vais translated the *Russian Bazaar* article for Edition 41. Vais, a publications assistant, enjoys translating for people who would not otherwise have access to this news. "Making money on my own time, from home, without a boss," is another selling point for Vais.

We pay \$25 per hour and stories should not take longer than two hours, unless a special arrangement is made ahead of time with our Editor. On Friday, we make our editorial decisions and inform our translators whether we've commissioned their pitches.

## ***THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR***

### **Editor**

Helene Bergman  
[editor@nyctranslators.org](mailto:editor@nyctranslators.org)

### **Editorial Board**

Trudy Balch  
Marian Greenfield  
Nancy Wright

### **Design and Layout**

Bahl Graphics  
[kbahlmann@austin.rr.com](mailto:kbahlmann@austin.rr.com)

### **Printing**

Mail Boxes, Etc. South Orange NJ  
[mailboxso@mindspring.com](mailto:mailboxso@mindspring.com)

*The Gotham Translator is published six times a year by the New York Circle of Translators, Inc., a chapter of the American Translators Association. The deadline for acceptance of contributions is the first day of the month preceding the month of publication. Articles and other materials should be e-mailed to the Editor at [editor@nyctranslators.org](mailto:editor@nyctranslators.org). The opinions and views expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or the policies of the NYCT or the ATA. All material submitted is subject to editing and becomes the property of the New York Circle of Translators unless accompanied by a copyright statement.*

© 2003 by the New York Circle of Translators. All rights reserved. Nothing contained in this issue may be reprinted without explicit prior permission of the editor or, in the case of copyrighted material, the copyright holder.



Helene Bergman

## Letter from the Editor

Many thanks to those of you who have submitted suggestions and articles! It is so nice to have participants in addition to readers! I would like to pass along a suggestion from member Trudy Balch: Could we compile a list of exercise options which

members find helpful while sitting at home? What do you do to maintain your figure, exercise your heart, and keep generally fit while sitting at home in front of your computer day after day? I personally go to the gym whenever possible either to lift weights or to catch 20 minutes of cardio-vascular activity. Let me know what you do and I will put it into our next issue! Another suggestion from Trudy: What is your preferred method of

keeping a glossary? Which program do you use and why? How do you deal with accents in the different programs? How do you catalogue your glossaries for easy reference? Again, let me know and I will compile the information and let you all know the results in the next issue. Speaking of which, we will publish the next issue in September. So, enjoy this one, contribute to the next one, and have a wonderful, relaxing summer!

We expect translated copy on Monday morning. Translators are encouraged to focus their time on the translation; additional editing, spell-checking and fact-checking are not required.

Many of our translators also enjoy participating in this social justice cause. "Being able to convey important news occurring in the Latino community to the general public," is rewarding for Telesh Lopez, a program assistant and Spanish language translator, who has translated for *Voices* since last summer.

In addition to *Voices*, IPA-New York recently launched translation service for the city government. Interested translators should fill out our questionnaire and your contact information will be added to our database. We will request your services as translation or interpretation assignments come in from the government.

For professional translators, *Voices* is great exposure. Your name appears above each article you translate, in the email sent out to our subscribers, and in our archives. It is a great way to learn about New York's vibrant immigrant communities, show off your translating skills and earn a little extra cash on the side.

Getting started is easy. Check our website: [www.indypressny.org](http://www.indypressny.org). Send an email to the Project Editor: [nyvoices@indypress.org](mailto:nyvoices@indypress.org). Include your name, language pairs, address, phone number and social security number. We will send you our translator handbook, translator contract and questionnaire. Feel free to call or email with any questions or inquiries. Sign and fill out the forms, send them back to us, start searching the papers and pitch your stories!

