THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

by **Rosene Zaros**

This issue, which is actually November/December, is very late in reaching you for a number of reasons. As some of you know, the Circle has been beset by a number of problems this year. Many of them involve our ability to communicate with you and you with us using the channels that have worked for so long.

The system that board members use to send "broadcast" emails to members began to malfunction back in April with the result that many members never received notices of meetings and other important information. Consequently, meetings were poorly attended and interest in Circle activities began to wane. At almost the same time, we began to have problems with the Gotham mailing list. After each issue, the Circle's mailbox was filled with newsletters that were returned because of problems with the addresses. So, many members were not aware of, and could not respond to, issues that were addressed there. Added to those problems were problems involving payment of dues and online profiles.

The Board has been working diligently on all of these issues and we hope that they will be resolved soon. There is a bit of good news in that you will now be able to pay your dues online and receive a receipt from PayPal, which will eliminate wondering whether you did, or did not, pay, searching for cancelled checks, etc. When you pay your dues, please be sure to update your online profile being careful not to create a new profile. Everything in the system is based on your Membership ID number. If you have forgotten yours, please contact the secretary and she will make it available to you.

As a result of these communication problems, there were no nominations and no election to fill the positions of president-elect and secretary. Also, there were no nominations for the Stern award, which was announced in the last issue. In late December we learned that both our President, Suzana Martinez and our President-elect, Lucien Morin had resigned leaving us without a president and also without a president-elect. Now, we have learned that Gloria Barragán, our secretary has decided to withdraw as a nominee for Secretary. Her two-year term ended at the end of 2007. She will, however, help during the interim until a new secretary is installed.

After a great deal of discussion, the Board decided that it is time to make a concentrated effort to involve the membership in these important issues. For that reason you will find a "Call for Nominations" in this issue, along with a

(continued on next page)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

3 NYCT Officer Nominations
4 His Excellency and His Interpreter
7 Crossing Borders... Bridging Cultural Gaps
9 Pursuing a PHD in Translation
11 Language Access For All
13 NYCT Member Survey
15 NYCT Membership Renewal

New York Circle of Translators

(212) 334-3060

2007 Board of Directors

Suzana D. Martinez, *President*
Work/Cell: (732)768-3948
president@nyctranslators.org

Lucien Morin, *President-Elect*
president-elect@nyctranslators.org

Gloria Barragán, *Secretary*
Work: (516) 977-9019
secretary@nyctranslators.org

Deborah Lockhart, *Treasurer*
nyct@thelanguageshop.org

Margarite Heintz Montez,
Program Director
programdirector@nyctranslators.org

Committees

Continuing Education: Jordan Fox

The Gotham Translator

Editor
Rosene Zaros
zarosr@hotmail.com

Editorial Board
Trudy Balch,
Ellen Sowchek,
and Betty Welker

Design and Layout
Bahl Graphics
kbahlmann@austin.rr.com

Printing
Mail Boxes, Etc. South Orange NJ
mailboxso@verizon.net

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

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. 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.

© 2007 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.

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 submissions, please advise us of this fact at the time of submission. ■

Do you know someone who'd
like to advertise in

The Gotham Translator?

Please e-mail your text or artwork to the Editor at editor@nyctranslators.org no later than 30 days prior to the publication date. Please indicate the ad size desired. If your artwork is in soft copy (business card or other) please mail to the editor at the address below together with your payment.

Ad Rates (single insertion)

Full page (7.5" x 10") $150
One-half page (7.5" x 4.75").....$80
One-fourth page (3.5" x 4.75") $40
One-eighth page (3.5" x 2.25").....$20

Note: All prices are for black-and-white camera-ready copy.

Payment: As soon as you and the Editor have agreed to the ad size and publication date, you will be sent an invoice via email. **We must receive payment in advance before we can publish an ad.** Please allow enough time for checks to be received prior to the publication date. Please mail your check payable to the New York Circle of Translators for your ad placement to:

The New York Circle of Translators
P.O. Box 4051
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163-4051

A Word From the Editor (cont'd)

description of the duties and responsibilities of each office. Please note that a member may nominate him/herself for these offices. With the exception of President and President-elect, anyone may serve on the Board. According to the Bylaws, the President and President-elect must be voting members of ATA. Once nominations are received, an election will be set up so that members may have a voice in selecting people for these very important posts. You will also find another "Call for Nominations" for the Stern award.

At a recent meeting, the Board passed out a survey in an effort to get an idea about what you expect from your membership in the New York Circle of Translators. We are reprinting this form in this issue in the hopes that it will reach those of you who are not able to attend meetings regularly. You may mail it in, scan it, or copy it into a Word file and send it to me: zarosr@hotmail.com., or you can bring it to the January 23 meeting.

The translation industry is changing so rapidly and translators and interpreters are faced with an ever-growing number of problems that impinge on their ability to perform their jobs. Translators are unique in that most of us have a devotion to this important job that goes beyond just the money we make. It is very sad to learn that some translators have been prevented from doing their jobs because of social issues. The next issue of The Gotham will be devoted to professional organizations, in general, and how well they are, or are not, fulfilling the needs of their members.

