

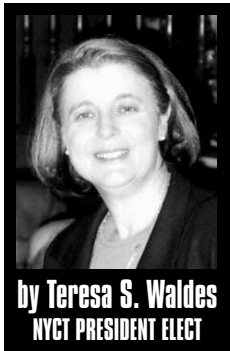


THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

November 2002

A Publication of The New York Circle of Translators

On Referrals, Marketing and the Website



by Teresa S. Waldes
NYCT PRESIDENT ELECT

This month I want to discuss referrals, one of the benefits of your NYCT membership. As this program has seen significant changes in recent years, it seems appropriate to go over its present status.

When I joined the NYCT about ten years ago, the Internet was still a gleam in some computer

scientist's eye. The NYCT did not have a website or online directory and the referral system was telephone-based. The way it worked then was as follows: we paid for a New York City Yellow Pages listing in the "Translators & Interpreters" section (which we still maintain). The NYCT telephone line was installed at the President's home and moved every year. When people called about translation services, the President would go through the directory book and pick three names that fulfilled the caller's language pair and specialty requirements. The President also kept track of the names he/she had already given so as to select different ones the next time around.

The procedures I just described were very cumbersome (in particular, moving the telephone every year proved to be impractical). Further, the volume of calls was significant and answering them was very time-consuming. That's why a few years ago we signed up for our current voicemail system. Now, when anyone calls the NYCT the recorded message directs callers to the website and the online directory. In turn, callers can leave messages about their translation needs, among other things.

This year it is up to Marie-José Daigneault and myself to answer those calls, although nowadays there aren't so many of them. (A probable reason is that prospec-

tive clients contact translators directly through the online directory instead of calling the NYCT.) We also get calls on our personal telephone lines as well as emails through the website's "Contact NYCT" page. Whenever we are asked to give referrals by any of these means, our policy is to direct callers to the online directory if at all possible. Only in exceptional cases, when the caller refuses to use the directory (most people love it!), we will give three names chosen at random from among those that fulfill the caller's requirements.

I must emphasize that, as a matter of policy, we scrupulously avoid any manner of self-dealing. That is, Board members do not keep for themselves any translation jobs where the caller contacted the NYCT and not one of us personally.

We have at times also been approached by employers who had job offers of general interest to our members. In those cases, we send a broadcast e-mail to the membership at large and we advise interested parties to contact the employer directly.

What I have just described is the official NYCT referral policy. But, of course, the directory is also used by prospective clients who are seeking translators/interpreters online or by your *(continued on page 3)*

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New Look for the NYCT Web Site!

By Margaret Altieri, Web Site Committee Chair

Back in December of last year, the Board of Directors made a Web site upgrade one of their top agenda items for 2002. After months of work and review, I am pleased to announce that Phase I of our Web site update is in progress and the Circle will have a brand new look before the end of this year.

Background

When we started the review, the Board's primary objective was to make NYCT membership more valuable to all members, both corporate and individual, by updating and improving the site. Specifically, it looked to do this by:

- making the Web site more user-friendly for outside clients seeking translation and interpretation services;
- ensuring a comparable look with other professional translation/interpretation organizations;
- reviewing and updating the site content;
- accomplishing this in a timely and economical fashion.

Here's a brief preview of the major changes. Starting with the Homepage, our "Welcome Mat" to the world, the NYC skyline has been eliminated. We've expanded the "Welcome to NYCT" into a headline banner, and added a brief mission statement below it. There is a link to a rewritten "About NYCT" page, which updates the description of who we are and what we do. In the upper left-hand corner, we've placed our familiar logo, the Chrysler Building spire, and have carried this through on all our pages.

More importantly, we've repositioned the "MEMBERS ONLY" link to share the home page with a new link aimed at outside clients. The "Find a translator or interpreter" section allows direct access to the membership directory from the home page. It also offers help to outside clients seeking direction about translation and interpretation services through a direct link into the FAQs page.

The FAQs page was completely rewritten by our own Teresa Waldes to provide general information to the public about available services, providers and cost. It also contains a link to the ATA website for additional information. The FAQs page now offers a new section for persons seeking to become translators or interpreters. It gives a brief, practical discussion of some major points, plus a link to the ATA Web site for more information.

The "Membership in NYCT" page has also undergone a significant update. We've changed our introductory paragraph into a bulleted list that highlights the many benefits of NYCT membership. The descriptions of membership classes have been updated, and we have added some corporate membership classes (like "Corporate Patron") that parallel the individual ones. So be sure to check out these changes and give us your feedback!