The following are languages currently needed for *Voices*, but please note that more languages may be added as new publications emerge:

Albanian, Arabic, Bangla, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Chinese, Estonian, French, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Nepali, Norwegian, Punjabi, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese and Yiddish. ■

*Ilana Miller is the Communications/Editorial Coordinator at the Independent Press Association-New York. She organizes a fellowship for immigrant journalists and arranges press clubs, trainings and workshops for members of New York's ethnic and immigrant press.*

## NEW YORK CIRCLE OF TRANSLATORS

(212) 334-3060

### 2003 Board of Directors

**Teresa S. Waldes, President**

(212) 769-9411

[president@nyctranslators.org](mailto:president@nyctranslators.org)

**Consuelo Corretjer-Lee, Secretary**

(212) 627-4506

[secretary@nyctranslators.org](mailto:secretary@nyctranslators.org)

**Maureen Gonzalez, Treasurer**

(718) 884-2952

[treasurer@nyctranslators.org](mailto:treasurer@nyctranslators.org)

**Deborah Folaron, Program Director**

(718) 381-4303

[programdirector@nyctranslators.org](mailto:programdirector@nyctranslators.org)

### Committee Chairs

**Teresa Waldes, ATA Accreditation**

(212) 769-9411

[twaldes@ix.netcom.com](mailto:twaldes@ix.netcom.com)

**Milena Savova, Continuing Education**

(212) 998-7033

[milena.savova@nyu.edu](mailto:milena.savova@nyu.edu)

**Anne Witt-Greenberg, Mentoring**

(516) 487-6128

[trlegdoc@aol.com](mailto:trlegdoc@aol.com)

**Renée A. Borio-Román, Programs**

(718) 823-8325

[rborio@peoplepc.com](mailto:rborio@peoplepc.com)

**David Mintz, Webmaster**

[dmintz@panix.com](mailto:dmintz@panix.com)

# Spanish for Dermatologists

Douglas Altchek, M. D., dermatologist, in private practice in Manhattan, and Associate Clinical Professor of Dermatology, Mount Sinai School of Medicine



Communicating with patients is difficult enough without a language barrier, which exists for most dermatologists practicing in Manhattan. Of the 307 practicing dermatologists in Manhattan, only 6 are Hispanic. Several dermatologists, including

Hispanics, claim to speak Spanish, but do not, as not all Hispanics speak Spanish.

Spanish is the third most commonly spoken language in the world, after Mandarin and English. It is spoken in Spain and 19 Latin American countries. In the U. S., over 25 million people speak Spanish as their first language. Spanish-speaking immigrants, who form a large part of patient populations, come into the U. S. yearly at the rate of 500,000 legally, and over 5 million illegally. Spanish-speaking people are the fastest growing minority in the U. S., and may soon become a majority.

Most physicians refer to Spanish-speaking patients as "Spanish". This very often antagonizes both Spaniards and Latin Americans. The term "Spanish" really means of or pertaining to Spain, its people, language, or culture. The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" really mean of or relating to the language, people, or culture of Spain or Latin America.

The translation and health care needs of Hispanics are clearly not being met currently. While the population of Spanish-speaking patients is increasing dramatically in the United States, New York State, and New York City, the number of Hispanic/Latino students in medical school and in residency training programs has decreased in the past 10 years. Very often, 50% of patients in dermatology clinics in Manhattan either prefer to speak Spanish or speak only Spanish. Translation needs are clearly not being met, or even addressed, as very often hospitals will relegate translation to housekeepers who happen to be available, rather than paying professional translators.

*While the population of Spanish-speaking patients is increasing dramatically in the United States...the number of Hispanic/Latino students in medical school and in residency training programs has decreased in the past 10 years.*

For those of us who do speak Spanish, one dilemma is whether to speak Castilian Spanish or Latin American Spanish with our patients. Spanish is remarkably uniformly spoken with the exception of the "Spanish lisp", which is used in Spain. In Castilian Spanish, the c before e and i and z before a, o, and u is pronounced "th" as in think, while in Latin-American Spanish, it is pronounced "s" as in see. I find it prudent to use the "lisp" with my Spanish patients and to omit it with my Latin American patients. Spaniards and Latin Americans respond warmly to accents similar to their own.

Hispanic dermatologic needs are considerable. Over 40% of Hispanics suffer from eczema. Melasma, or pigmentation of the skin usually about the face, is prevalent in 50% of Latino women. Most Hispanics in large urban centers will neglect skin problems or mistreat them before they will consult a dermatologist.

Cognates facilitate medical translation. Acne in Spanish is *acne*, tumor is *tumor*, ulcer is *úlceras*. However, a source of international confusion arises from the translation of "measles" which is "sarampión" in Spanish, but "rubeola" in Latin and "German measles" which is "rubeola" in Spanish and "rubella" in Latin.