As is the case with democracy, if we are to see significant change in our profession as it relates to the rest of the world, we must get involved and make our voices heard. ■

NOMINATION OF NYCT OFFICERS

The following is a description of the four offices taken from the bylaws of the New York Circle of Translators:

President. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Circle and of the Board of Directors. He or she shall be a member ex officio of all committees, without the right to vote. The President has all powers and duties normally associated with such office and, in particular, the power to sign all documents in the name of the Circle and to serve as liaison with the ATA. No further ATA liaison officer shall be appointed. The President shall share with the Treasurer the right, to be exercised individually, to sign and co-sign checks and orders for withdrawal of the funds of the Circle, subject to the same limitations as established below for the Treasurer.

President-Elect. The President-Elect shall assist the President as required by the latter and shall furthermore perform the duties of President in the event of the latter's absence or incapacity, resignation, removal from office, or other vacancy in such office.

Secretary. The Secretary shall take, distribute, publish, and issue all the minutes of all Board meetings and all general meetings of the Circle and keep them on file, and shall perform such other duties as directed by the President or by resolution of the Board, including the submission each year of a report of the Circle activities to the Board of Directors of the American Translators Association. It shall also be the duty of the Secretary to handle all correspondence sent to the Circle, and to organize mailings and directory publication.

Program Director. The Program Director shall be responsible for planning, preparing and organizing monthly meetings, dinners and events such as picnics and holiday parties.

CALL FOR NOMINATION FORM

This form may be completed by either the nominator or the nominee.
The nominator can nominate him/herself.

Submitting the Form: Please submit the form by mail to Rosene Zaros, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, 1375 Washington Street, Stockport, Ohio 43787 or by email: zarosr@hotmail.com

Name of Nominee: _____

Email Address: _____

Nominated for position of:

❑ President ❑ President-Elect ❑ Secretary ❑ Program Director

Is the nominee aware of this nomination? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Name of Nominator: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Comments: _____

HIS EXCELLENCY AND HIS INTERPRETER

© Copyright *Translation Journal* and the Author 2004

by Danilo Nogueira

The President of Brazil visited Africa in early November 2003 and made certain statements during his stay in that continent. The contents of the statements themselves need not concern us: he did not talk about translation and this is not the *Poughkeepsie Review of International Politics*.

An interpreter translated what he said and that concerns us, because this, as you very well know, is the *Translation Journal*. Whether interpretation is a species of translation or a sister discipline may be a matter of some dispute in certain quarters, but I daresay both activities are very close kin, and interpretation of Presidential speeches is news fit for the *Translation Journal* to publish. If it is not, the publisher will deal with this article in the appropriate manner.

Give me the Facts: What happened in Windhoek?

On a fine day in Windhoek, Namibia, the President ad-libbed a few remarks, as is his wont. At a certain point the interpreter stopped translating, looked at the President, and interrupted: "Presidente, não estou entendendo", a remark that can be construed both as *Mr. President, I cannot understand what you say* or *Mr. President, I cannot understand why you are saying this*. It might be added that the President always speaks in a loud, slow and clear voice. In addition, he is a very simple man and would never use the convoluted, highfalutin language so many politicians too often indulge in. The President always calls a spade a spade and the chances of misunderstanding or misinterpreting him are indeed slim. It must also be stated that the interpreter has often translated for the President.

The President must have heard his interpreter, since he repeated the phrase and added a second phrase, so as to build a comparison. The interpreter then provided what would usually be considered an inaccurate rendering of the first part of the comparison and omitted what would generally be considered a key term from the second. The translation up to that particular point and after it was considered very precise.

Beyond the Call of Duty

The fact was widely reported by the Brazilian press. Translators usually make the news only when we blunder or when the ladies and gentlemen of the press need something cute to laugh at. In this case, however, the reports claimed that the interpreter had corrected a Presidential *faux pas* because the original statement would be offensive to some hearers.

> The President's translator... considered the President's statement politically incorrect and decided he was the man to put things aright.

The matter was also discussed at some length at translators' lists and it was generally agreed that the interpreter did well in bowdlerizing what the President had said. Many colleagues held that the interpreter had rescued the President from an awkward, embarrassing situation (what is termed in Brazil "wearing a tight skirt" for reasons better left unexplained) and, as such had gone beyond his duty both as a professional and as a patriot.

Did he? Perhaps. However, the more I think about it, the less I like it.

What do we need an Interpreter for, anyway?

Some interpreters like the "reported speech" mode of interpretation, principally when they are doing conversations. In the unlikely case you do not know what I am talking about, it is the mode in which the interpreter always begins each intervention with something like "Mr. Doe says

that...". This may be very awkward, mainly when speakers themselves are in the habit of beginning each utterance with a "please tell him that...", which would result in a horrible "Mr. Doe asks me to inform you that...".