Phase II of the Web site update will target online publication of our newsletter, *The Gotham Translator*, and the creation of an online archive of back issues. We will continue to mail *The Gotham Translator* in parallel with its online publication, but later on we plan to allow members to opt out of the paper issue altogether.

We are also looking into upgrading the looks of our web-site in the near future. This will require hiring the services of a graphic designer.

More on this as the next phase moves forward, so stay tuned! ■

THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

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Monthly Meeting on November 18: A Recap of the ATA Conference

The NYCT is pleased to welcome you to a roundtable discussion on the annual ATA conference in Atlanta! If you were there, come and share your experiences. If you missed the conference this year, come hear first-hand reports on the sessions and other doings from your fellow NYCT members. This event will be held on Monday, November 18th at 6:30 p.m. at the Masonic Hall (71 West 23rd St.), Room 2 Central. Join us for dinner afterwards at 8:00 p.m. at Cal's Restaurant (55 West 21st St.). Dinner is

\$28 per plate (tax and tips included) with individual drinks paid for separately. Please reserve by e-mailing Debbie at dfolaron1@nyc.rr.com or calling (212) 334-3060. We look forward to seeing you!

Save the date for the Holiday Party!

Plan to join your fellow NYCT members at a festive luncheon on Sunday, December 15th. Look for full details in the December Gotham and on the website.

On Referrals, Marketing and the Website

(continued from page 1)

fellow NYCT members who need help with a big job or who want to recommend a colleague because they cannot take a job themselves. In all cases, it is useful for directory users to know whether or not a translator wants to be contacted for possible translation jobs.

Because they work full-time or for other reasons, some NYCT members do not want to get calls. In the past, the printed directory displayed the mention "No Referrals" under those members' entries. Although the membership questionnaire still asks whether you want referrals, the current on-line directory does not show that information. This is going to be remedied as part of the current redesign of the website. As soon as the changes are implemented, on-line directory entries will indicate whether or not a member wants referrals. This information will also be displayed in the 2003 printed directory.

Hopefully, all the members who do want referrals will get lots of calls from directory users. To ensure that this is so, we are in the process of upgrading the website and on-line directory to make them even more attractive and user-friendly. Elsewhere in this issue, Margaret Altieri discusses the Phase I changes that should already be implemented by the time this goes to press. In this regard, the Board wishes to pay tribute to Margaret's efforts and dedication as Chair of the Website Committee and hope that as a Board member she will keep contributing to the website redesign next year. Our goal going forward is to ensure, with the support of our devoted Webmaster David Mintz, that the website is and remains an effective marketing tool.

We are always interested in hearing your comments or suggestions about referrals or any other topic. Address your messages to presidentelect@nyctranslators.org ■

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Economics Workshop for Spanish Translators

A Terminology Harvest



by Eileen Brockbank

If you are interested in the global economy with a focus on Latin America and great discussions about the precise word to use in a related translation, you'll want a front-row seat in the next seminar given by Alexandra Russell-Bitting. On Saturday, October 5, she presented a two-part seminar, covering the basics of "Economics for Spanish Translators" in the morning, then turning to an examination of Argentina's troubles in the afternoon. This was a special event cosponsored by the NYCT and the NYU School of Continuing and Professional Studies, held at New York University.

Part One

In the basic economics part of the session, we were first reminded of the distinction between *GDP* and *GNP*: in case you've forgotten, *GNP* is broader, including *foreign direct investment*, a set term for which the Spanish equivalent is *inversión extranjera directa*. Starting from the Asian crisis, the presentation moved into a discussion of currency concepts and terms. *Paridad cambiaria* is the *currency peg*, and *flotación libre* or *libre fluctuación* is the *free float*. When the Asian crisis began to spread to Latin America, this was known as *contagio* or *contagion* in English.

The *poblacion economicamente activa* is the *labor force*, which can also be called the *economically active population*. This is expressed as a number, starting with the total population, subtracting those too young to work, retirees, and those not seeking work. To determine the *tasa de participación*, which is the *participation rate* [i.e., the *employment rate*] in English, divide the result of that calculation by the total population.

The *open unemployment rate*, translated into Spanish as *desempleo evidente* or *manifiesto*, was reported as 2.55% for Mexico, for 1999. Although it was a good year for Mexico, when you see a rate as low as that, you know it's not the whole story. Many people busy scrambling to earn some pesos any way they can can't afford to be unemployed (i.e., hunting for a job). And of course the figure does not address *subempleo*, *underemployment*, referring to people employed below their level of education or training.