Vernaculars are significant in dermatologic vocabulary. There is a wide variance of vernaculars spoken in the United States, which varies from MX (Mexican) to PR (Puerto Rican) to ELA (East LA) to SPNGL (Spanglish). The word "itch" can be translated as: *picor*, *hormigueo*, *escozor*, *picazón*, *comezón*, *cosquilleo*, or *prurito*. "Rash" can be translated as: *erupción*, *brote*, *salpullido*, *sarpullido* or *urticaria*. Nowhere is the difference of Spanish vernaculars more apparent than in the terms for male and female genitals. The terms used for male genitals include: *las partes*, *los agentes*, *el bicho*, *los huevos*, *los cojones*, *las bolas*, *el pito*, *el palo*, *el pipí*, *el pitón*, *el todo*, *el pajarito*, *el futuro*, *la gloria*, *el viejo*, *el enfermo*, *el flojo*, and *el absurdo*. Other colorful terms include: *banano*, *cosita*, *chile*, *chorro*, *chucho*, *hierro*, *hueso*, *diablito*, *explorador*, *machete*, *morcilla*, *palo*, *paloma*, *salame*, *víbora*, and *yuca*. The

female genitals are referred to as: las partes, los agentes, la cosita, la chocha, la cotorra, and el cuchi-cuchi. Other interesting terms include: araña, coño, cucaracha, cuevita, mono, muñeca, papaya, pepa, pepita, tamal, torta and yoyo.

The greatest concentrations of Hispanics in the United States are in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, New Mexico, New York and Texas. Hispanics as patients are young (17-28), have limited education (9-12 years), have a median income of \$15,000, and tend to cluster in neighborhoods or barrios. Music is of great importance, as is religion. Recorded music and religious objects are frequently brought to the hospital or physician's office. Vibrant colors in clothing, jewelry, and makeup are commonly worn. There is a widespread use of household remedies or "remedios caseros" which are often used prior to consulting a physician. Hispanics have a long folk medicine history and very often see "curanderos" before physicians. They are less expensive and do not exact fees but ask for contributions. "Sobadoras" are female healers who treat with "aceite de culebra" or just olive oil. Hispanics often have a fatalistic attitude toward disease and feel that no matter what the treatment, everything is in God's hands. The concept of "el mal de ojo" is one in which the illness occurs when a person with a stronger vision looks at another admiringly but does not touch him. Symptoms of rash, fever, vomiting, and headache occur. When the stronger-visioned person actually touches the other, the symptoms will disappear. Another concept is to sweep or "barrer" which is to pass a raw unbroken egg over the body of the patient. After the sweeping, the fever and rash are transferred to the egg and it is cooked. The "hot and cold" theory of disease is one in which the patient, when he has a "hot disease" refuses to eat hot food because he thinks the condition may worsen. It is helpful as a physician and a translator to bear in mind folk medicine of Hispanic populations.

The Spanish language has become an important and essential element in healthcare. A thorough knowledge of its subtleties and complexities is necessary to attain a successful translation and healthcare outcome. ■

## Ethics in the Doctor's Office



I am currently working in-house at a law firm and took off Holy Week for vacation. One of my favorite interpreting agencies called me on that Tuesday to go out on an interpreting assignment the following day. Even though I was on vacation, I readily agreed because I always find interpreting at independent medical examinations (referred to as IME's) to be very interesting. No case is exactly the same and working in the medical field has always made me feel I am helping someone and making a difference in the world. The work is usually low-stress and the assignments are very short so I knew it would afford me the rest of the day to myself. It is a fast way to make a buck and it gives me a chance to drive out to places hitherto unknown to me.

From the "invoice" that the agency sent me, I noted that the interpreting assignment was to take place at an Orthopedist's office. The client was Spanish and did not know enough English to communicate with the doctor so an interpreter was needed. The agency had been hired by an Insurance company and it was one of those typical workers' compensation cases that I have had lots of experience doing. I enjoy medical translation and interpreting so I was looking forward to the job. I always learn new vocabulary whenever I do these assignments.

As usual, the day before, I downloaded the driving directions from Smartpages.com and I realized right away that I had worked at this doctor's office in the past. It would take me no more than a half hour to get out there. I was traveling from Brooklyn to Queens. I knew that if I had any difficulty, I could call the facility to get the exact location and directions. In this case, it was not necessary since I had already worked there.