Conversations flow more easily in the "direct speech" mode when each speaker addresses the opposite part as if both had a common language and the interpreter uses "I" to refer to the person he is interpreting for. However, the reported speech mode has the advantage of emphasizing that the interpreter is entrusted with the task of delivering a message. If interpreters/translators willfully deliver a message different from the one conveyed to them, they are lying and that is that.

Like, say, when John calls the office and asks his friend George to please tell the boss that something came up and he will be a couple hours late for work and is very sorry about it and George tells the boss John called in and said he met this terrific blonde and was flying down to Acapulco for a couple weeks and the office be damned. This would be considered an outright, dirty lie. Now, why isn't the willful deletion of a couple words from a presidential speech considered a lie too?

A lie is a lie, of course, and although there may be cases where a lie is ethically justified, such as when a life is in danger, we should be really careful with exceptions.

Can we trust this Interpreter?

We must also consider the audience. They were there to hear what the President had to say. Since they didn't understand Portuguese and the President speaks only Portuguese, they needed an interpreter and the President provided one. And the audience believed that the interpreter was reporting what the President said, which he did not. So the audience was fooled. You might say that the interpreter's duty of loyalty was to his employer, the Brazilian government, not to the audience, which is very true.

But, if the President's interpreter is not to be trusted to provide a true translation of a Presidential speech, then the interpreter in such cases should be provided and paid for by the audience, because I am sure the audience wants to know what the President of Brazil said, not what his interpreter thought he ought to have said instead. I would go farther than that: the audience is *entitled* to know what the President said. After all, they were there to hear the President, not his interpreter.

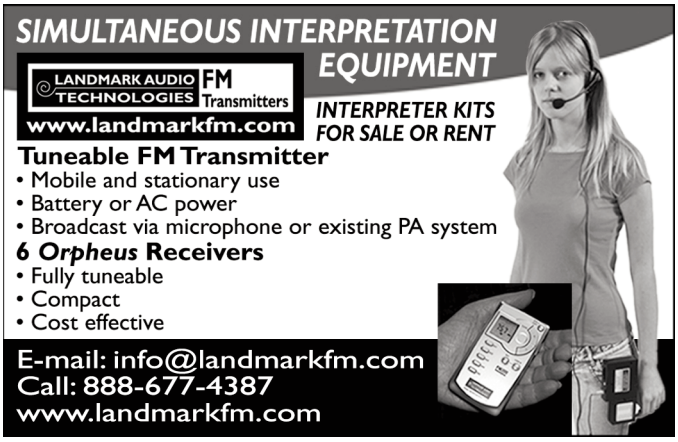
The possibility of an unfaithful translation is one of the reasons why, in international meetings, each side brings their own interpreters. Interpreters are in charge of translating for their principals *and* keeping an eye on what the other guys do for theirs. But in case I'm relating the audience was helpless of course: they had to rely on the speaker's interpreter.

How I Prevented a Real Fight and Other Stories

A few colleagues at the trad-prt translators' list claimed we should always "dilute" statements and that is the correct way to act. They told stories of how an interpreter prevented a fight by omitting insulting statements from the translation. Great. But, first, if someone calls me an &$#@!!! to my face in a foreign language I believe I'm entitled to know what he said and, second, the purpose of avoiding a fight might have been equally well served by providing an exact translation and letting the parties understand that the other guy was mad as hell and meant business, too.

In addition, I don't see myself as a negotiator or facilitator: my burden as a translator is already heavy enough for me. You start doing a little bit of editing here and there just to grease the gears and in no time at all

(continued on next page)



His Excellency and His Interpretor (cont'd)

people will be blaming you for the next international incident. (If the interpreter had only...)

We are always complaining against non-translators who decide they must have a go at translating and then they blotch the job. I firmly believe we should do what we preach and leave negotiations to the negotiators—and presidenting to the presidents, if I am allowed to say so.

The Perils of the Profession: There is no God!

In addition, the interpreter ran the additional risk that the President might have been playing a rhetorical game. Instead of explaining what I mean, let me tell you a story, an extreme case, but true nevertheless.

Father Antonio Vieira, a master of baroque Portuguese oratory, once climbed the stairs to the pulpit, cleared his throat and boomed: "There is no God!" The congregation froze in terror: had the good priest gone bananas? Was it the work of the devil himself? Would the roof fall on their heads? Was the end neigh? None of the above. Antonio Vieira was just using a very old rhetorical device. After allowing his audience a few seconds for general bewilderment, he said in a calm and controlled voice, something like "... that is what fools say". Then he proceeded to develop his sermon according to good Roman Catholic orthodoxy.

This, in my view, is the perfect example to show the two main differences between translating a text and translating a speech: the lack of "forward" context and the impossibility of correcting one's translation.

If you have to translate the published text of the homily and decided that was a typo, because of course a sixteenth century Roman Catholic priest could not and would not deny the existence of God and, as a consequence, decided to translate the *Deus não existe!* as *There is a God!* the following sentence would show your assumption was wrong and you could go back and humbly correct the translation of the first. However, if you were doing a "translate-as-he-goes" each new sentence would be a source of embarrassment.