One interesting term is the *current account balance*, or *balanza en cuenta corriente*, which includes *remittances*, or *remesas*. Remittance is the word for that flood of funds sent by Latin Americans and other immigrants to their families. In El Salvador, for example, such funds sent "home" account for 11% of GDP.

Turning to *equilibrios macroeconómicos*, or *macroeconomic equilibria*, you may remember that macroeconomics is the study of the economy as a whole, with a particular focus on the relationships among the sectors. (1) *Primary sector*, (2) *secondary*

sector, and (3) *tertiary sector* (and their respective Spanish cognates) refer to (1) agriculture, (2) industry and (3) services.

Following the general economics presentation, everyone took a few minutes to do draft translations of some passages (one S>E, one E>S), which led to further discussion. Comments about the various institutional information sources were interspersed in with the discussions of terms.

For statistics, among the various multilateral organizations, the World Bank is an excellent source (<http://www.worldbank.org>). Both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have one official language, English, so their information in other languages is not as plentiful as that provided by some other organizations. (The IMF Web site is at <http://www.imf.org>). However, both organizations have powerful search engines, especially the one on the World Bank Web site. Our handouts included an annotated list of useful relevant Web sites as well as information available about hard copies of annual reports, glossaries, etc.

The Web site for the Inter-American Development Bank is at <http://www.iadb.org>. Amidst other valuable information at that site, you can find the Bank's most recent annual reports online (in Adobe Acrobat) in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. If you wish to order single hard copies (or one each in a couple of languages), you can do that as well from the Web site. (The dinosaur writing this article recommends the hard copy of the reports.)

Part Two

What Led the Third-Largest Economy in Latin America to Default?

In 1991, the *Ley de Convertibilidad* pegged the Argentine peso to the U.S. dollar (so *convertibilidad* is the *dollar peg*). At the point when Brazil's 1999 devaluation made goods from Brazil much cheaper than Argentina's exports, the dollar peg had outlived its usefulness for Argentina. Given the ongoing decline of the Argentine economy, the government just kept increasing its bor-

rowings. This meant that debt was more expensive, thus contributing to further decline. Extensive privatization left many people jobless; meanwhile, prices for basic services were increasing. With decentralization and a reduction in federal *revenue sharing* (*coparticipación de ingresos* - in Argentina), provincial debt soared as well. The rising unemployment level pushed more and more people into poverty.

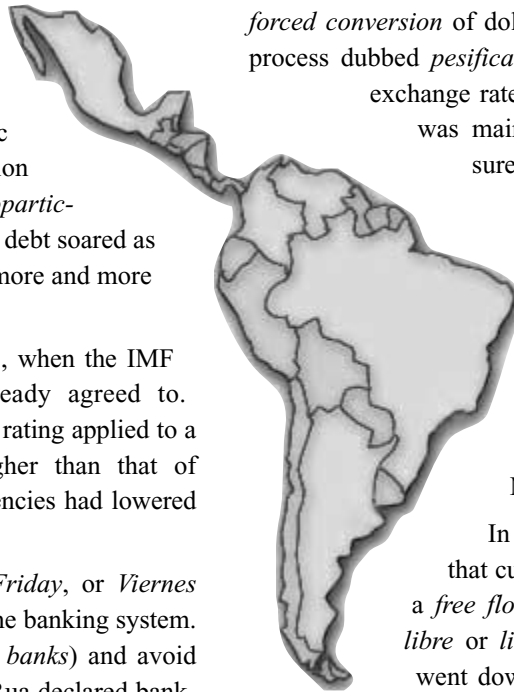
The crisis came to a head in the fall of 2001, when the IMF refused to release payments of loans already agreed to. Argentina's *country risk* (*riesgo país*), the risk rating applied to a country's government credit, was now higher than that of Ecuador, Nigeria and Afghanistan. Rating agencies had lowered Argentina's debt rating to DDD-junk status.

On November 30, 2001, known as *Black Friday*, or *Viernes Negro*, 1 billion pesos were withdrawn from the banking system. To stave off a *corrida bancaria* (*run on the banks*) and avoid complete collapse, President Fernando de la Rúa declared banking restrictions effective December 3 in the form of a *partial freeze* dubbed the "*corralito*" in Argentina. Based on the Spanish word "corral," which means "playpen," this term showed the Argentine people's disdain for the withdrawal "allowance" initially set at 250 pesos per week. As a result of the *corralito*, the term *bancarización* was popularized, with a new meaning: replacement of cash operations by credit or debit cards and cash payments by bank transfers.