Come the day of the job and I have made my way to the doctor's office. I arrive and announce myself to the attendant at the window. I tell her I have come to interpret for a patient. She checks her list and says that the patient has already arrived. She points him out to me. I go over, extend my hand and introduce myself in Spanish as the interpreter for his medical examination. He looks up, takes my hand but announces that his daughter will be interpreting for him. At the moment, his daughter is filling out the necessary forms for the doctor and for the insurance company and

*(continued on next page)*

from her posture, I can immediately see that I am presented with a problem. How can I do my job without competing with this patient's relative? I surely do not want to enter into a discussion or create an uncomfortable situation in the doctor's office. I have to make an immediate decision.

I used my cell phone to call up the agency. I informed the assignment coordinator that the patient already had his daughter with him who was helping him to complete the forms. She evidently knew English and had every intention of going into the doctor's office with him. From past experience, I knew that this would not be a good idea. It would not be appropriate for two people to be interpreting in the doctor's examining room. The agency called the insurance company. Sure enough, the insurance company was insisting that the interpreter alone accompany this patient into the examining room to do the interpreting and not the relative of the patient. The agency called me back with the news. They further called the facility to let them know that the insurance company did not want the patient's relative interpreting in the examining room, but instead they wanted the interpreter to do the job. The attendant at the window called me to let me know that she had received a telephone call from my agency with the same instructions.

When the time came for the patient to be examined, the patient and his daughter arose to leave the reception area and enter the examining area. I remained seated. I allowed the attendant at the window to inform the patient and his daughter that the insurance company required the interpreter alone to accompany the patient into the examining room. Both the patient and the daughter strongly protested. The daughter insisted that she had every intention of accompanying her father and interpreting for him. The facility insisted that she would not be able to do so. I immediately understood the patient and his daughter's concern. They wanted a fair evaluation with all the details pertinent to his case included. They needed reassurance that the interpreter that had been sent would adequately represent the patient. A discussion arose in the waiting room. Some patients started to voice complaints about the doctor, that he had failed to report their disabilities when they were clearly disabled. Hence their insurance company's failure to award them the benefits they thought they deserved. Some patients insisted that the daughter had the right to go into the examining room with her father. This was a discussion that I could take absolutely no part in.

The attendant at the window prevailed and the family had to accept the decision since they evidently needed the dis-

ability benefit. I could see the look of desperation on both their faces. At this point, I arose and said to both father and daughter in Spanish with compassion and confidence at the same time: "Don't worry, I work for the interpreting company. I am not an employee of the insurance company. I do this all the time and most of my cases work out all right." I knew all eyes were on me. I looked to see what the reaction of the patient and his daughter would be. Their faces both seemed to relax and she loosened her grip on the situation and tacitly turned her father over to me for safekeeping. I gently rested my hand on his shoulder as we walked into the examining room and I started asking him background questions in his language since I had not seen the information on the questionnaires that his daughter had filled out. He responded to my questions and I knew that the air had been cleared. In adopting a gentle attitude, I had stolen a bit of confidence from the patient.

He continued to fill me in as we waited for the doctor in the examining room. As it turned out, this doctor was very skeptical because the patient had gone to see him before without any medical records and with no interpreter and therefore the doctor had subsequently sent a report to the insurance company stating that the patient was not disabled. The medical reports that the patient now had clearly stated that he was disabled from his accident at work. I was there to respond to all the doctor's questions and to show the doctor all the medications that the patient had been given.

I am not sure what the outcome will be, whether the patient will be put on permanent disability. I am sure that I provided the best possible service to the agency. I interpreted to the best of my ability everything that was said by the doctor and the patient and sent a detailed report to the agency after the assignment. I also know that I was able to reassure the patient and his daughter that they stood a better chance of receiving a favorable verdict because they had an objective interpreter in the examining room. What is more, the people in the waiting room who had made negative comments about the facility and about insurance companies in general walked away knowing that the interpreter had performed her duty to the best of her ability. The doctor and the receptionist thanked me and both the patient and his daughter also thanked me. I left the facility to continue enjoying my well-needed vacation. ■

*Deborah A. Lockhart, a member of the New York Circle of Translators, is a freelance interpreter/translator who works in English, French and Spanish. She is also a member of the American Translators Association.*

**SOUTHSIDE HOSPITAL  
FULL PAGE AD**

# Best Face Forward: In-Person Marketing Skills for T&I Professionals



By Diane E. Teichman

After you've mailed your resume to a thousand agencies, sent out brochures detailing your services or paid dearly for a display advertisement, how else can you market your services? Consider meeting potential clients in person. After all, some of the greatest business relationships in the world were initiated person to person. Here are a few steps to finding your most desirable clients in person, while making a great first impression.