Of course, it might have been a slip of the tongue and the interpreter might have to correct himself later by saying "the interpreter apologizes...". Not an easy situation, either. But I believe it would be the best alternative

The Dangers of Translating

Translation is about deciding. There are no hard-and-fast rules, no perfect translations, we must make decisions all the time and most of them are dangerous. We are always walking a tightrope. It takes many of us a long time to figure that out. Neophytes are always looking for *the right translation*, or for the *grammatically correct expression* or the *correct way to deal with....*

There is no such thing. There is always another solution and there will always be people who claim the other solution was better and offer strong evidence to support their views. Unfortunately, too often the guy who disagrees and the guy who signs the check (or decides not to) are one and the same person.

A Decision Made, an Effort Lost

The President's translator made his decision. It looks like he considered the President's statement politically incorrect and decided he was the man to put things aright. The President has press relations officers, the guys who are paid to claim that *the President was misquoted* or *the President was quoted outside context* if need be. Those are the experts, the real spin-doctors. But the interpreter thought *he*, of all people, should handle that.

It was all to no avail, alas. Other persons in the audience understood Portuguese and noted that the interpreter had sanitized the statement, and the matter received more attention from the international press than it would receive otherwise, for the press is always interested in anything that might embarrass a public figure.

The very fact that the statement was expurgated by the interpreter helped prevent the Presidential press office from doing its job of claiming the President had been quoted out of context or something.

And, finally, when he returned to Brazil, the President was questioned about his statement and, never a man to mince his words, answered *had you been there, you would have agreed with me*. ■

CROSSING BORDERS…BRIDGING CULTURAL GAPS

HOW CAN LANGUAGE PROFESSIONALS BRIDGE THE HEALTHCARE GAP?

by **Deborah Lockhart**

Deborah Lockhart

There has been an increasing buzz about the requirement for foreign and sign language interpreters to be available for all non-English-speaking patients in medical facilities. Due to specific legislation and also for practical reasons, doctors' offices, hospitals, clinics and insurance companies are experiencing an increasing need for qualified language professionals to aid in the communication process between patients and health care providers. Being able to provide this service requires specific and ongoing training. In this article, I will discuss one particular aspect of medical interpreting: interpreting at Independent Medical Examinations (IMEs).

IMEs can be scheduled by insurance companies in the process of Personal Injury, Workers Compensation or Medical Malpractice claims. The insurance company requires a physician, alternative medicine provider or medical facility to determine the level of the claimant or patient's injury in order to decide whether or not to settle the claim. Usually, if the patient does not speak sufficient English to communicate with the health care provider, the insurance company contacts the translation company and requests an interpreter. The translator will then seek suitable freelancers to provide this service.

The minimum charge for interpreting at IMEs is usually two hours because the average IME can last for that time. At times, it can last a longer or shorter time. If the only available interpreter has to travel a significant distance, the insurance company is usually willing to pay a travel fee. The freelancer providing the service should discuss the matter of fees only with the translation company's project manager. It is important that the freelancer bear in mind that generally, in the case of IMEs, neither the health care provider nor the claimant or patient is the client. Usually, the freelancer will not know which insurance company ordered the service and should direct all concerns and questions to the translation company contracting his or her services.

When the purchase order is received, the freelancer should call the doctor's office ahead of time. Usually, the facility's telephone number, the name of the doctor(s), the name of the patient and the date and time of the doctor's visit are provided on the purchase order. The interpreter must be brief when calling, being aware that a doctor's office tends to be busy. The interpreter should in a very professional manner introduce himself or herself and identify the patient for whom he or she will interpret. It is a good idea to verify the information on the purchase order, making sure to confirm that you have the correct address. Sometimes a doctor has several locations and it never hurts to make sure you are going to the correct office.

It's also wise to find out the doctor's area of specialization. This way, the interpreter can look up all the terminology related to that area of medicine in time for the assignment. Some areas of specialization for an IME can be orthopedics, psychiatry, acupuncture and chiropractic, among others. At times, a freelancer may have to interpret between the claimant and several healthcare providers at the same IME. The more prepared you are before the assignment, the more comfortable and confident you will feel. The more medical terminology the interpreter knows in both languages that will be used, the smoother the IME will flow. For example, questions relating to the actual physical injury can be asked in a psychiatric evaluation. The psychiatrist can ask the patient if he or she feels pain, uses crutches, a wheelchair or

(continued on next page)

Crossing Borders (cont'd)

braces. It is okay to bring a good bilingual medical dictionary with you in case a word is used that you do not know how to say in one or the other language. Do not panic if this happens. Just request a moment to look the word up. However try to limit this to one or two occasions in order not to seem incompetent. It is better to do your preparation beforehand. Be as accurate as possible. Someone's health, livelihood or even their life may rest in your hands.

It is always a good idea to leave ample time between assignments. Usually, the interpreter should wait for at least an hour before determining that the patient is not going to show up. Before leaving the doctor's facility, check with the receptionist and, in addition, call your project manager informing the project manager of the no-show. Once you receive the go-ahead to leave the provider's office, you may do so knowing that you will still be honored for showing up at the assignment.