During the first few weeks of December, with rioting, looting, and mobs of unemployed workers roving the streets, De la Rúa declared a state of siege. On December 19, he called for peace. In response, the people took to the streets in what came to be known as "*cacerolazos*," or banging on pots and pans, demonstrations that noisily rejected the president's request for forbearance.

Upon the forced resignation of De la Rúa, the interim president Adolfo Rodríguez Saá made the decision to declare *default*, known by the same word in Argentina, as well as *cesación de pagos*. The amount of debt in question, \$150 billion, represented the largest default in history. The question arises: can a country default (thus entering into *sovereign bankruptcy/insolvencia soberana*)? In fact it can, but unlike a company, it does not have assets to be seized. Instead, its name becomes mud, and it is no longer able to secure the long-term financing on which national governments depend. The long road back to creditworthiness requires reorganization and a renewed commitment to proper fiscal management that will win back the IMF, the World Bank and other multilateral lending organizations.

When Eduardo Duhalde took over the presidency following another interim president, he implemented another major change:



forced conversion of dollar-denominated deposits into pesos, a process dubbed *pesificación* [pesification, pesofication], at an exchange rate of 1.40 pesos/US\$1.00. The *corralito* was maintained, and there were frequent closures of banks for a day or so, known as a *feriados bancarios*. Currency trading was also suspended from time to time, in a *feriado cambiario*, further disrupting business operations. Many people filed lawsuits against the government; according to Spain's *El País*, there were 120,000 such lawsuits as of March 2002.

In early February, the government decreed that currency would now be exchanged under a *free float*, for which the Spanish is *flotación libre* or *libre fluctuación*. In May, the currency went down to 3 pesos/US\$, and by now, it has stabilized at around 3.65 pesos/US\$.

The problems Argentina faces today are legion: imports choked off, shortage of medical supplies, lack of available credit for many companies, wine business suffering from lack of corks, high prices and the specter of inflation. More than half the people in Argentina are now below the poverty line.

Following the background information on the situation in Argentina, the presentation turned to the role of the IMF and examined relations between the United States and the Latin American and Caribbean countries. Participants were once again given related passages for translation, one from Spanish (to be done into English), the other from English (into Spanish).

The subject of this article is covered in much greater detail, along with a complete glossary and bibliography, in Alexandra's own article that appears in the *Proceedings* of the 43rd Annual ATA Conference 2002, issued in early November in Atlanta.

Alexandra struck just the right balance, providing a seminar that was informative, with useful handouts and rich content, carefully selected, eschewing information overload. As is her custom, she was very respectful of attendees in her careful, detailed preparation and presentation; you feel privileged attending one of her sessions. All of us attending the seminar had a highly educational and enjoyable day. ■

Eileen Brockbank is an ATA-accredited freelance Spanish>English translator specializing in legal, financial and insurance translation. Eileen welcomes assignments with an emphasis on fine writing. She may be reached at ebrockbank@mindspring.com.

QED, ASAP, etc!

How to Live With Abbreviations

by Frank Dietz

Abbreviations can be the bane of a translator's existence, particularly when they appear in the barren terrain of a list without context. You are translating along merrily, when you suddenly come across the abbreviation "PLA". Let's see...this could be People's Liberation Army...or Programmable Logic Array...or Pylon Loading Adapter...or Power Level Actuator...or...

Here are a few tips for dealing with these shrivelled words:

- **Read on.** Many times a writer will forget to explain an abbreviation the first time it is used, but will do so at a later occurrence. Use your word processor's Find function (if you are dealing with an electronic copy).
- **Concentrate on the context.** If you are dealing with a bank brochure, "ATM" is more likely to be "Automated Teller Machine", while in a printer manual "Adobe Type Manager" would be a better guess.
- **Don't be afraid to ask the client** (if that's possible). Some of the most knotty problems concerning abbreviations might turn out to be company-specific jargon (or even simply typos!)

Here are a few of the resources I use in attacking acronyms and abbreviations.

I still occasionally consult de Sola's *Abbreviations Dictionary* (Elsevier, 1978) which dazzles with its all-inclusive subtitle: *Abbreviations, Acronyms, Antonyms and Eponyms, Appellations, Contractions, Geographical Equivalents, Historical and Mythological Characters, Initials and Nicknames,*

Short Forms and Slang, Shortcuts, Signs and Symbols. While it is not particularly strong on computer-related acronyms, it will tell you that the "Home of Contented Cows" is Carnation, Washington - just in case you needed to know.

Most of the time, however, I would try web-based resources first:

Acronym Finder (<http://www.acronymfinder.com/>) is one of the heavyweights, with over 230,000 entries. Make sure you read the "Search Tip" section before using it.