Start with an outline of what kind of clients you want to develop. Then identify where they gather to network; such as their trade associations. You will find the same networking opportunities they do there. You can identify these by the titles of the people that hire you or the name of their profession. Often there are local divisions of national associations listed in the telephone book by their title under "Association". Sometimes they break down into gender (Association of Women Engineers) or even race. Do you want more exposure to people who would hire you to translate engineering material? Look to the American Council of Engineering Companies. Do you want more work in medical translation or interpreting? Look up the local chapter of the American Academy of Medical Administrators. You can also find the non-competitive professions that are seeking the same people you are. If you are a literary translator, authors are also in the market for publishers. Are you a legal interpreter? Videographers and court reporters are always soliciting law firms. Every international association is a source of work for conference interpreters. I have listed a few as an example for you. You will need to verify if they welcome guests at their meetings, lectures or "Programs". Another option is attending one of their fundraisers or social functions.

Before you go, do your homework. The more relevant your services are to the people you will meet the more you can maximize their receptiveness of what you have to offer. On the web you can learn about the association and the profession. Target meeting people who will have the power to contract, hire or recommend you.

Prepare yourself for the face to face meeting. In almost any business or social situation, in the course of a person-to-person introduction, you have between 45 and 60 seconds to capture the interest of the person you are meeting. First impressions

are comprised of your appearance and the initial information received about you and from you, in other words how you are introduced and what you say about yourself. For purposes of this article let's focus on clients for the Translation and Interpreting professions.

Both professional translators and interpreters often face the burden of an uneducated market. Our clients don't always know how we work or what we do even if it is critical to their own profession. I have found the best way to conquer this problem is to learn as much as possible about my client's work and responsibilities. This allows easier conversation with a potential client besides impressing them.

*...in the course of a person-to-person introduction, you have between 45 and 60 seconds to capture the interest of the person you are meeting.*

The initial information received about you in the introduction is critical, whether you are being introduced or are introducing yourself. You can capture their interest to learn more about you just

as you can with the first words you place in your display advertisement of your services or the first few lines of your resume. They need to know your name and what service you provide. Since you are still in that 45 to 60 second window time limit, inform them of your services. Even the catchiest company name won't tell them that you are capable of the work. Compare these two introductions

*"Hello, I'm Robert Waterman with Around the World Incorporated. "*

*"Hello my name is Robert Waterman; I'm a professional science and technology conference interpreter."*

It is then natural for them to comment on what you've said. In the latter introduction it will be about your profession as it relates to them. This potential client will either mention how his business employs people like you, such as his last experience with a conference interpreter or if they don't recognize the profession he or she will ask you for more information.

Be careful to avoid the *lethal introduction*; when someone introduces you and mis-states your services. Picture this scenario. Here you are, already employed as the senior translation project manager at a major company but you are in the market for a better position. A former student of yours from the "make



ends meet" days when you taught is about to introduce you to the human resource director of a Fortune 500 Corporation. Imagine the damage done if you are introduced only as his former Spanish teacher. The 60 seconds are gone and you can not tactfully correct this person doing you this great favor. I suggest avoiding this by briefly reminding your host with the exact wording of your expertise and goal;" I really appreciate you introducing us as I am looking to move on from my translation project manager job at XYZ company"

If the potential client then expresses an interest in your work, remember to be brief and considerate of their time. Your progress in achieving your goal can be measured by every subsequent question they ask about your work. Design a maximum ten word, single sentence description of your key services to start with. Offer your card as you are speaking and ask for that person's card. If you've done your homework and know about the company then show interest in their work and company. Don't tell them about their work, such as why they suffer failures in translation or interpreting, let them be the expert.