Generally, purchase orders require that you arrive at the doctor's office fifteen minutes ahead of time. Use the time to introduce yourself to the staff at the doctor's office. The patient may already be there and will need to be put at ease and assured that you will do a good job to help him or her communicate with the health care provider. You may need the additional time to help the patient to fill out paperwork. The more information you have on the patient, the time of the incident, the injury, the medications used, the easier it will be for you to interpret when the doctor is examining the patient. A well-prepared and organized interpreter will stand a better chance of earning the trust of the provider and the patient.

At times, the task can be even more challenging because, unfortunately, some health care providers relinquish their primary commitment to provide healing and relief to patients because of their business arrangements with insurance companies which are overly cautious in the face of the abuses of insurance fraud. At times the entire process can be very emotionally charged and, despite personal feelings, the freelancer has to do his or her best to aid in the communication process between the health care provider and the patient despite the challenges experienced. At other times it can be very complicated because in longer IMEs, for example in psychiatric evaluations, there is a large amount of paper work to be completed and the patient can become agitated.

It is not unusual to encounter some resistance from the patient who might not understand what your role is. The patient may be under the mistaken view that you represent the doctor's office or, worse yet, the insurance company. You may have to communicate your role to the patient, explaining that you are a freelance interpreter working directly for a translation service and neither for the doctor nor for the insurance company. Remember, you are not a lawyer or a doctor. You job is to ensure that the communication process between the client and the doctor runs smoothly, nothing more, nothing less. Does this mean that at times, you may be required to offer an explanation of what the patient is saying? Yes, at times, this is the case. If you have to convey some aspect of the patient's culture to help the healthcare provider understand clearly what the patient is saying, do so succinctly and professionally. Do not ask the patient more questions than the doctor asks except to make sure that the doctor's questions are being clearly understood and answered. At times, the patient considers the question-and-answer process excessive and may vent his or her frustration on you. Try to be patient and understand the difficulty that this person is experiencing: perhaps pain, the loss of income or a drastic change in routine, stress, depression, and more. At times the patient really has suffered pain and suffering and has not been very successful in convincing the health care provider or the insurance company of this fact.

When the assignment is done, leave the premises as soon as the necessary paperwork concerning your assignment is completed and the health care provider(s) and front office staff have indicated that they do not need anything further from you. Some translation companies ask that the doctor's office log the start and end time of your assignment on a sheet that you would have already received with the purchase order. In the cases where they

don't, it is a good practice to call the agency and let them know that the assignment has been completed.

Do not expect the doctor to discuss the evaluation with you. Neither will the provider provide medical advice or treatment to the patient. At times, this is a hard pill to swallow because the general perception of a healthcare provider is one who always seeks to provide comfort and healing to patients. At times, the IME may seem like a very cold and heartless procedure that is charged with antipathy. After the medical evaluation, the patient may want to discuss his or her case with you, seeking your opinion, support and advice. The only appropriate advice to give is that they consult with their own lawyer or doctor. This can be done in a most gracious, polite and compassionate way.

The above suggestions are by no means exhaustive but are offered to newcomers to the field or those interested in providing this service. Even though, as language providers, we may not be able to bring overnight changes to health care, if we care and are dedicated to professionalism, we can do our part to bring change, one step at a time. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Deborah Lockhart is President of *The Language Shop* and founder of the *Networking Lunch*. She is currently the treasurer of the New York Circle of Translators and has been in the translation business since 1985. Contact: nyct@thelanguageshop.org

PURSUING A PHD IN TRANSLATION AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

PROFILES OF STUDENTS IN A NEW DEGREE PROGRAM BEING OFFERED WITH THE INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

by **May Fung**

Kent State has long distinguished itself as a leading university for translation studies, offering both undergraduate and graduate level degrees specializing in translation in French, German, Japanese (MA only), Russian and Spanish. This past fall, with the introduction of a doctoral program, Kent State became the only university in the United States to offer all three degree levels. The doctoral program, which had always been a long-term goal of faculty, is the culmination of four years of planning and development.

PhD students embark upon a minimum of three years of full-time post-MA study in any language. Students can choose from two different specialization tracks within the doctoral program: General Translation Studies or Translation Tools/Language Informatics. The General Translation Studies track focuses on translation theory, pedagogy and research whereas the Translation Tools/Language Informatics track focuses on research in computer-assisted translation and terminology, multilingual document and software internationalization, and localization. Courses include Translation Pedagogy and the Language Industry, Language Information Technology, Computational Terminology and Lexicography. Kent State's language programs are known for their emphasis on technology and translation as it is practiced in the real world.

The first crop of PhD students come from all across the globe, and from diverse backgrounds. While all the PhD students acknowledged that their pursuit of a doctorate was in part motivated by the desire to augment their credentials, all seemed to be far more interested in having the opportunity to study translation at a higher level with some of the leading voices in translation in the United States.