If your abbreviation happens to consist of three letters, try **The Great Three-Letter Abbreviation Hunt** at <http://www.atomiser.demon.co.uk/abbrev/index.html>.

In many cases, though, it would be best to consult a specialized abbreviations site, be it **Postal Service abbreviations** (<http://www.usps.gov/ncsc/lookups/abbrev.html>), **Jane's Defence Glossary** for military acronyms (<http://www.janes.com/defence/glossary/index.shtml>), a list of acronyms related to the **European Union** (<http://eur-op.eu.int/code/en/en-5000400.htm>), **computer-related** acronyms (<http://www.cs.tut.fi/tlt/stuff/misc/babel.html>) or **electronics** acronyms (<http://www.eetimes.com/docs/gloss1.html>).

For medical and pharmaceutical abbreviations, the **Pharma Lexicon** (<http://www.pharma-lexicon.com/>) is useful starting point (turns out, our old friend PLA could also be Peripheral Laser Angioplasty or Platelet Antigen or...)

A good compilation of online glossaries, with subjects ranging from accountancy to veterinary medicine, can be found at <http://www.opau.com/acro.html>.

Finally, don't forget your good old search engine. While a common acronym will most likely generate too many results, combining an acronym with some context words might just work, plus you have the option of filtering the results by language, for instance at http://www.google.com/advanced_search?hl=en. ■

Dr. Frank Dietz is an ATA-accredited (E>G) translator living in Austin, Texas. He specializes in technical translation and software localization and has translated over 30 computer games into German. This article first appeared in the Spring 2002 issue of the Capitol Translator, the newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Translators Association, and is reprinted here by permission.

The Bylaws Amendment is Approved

The proposed amendments to the Bylaws were duly approved at a business meeting of the membership of the NYCT held on September 25, 2002. Thirty-seven NYCT members in good standing attended the meeting and cast their votes. The amendments were passed with 36 affirmative votes and one abstention.

The amended text of the bylaws will soon be posted on the website for everyone's reference.

Election of Officers Candidate Statements

Shena Crane



Candidate for President-Elect *In work, one of the most important and profitable things we can do is take advantage of every available resource that helps us grow professionally and advance in our careers. I consider the New York Circle of Translators to be such a resource. To me, it is a source for information, advocacy and peer support. Having served as Treasurer of the Circle for the past two years, I am very pleased to have been nominated for President Elect/President (2003-2004). I pledge to continue the development of the Circle to ensure that all members view the NYCT as a valuable resource in their professional lives.*

Margaret Altieri



Candidate for Treasurer *I would like to submit my name for consideration for the post of Treasurer. I have served this past year as the Web Site Committee Chair, and have successfully worked with the Board of Directors to redesign and update our Web site. I am looking forward to continue this work on Phase II of the Web site update, the online publication of The Gotham Translator. I am also seeking to continue in a more active role in the business affairs of the New York Circle of Translators. I performed Treasurer functions for the Hofstra University Chapter of Pi Delta Phi, the French National Honor Society, for many years, before moving to New Jersey. As NYCT Treasurer, I believe that we need to ensure that our members receive value for their dues (like our new and improved Web site), and that we continue to manage our administrative expenses effectively. I look forward to serving the Circle as its Treasurer. Thank you.*

Debbie Folaron



Candidate for Program Director *No profession is as exciting and stimulating to me as the field of translation! As the marketplace and industry practices continue to change and develop they pose new challenges to translators and interpreters alike, in no small part due to evolving technologies and increased visibility of a number of world languages in a "globalizing" environment. As Program Director of the New York Circle of Translators I wish to provide the membership with opportunities to continue to uphold high quality professional standards through information, education and training, whether in the form of speaker presentations, workshops on technical procedures and technologies, or seminars on specialized terminology. Likewise, I am committed to providing informal forums for networking at meetings and dinners. It is my overall hope that through translator and client education and informed communication, society and the market will learn to more adequately appreciate and value the skill, knowledge and expertise that translators and interpreters rely on daily to carry out their professions.*

BALLOT

Cast your votes for President-Elect, Treasurer and Program Director as follows:

- Shena Crane for President-Elect, 2003 (President in 2004)
- Margaret Altieri for Treasurer, 2003-2004
- Debbie Folaron for Program Director, 2003-2004

Ballots must be postmarked no later than November 30, 2002. Mail your ballots to:
Anne Witt-Greenberg, NYCT Secretary, 12 Hayden Avenue, Great Neck, NY 11024

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 and join on-line!

THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

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