When you are asked about your work avoid personal aggrandizement. Calling yourself or your company the best, the oldest or the largest begs a challenge to the claim. Measure their interest in what you are saying by watching their body language and ensuing questions. Only offer to send them more information or to meet with them if they express such an interest. It really stings to be told "No thank you, I'm not interested" in person. You can contact them a few days later if you are not sure about their interest. Whenever the conversation moves away from you or your services, be polite and don't bring it up again. You may have made a good impression already and trying to refocus on yourself would demolish that progress.

Before you go, put your business card to the professional litmus test. There is nothing more un-professional than a cluttered business card. It should be limited to the company name, your name, address, phone number, email and web address. If necessary, a description of services should be limited to a maximum of five words. A tagline under your logo serves the same purpose. Adding the acronyms for professional memberships are a good sign of your dedication to your work. Physical addresses are less mandatory as contact information in today's cyber world, so removing this can free up space on your card.

You are now armed with the right appearance, the right script and the right approach. Now go out and get those clients! ■

*Diane E. Teichman is a professional licensed Court Interpreter and a translator specializing in legal work since 1980. She is President of Linguistic Services and series editor for the Multilingual Matters text series Professional Interpreting in the Real World. She also authors and lectures on her profession. She is a member of ATA, NAJIT, HITA and AATIA. She can be reached at Speakeasy@pdq.net or www.linguistic-world.com*

## **A Sample of People Who Should Know YOU!**

**International Association of Business Communicators**

<http://www.iabc.com/>

**National Court Reporters Association**

<http://www.verbatimreporters.com/>

**Association of Consumer Research**

<http://www.acrweb.org/>

**American Academy of Medical Administrators**

<http://www.aameda.org/>

**Public Relations Society of America**

[http://www.prsa.org/\\_Chapters/main/](http://www.prsa.org/_Chapters/main/)

**List of Hospital Associations by state**

<http://www.pohly.com/assoc.html>

**Society for Technical Communication**

<http://stc.org/>

**Legal Assistant Management Association**

[www.lamanet.org](http://www.lamanet.org)

**International Women's Writing Guild**

<http://www.iwwg.com/>

**National Federation of Paralegal Associations**

[www.paralegals.org](http://www.paralegals.org)

**Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America Inc.**

<http://www.sfwa.org/>

**American Council of Engineering Companies**

<http://www.acec.org/>

**American Institute of Chemical Engineers**

<http://www.aiche.org/>

## CIRCLE NEWS

### Our Program Director Moves On

Debbie Folaron, our hard-working Program Director, is leaving the NY area to take up an academic appointment at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. Debbie is resigning from the NYCT Board and her duties will be taken over by the Chair of the Programs Committee, Renée Borio-Román. We will miss Debbie but are delighted she is getting this wonderful opportunity and wish her all the best in her new life.



### Federal Court Interpreter Certification – Spanish

Registration is now open for the Oral Examination in Spanish. Register by: June 21, 2003. The local test site is Jersey City, NJ. For more information call (916) 263-3494 or register online at: [www.cps.ca.gov/fcice-spanish](http://www.cps.ca.gov/fcice-spanish).

Registration is open to any candidate who has passed the Federal Court Interpreter Written Examination.

### Our Secretary Is Also On The Move

Also moving from the NY area is our Secretary, Consuelo Corretjer-Lee, who has relocated to her native Puerto Rico. For the time being, Consuelo will be commuting between NYC and PR and will continue attending to the needs of our members via email and telephone.

### Accreditation Exam Held

On March 15 the NYCT once again sponsored an accreditation exam sitting on behalf of ATA. The sitting, held at Masonic Hall, was the first one held under the new rules e.g., only two passages required instead of 3. The next accreditation exam in New York City will be held on Saturday September 20, 2003. Anyone interested in registering for the exam should contact Terry Hanlen at ATA headquarters: [terry@atanet.org](mailto:terry@atanet.org).

### Legal Translation Conference

This very successful ATA-sponsored event was held at the Hyatt Regency in Jersey City on May 2-4. Many Circle members were among the over 200 attendees who were offered a wide array of in-depth sessions on legal translation. Watch for a report on the conference in the next issue of the Gotham Translator.

### A Passel of Seminars

#### Going to Spain?



Intermark Language Services and Versalia Traducción are offering a legal translation seminar for Spanish-English/English-Spanish linguists in Madrid, Spain, on Friday, June 13, 2003. This six-hour seminar entitled

"Corporate Law in the United States and Spain," will be taught by attorney/translator Thomas L. West III. For more information, log onto Versalia's website at [www.versalia.com](http://www.versalia.com).