(continued on next page)

Pursuing a PHD (cont'd)

Zhiwei Fan has plans to return to China to teach translation after her studies at Kent State. She could have obtained a post with her Masters degree, she says, but decided to pursue a doctoral degree for the opportunity it afforded her for more in-depth study. It was while pursuing her Masters degree at Yanshan University in Hebei province that she became very interested in corpus studies. Fan worked on a project headed by the National Committee for Sciences and Society to establish corpus for the 18th century novel *The Dream of Red Mansion*. Working closely with Kelly Washbourne, she is also covering a lot of ground in the theoretical background of translation – an area which she says was not emphasized in her previous studies.

Holding Masters degrees in French from Purdue University and in Foreign Languages and Literature, and in Library Science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Edmund Asare is well positioned to recognize that "the barriers between disciplines are becoming more and more narrow." The translation industry is a prime example of where such field overlap is so common. Because of this, Kent State's focus on technology in translation resonates with Asare, who believes that the next generation of translation tools must be developed by translators themselves. "Developers don't understand the challenges of translation," he says. Rather than using translation technology like toys, translators must begin to see it as the powerful tools they could be. "Things are changing for us. We must move with the times."

Before entering the program, Dave Summers had been working as a translation project manager in the D.C. area. He received his MA in Foreign Languages and Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, spending the year in between in France as a teaching assistant. In total, Summers has spent nearly a decade studying and working with language. However, despite his long relationship with language, it is actually the technology and the tools that really interest him. His decision to return to academia was, therefore, prompted by the discovery of the Kent State doctoral program. The program, he said, offered the rare combination of research in both computing and language. "This program is one of a kind in the country," he said. "The professors are so knowledgeable; they are experts in the field. It's really impressive."

Perhaps no other PhD student can know Kent State's translation program as well as Elena Dunne; she received her MA from Kent State in 2003. Since then, Dunne has been working as a project manager for Advanced Language Translation, a small translation company based in western New York. As the company grows, Dunne finds that she must also grow. "You must be proactive. You need to know a lot. By myself, I wouldn't know where to start. With a structured environment, it's easier to reach those goals." She marvels at how much she has already learned in the first four months. Dunne's research will focus on project management in the language industry – a severely neglected area of study. Kent State, she says, is one of the very few places to go to learn about project management in the translation industry and about the translation industry itself.

Despite the differences in areas of study and ultimate goals, all the PhD students seem to agree that there are vast horizons to be explored in the field of translation. A growing interest in translation, particularly in the United States, will be accompanied by changes in what we translate, how we translate, and even the very definition of translation itself. These students see a doctorate not only as the best way to meet those changes, but also the best way to instigate them.

For full course listing and admission requirements, please visit the Institute for Applied Linguistics' website at http://appling.kent.edu. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

May Fung is a second-year graduate student in the program, specializing in French>English translation. You can contact her at mfung@kent.edu.

LANGUAGE ACCESS FOR ALL

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN POLICY AND PRACTICE

by **Deborah Lockhart**

During October of last year, I attended a number of events that highlighted the growing awareness of the need for, and challenge of, providing quality health care in a multitude of languages. Among such events was a one-day seminar for medical interpreting professionals and policy makers organized by New York – Presbyterian *The University Hospital of Columbia and Cornell* and New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies, entitled "Language Access for All – Bridging the Gap Between Policy and Practice." I would not be telling the truth if I said that I could review this in just one article. However, I will mention here some of the memorable parts of the seminar, including the Keynote speaker's address.

In the first session of the morning, the welcome was extended by the Dean of NYU's School of Continuing and Professional Studies. The Keynote Address was given by Mariano Jose Rey, MD, Director of NYU Institute of Community Health and Research, Senior Associate Dean for Community Health Affairs, NYU School of Medicine and Medical Center. Immediately following was a panel discussion of the topic "Challenges in Medical Interpreting and Translation" moderated by a Medical Interpreter at Memorial Sloan-Kettering and Instructor at NYU SCPS between the Coordinator of Translation and Interpreting at Hunter College who spoke on "Translation in Healthcare," the Coordinator of Language Services at St. Vincent's Hospital who spoke on "The Role of Language Service in Hospital Care," and the Senior Psychiatric Sign Language Interpreter at NY Presbyterian Westchester Division who spoke on "Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Patients."

In the second session, the panel discussion of the topic: "Quality Assurance Data Collection and Evaluation" was moderated by the Director of Patient Advocacy, New York Downtown Hospital between the Language Assistance Program Coordinator of NY Hospital Medical Center, Queens who spoke about "Quality Assurance Tactics for Frontline Managers," the Vice President, Quality and Patient Safety of NY Presbyterian who spoke about "The Link Between Quality and Safety," the Health Outreach Coordinator, New York Immigration Commission and the Director of the Language Services Program at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. They discussed interpreting the statistics to serve the community and technological advances and techniques. To close the session, the President of New York Presbyterian Hospital shared his remarks.

After lunch, there was a town hall meeting with regulatory leaders moderated by the Director, Volunteer and Patient Centered Services at New York Presbyterian between the Director of the Division of Primary and Acute Services of New York Department of Health and two Equal Opportunity Specialists, Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Keynote Speaker's address entitled "Interpretation and Translation in Healthcare (A Physician's Perspective") was very moving. His definition of interpretation is worth noting because it can revolutionize the way in which a medical interpreter approaches his or her responsibilities:

> "Interpreting or interpretation is the intellectual activity that consists of facilitation of oral or sign language communication, either simultaneously or consecutively, between two or among three or more speakers who are not speaking, or signing, the same language. In healthcare, interpretation is most often used in patient-provider encounters.
>
> The word interpreter refers to the

(continued on next page)

Language Access For All (cont'd)

> practitioner who orally translates for parties conversing in different languages or in sign language. Interpreters must convey not only all elements of meaning, but also the intentions and feelings of the original, source language speaker. The aim is to allow target language listeners to experience the message in a way that is as close as possible to the experience of those who understand the original language."

As if this is not enough, he goes on to describe the functions of the medical interpreter:

> "Medical interpreting is a subset of public service interpreting, consisting of communication, among medical personnel and the patient and his or her family, facilitated by an interpreter, usually formally certified and qualified to provide such interpretation services.
>
> The medical interpreter must have a strong knowledge of medicine, common medical procedures, the patient interview, the medical examination processes, and the daily workings of the hospital or clinic where he or she works, in order to effectively serve both the patient and the medical personnel.
>
> Moreover, and very important, medical interpreters often are cultural liaisons for people (regardless of language) who are unfamiliar with or uncomfortable in hospital, clinic or medical settings."

Dr. Rey discussed in detail the concerns of physicians in respect to the role interpreters play in providing healthcare services. He mentioned the existence of the following problems: dual-role interpreters, ad-hoc interpreters, errors of omission, errors of additions, false fluency, substitutions and "editorializations." He demonstrated how poor patient-provider interaction could lead to wrong diagnosis, wrong treatment, health disparities, patients' drop-out of care and ultimately, death, because of different meanings of signals or signals being too vague or muddled.

His statistical and demographic discussions made the need for effective language services in health care obvious as he discussed at length the historical changes in the US and New York City Population: increases in immigrant, "minority" non-English-fluent and subgroup diversity populations and their dispersions within the country, the states and cities. He discussed historical changes in health – acute diseases (infections and trauma) to chronic diseases (cancer and cardiac), the awareness of population health disparities and increased longevity. He also explored the historical changes in health care – inpatient to outpatient, bedside to community; medical-technological development and legalization of health care interactions – informed consents and malpractice suits. He discussed changes in populations – increases and diversity and showed a chart on the foreign-born US population size and composition and discussed health disparities such as heart disease, cancer, infectious diseases and mental health issues vis a vis the various ethnic-linguistic groups. His charts covered levels of unmet medical needs by racial/ethnic groups. He mentioned groups who were less likely to report positive patient-physician interactions and those who believe that their doctor does not understand their background or values. He showed a chart outlining the percent who say that cultural/religious beliefs are a reason for use of alternative care and which groups are more likely to experience communication problems with their doctors.

He expressed the view that Cross Cultural Competence includes language and interpretation and translation within a larger context and provided an interesting definition of culture as:

- Shared system of values, beliefs, and learned patterns of behavior
- Not equivalent to ethnicity or race
- Not equivalent to language
- Dynamic, not static

He took the time to prepare the cultural factors that impact on patient-provider interaction > Patient and Provider may not share the same linguistic skills

Hard for both to share information and shared decision-making > Patient and Provider may not share same ideas about illness

Difficult to arrive at same problem definition > Physician and patient may not share similar role expectations

Behavior and actions in the clinical encounter may mismatch expectations > Physician and patient have their own biases and stereotypes

Bias or stereotyping may influence the exchange of information and may result in provider ignoring some information

He provided the prescription for how health care providers can provide patient-based cross-cultural care:

- Language interpretation
- Understand local population
- Avoid cultural categorization
- Recognize own cultural perspective
- Identify and address areas of cross-cultural sensitivity
- Serve the individual:
  - Explore the patient's perspective
  - Explore the patient's expectations
  - Engage the patient, Earn the trust

Dr. Rey shared enough information for medical interpreters to interpret and aid in meeting the increasingly urgent need for effective communication between patient and provider. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Deborah Lockhart is President of *The Language Shop* and founder of the *Networking Lunch*. She is currently the treasurer of the New York Circle of Translators and has been in the translation business since 1985. Contact: nyct@thelanguageshop.org

NYCT MEMBER SURVEY

In order to better serve the diverse needs of the membership, please complete the following survey. The Board will review all the information and implement steps to improve the quality of membership in the New York Circle of Translators.

Since we are not yet set up to conduct this type of survey online, you may mail it to P.O. Box 4051, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-4051, you may bring it to the January 23 meeting, or you may scan the completed form or copy it into a Word file from the webpage and email it to zarosr@hotmail.com. It can also be faxed to 740-557-3212. Thank you in advance for your feedback.