#### Going to Paris?

You could attend the 8th Euronext Paris Financial Translation Workshop to be held on June 20 in Paris, France. This all-day event is organized by Euronext Paris and Rencontres Traduction Financière in partnership with Société française des traducteurs and the Financial Translators' Forum. For more information contact Chris Durban: [101327.35@compuserve.com](mailto:101327.35@compuserve.com)



#### What about Texas?



Tom West will be in Houston, TX, on Saturday, July 12, 2003 to teach a new one-day seminar, "A Criminal Lawsuit in Latin America." The seminar will be held at the Courtyard by Marriott near the Galleria in downtown Houston. Early-bird registration ends on June 13. Contact [faxes@intermark-languages.com](mailto:faxes@intermark-languages.com) for more information.

## **NYCT Meeting, March 11, 2003**



Due to the monster February 18th snowstorm, the monthly New York Circle of Translators meeting was rescheduled for March 11th. It was with an added sense of anticipation that NYCT members and guests listened to Peter Wheeler's talk, "Splendeurs et Misères: the upsides and downsides of running a small translation company".

Peter Wheeler has been a member of the NYCT since 1988, serving as its president in 1991. Before starting his own company, Antler Translation Services in Sparta, NJ, Peter worked in various in-house translation positions, which included 10 years with the European Commission in Luxembourg.

The subject matter - how a translation company interacts with its clients as well as its freelancers - was rich in anecdotes and examples. Peter's fledgling company began when he was working in his previous job, eventually becoming so successful that he set up operations working out of his own home. When the business outgrew his home office, he had to find additional space, and additional personnel. This new office came with its own set of challenges, among them the joys of bureaucracy and administrative requirements. The ultimate example of this was the existence of the required "Exit" sign, perfect in every way except one - that it led nowhere.

Peter discussed the basics of a translation job, from start to finish. In his own company, Antler Translation Services, the first step in a translation is always to learn as much as possible about the potential assignment. The text to be translated has to be sent in, either electronically or in hard copy, to determine the specifics of the assignment, and to provide a formal price quotation for the client. With the translation in hand, potential translators for the assignment have to be found, either in-house or from a pool of Antler's freelance contractors. The three factors to be resolved are determining the mother-tongue fluency in the target language, the right subject expertise, and translator availability.

Peter also touched on a subject of essential importance to all of us at the NYCT, the importance of translators,

and recognition of the vital role they perform. Unfortunately, translators have to combat the misconception of many outside the translation community - that anyone with knowledge of a foreign language can translate. Just because someone grew up speaking a different language does not mean that he has the requisite knowledge and writing skills to turn out accurate and well-written translations. Many translations require knowledge of highly specialized vocabulary, and can be done only after hours of detailed research. The cost of translations has to reflect all of these elements - another concept which is badly understood by the general public.

A good presentation can be judged by the quantity and quality of questions posed to the presenter. Peter Wheeler's talk elicited a number of thoughtful questions, and much lively discussion. One NYCT member commented on the difficulty of being paid by clients. Peter's suggestion - never hand over a translation to an individual client without receiving payment in return. The presentation came to an end, and was greeted with enthusiastic applause. Many of the topics brought up in Peter's presentation were discussed further among NYCT members at the Chinese New Year banquet which followed at Tien Fu Gong. ■

*Michelle Annette Mead moved to New York City in 1994, after spending 5 years in Sydney and 14 years in Paris. She has graduate certificates in French-to-English Translation and International Affairs from New York University. Michelle is a dual American/French citizen, and is currently massacring the language of Goethe at the Bayerische Landesbank in New York.*

**FRENCH TRANSLATOR  
LOOKING FOR 1-YEAR INTERNSHIP  
IN NYC-BASED  
TRANSLATION AGENCY**

(Preferably Starting from July 03)

Please contact : GUILLAUME FLEURY

E-mail: fleuryguillaume@hotmail.com

## ***THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR***



The New York Circle of Translators (NYCT) is a New York State not-for-profit corporation regrouping 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](http://www.nyctranslators.org) and join on-line!

## ***THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR***

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