What was your main reason for joining the NYCT? _____

_____

_____

Do you attend monthly meetings on a regular basis? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

Do you attend the dinners on a regular basis? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

What type of speakers would you like to have at the monthly meetings? _____

_____

_____

What is one thing that you would like to see added to the services or functions of the NYCT? _____

_____

What would you recommend to the Board about how the NYCT can better serve your needs? _____

_____

What is the best thing about the NYCT? _____

_____

_____

What is the worst thing about the NYCT? _____

_____

_____

CIRCLE NEWS

■ Charles M. Stern Autonomous Award

Because of the communications problems we have been experiencing, we fear that nominations for this award may have gone astray. This award was established at the request of Charles M. Stern who left ten percent (10%) of his estate to the New York Circle of Translators to be awarded to the one worthiest, needy male and to the one worthiest, needy female member of the Circle.

Candidates for this award must be members in good standing of the New York Circle of Translators. Five hundred dollars ($500) is the maximum amount awarded annually. If two members are selected, then each will receive $250.

Any member may nominate candidates for this award. Names of candidates, together with a brief biography and the candidate's specific need or proposed use for this award, should be submitted via email to zarosr@hotmail.com by February 1, 2008, using "Stern Award" as a subject.

■ Announcements from the Board

Lucien Morin submitted his resignation as President-elect to take effect December 31, 2007. He expressed regret that his rigorous work schedule did not permit him to devote the necessary time to the NYCT.

Suzana Martinez submitted her resignation stating that personal commitments prevented her from completing her term.

Gloria Barragán withdrew her name as a nominee for Secretary. She, too, stated a work schedule that prohibited her from giving the necessary attention to NYCT affairs. Although her present term expired on December 31, she very graciously agreed to continue with her duties as interim Secretary until a new secretary is elected.

In recognition of Rosene Zaros's excellent job as an Editor, the Board voted and agreed to pay Rosene the amount of $2,500 for the calendar/fiscal year 2007. This amount will be payable once a year.

■ NYCT Meetings

Be sure to mark your calendars for the following meetings:

Wednesday, January 23, 2008

This would ordinarily have been our annual business meeting with the installation of new officers. As it is, you will have the opportunity to meet the members who have graciously agreed to serve as interim officers: Marian Greenfield, President and Lori Colman, President-elect. This will also be an opportunity to nominate members for office, members to receive the Stern Award, and to submit the surveys published in this newsletter.

Thursday, February 7, 2008

Milena Savova will be speaking on translation education, how to get into teaching and other topics regarding translation in academia.

■ Other Upcoming Events

May 16-18, 2008

National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) 29th Annual Conference
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
http://najit.org

August 4-7, 2008

International Federation of Translators 18th FIT World Congress
Shanghai, China
www.fit-ift.org

November 5-8, 2008

American Translators Association 49th Annual Conference
Orland, Florida
www.atanet.org

NYCT MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The New York Circle of Translators
P.O. Box 4051
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 100163-4051

December 2007

Dear Member:

It is time to **renew your NYCT membership for 2008**. Please fill out the payment coupon at the bottom, detach it and send it, together with your check or money order payable to "NYCT or "New York Circle of Translators," to the attention of the NYCT Treasurer at the address indicated above. Please note that the NYCT is now set up to accept payments online via PayPal.

Your 2008 dues are due by January 1st 2008 (calendar year basis). **Please pay promptly!** If your dues have not been received by January 31st 2008, your entry will not be included in the 2008 printed version of the Membership Directory.

If you are renewing your NYCT membership for 2008, you do not have to create a new record. Just send the check indicating "Renewal membership 2008," your name, and/or ID number. If you create a new membership record, your name and data will be listed twice. Make sure not to duplicate your membership records.

If you need to update your profile, go to the NYCT website http://www.nyctranslators.org and click on "**NYCT MEMBERS ONLY. Update your profile there.**" At the login screen, enter your member ID number and password. Be sure to update the information on all **three data screens** of your profile, clicking on the "update" button at the bottom of each screen that you change. If you forgot your member ID number and/or password, please contact us so we can provide you that information.

Your profile information appears in both the NYCT online and print directories. This information is also used by the NYCT to mail you the Gotham and to contact you. **It is your responsibility to update this profile to ensure that it is accurate and current. All members must update their own profiles online when they need to be updated.**

Keep the top portion of this letter for your files. Use your ID Number and password to update your profile information if it changes at any time during the year.

Gloria Barragan
Secretary – New York Circle of Translators

Member name: _____

NYCT Membership Number: _____

❑ Individual Membership

❑ Student Membership

❑ Corporate Membership

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

NYCT members work in a variety of languages and specialties. Our members are committed to the exchange of ideas and mutual support. One of our goals is to educate the general public about the professional nature of interpreting and translating.

NYCT members enjoy the following benefits:

- Free monthly meetings featuring speakers on all aspects of the translation profession
- Networking opportunities at monthly dinners and annual holiday party
- Professional development workshops and seminars
- Subscription to our newsletter, The Gotham Translator
- Listings in the NYCT Online Membership Directory and the annual NYCT printed Membership Directory
- Referrals (if you indicate that you accept them, existing members may direct work requests to you or clients may contact you directly)

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

THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

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