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TRANSLORIAL

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General interest articles can also be read online at www.translorial.com. The most current stories are protected by password. For this issue, the password is **venetian**.

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YOUR TURN! *Translorial* is always looking for contributions and opinions. Articles can maintain your ATA certification and grant you a free "plug" both in the Contributors section of this page and on the *Translorial* archive page of our website. Send your ideas and/or comments to editor@ncta.org. Articles for upcoming issues are accepted on an ongoing basis. ✓

contributors

ALISON ANDERSON is a French-English literary translator. She has translated over twenty books, including the recent *Ensemble, C'est Tout (Hunting and Gathering)* by best-selling French author Anna Gavalda. Alison received an NEA grant in 2004 for her translations of works by Christian Bobin, and is the author of two published novels.

ANNE MILANO APPEL is an Italian-English literary translator. A former director of libraries and teacher of English, Italian, and ESL, she is active in both ALTA and ATA. Several of Anne's book-length translations have been published, as have shorter articles and papers that she has authored or translated. Her translation of Stefano Bortolussi's novel *Head Above Water* was the winner of the 2004 Northern California Book Award for Translation.

MARIA-LUISA BODEN is a founding member of NCTA. A native of Spain, she started proofreading translations for her father's scientific publications at the age of 16. On her first job as a trilingual secretary, she found herself responsible for the translation of business documents and decided on a translation career. She has lived in Spain, Switzerland, London, and New York before settling in San Francisco, and has worked both in-house and freelance.

QUYEN NGO is a freelance English-Vietnamese interpreter/translator/editor,

currently specializing in medical and legal interpreting. She also teaches, in English/Vietnamese, a weekly private class in the Southern California area, for interpreters who want to specialize in legal interpreting, which covers everything from legal terminology to translating court documents. Quyen has also just completed training to become a language tester and is working toward her ATA certification.

TONY RODER is an "almost-founding" member of the Northern California Translators Association, and has been a freelance translator of French and Romanian for the past 35 years. An engineer/physicist by trade, Tony translated part-time while employed in industry and laboratories, and full-time since retirement. A long-time member of ATA, Tony served on NCTA's Board of Directors for 10 years, six of which as a two-term President of the association.

ANGELA ZAWADZKI is an English <> Spanish and English <> Italian interpreter in the private sector. In addition, she is an experienced language and literature instructor in Spanish, French, and Italian, as well as a legal/community interpreter and bilingual personnel trainer. She also designs and teaches community interpreter training workshops. Angela earned her graduate degrees in Comparative Literature from the University of California, Berkeley. ✓

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warm thanks

S. Bradley, B. Guggemos, S. Korwek, A.Steiert, A. Zawadski.



letter from the president

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

BY TUOMAS KOSTIAINEN

I am writing this in Lucca (Tuscany) and trying desperately to wipe my fingers clean of the remnants of salami and pecorino that I had for lunch, and avoid spilling my Chianti on the keyboard. What could be important enough to pull me away from the dessert plate?

Allora, as they say here in Italy ... I could go on and on and tell you more about my other lunches or the local cuisine in general, but that would be unfair and tasteless, so let's turn our attention to NCTA business.

First of all, congratulations to our new board members: Paula Dieli, Dagmar Dolatschko, Norma Kaminsky, and Diane Montgomery, and of course, Stafford Hemmer, our incumbent and skillful secretary. It is always hard to say goodbye to the exiting board member friends but at the same time it is good for the association to get new people with new ideas and plenty of fresh enthusiasm on the board. I am sure this year's "freshness" injection will make us even more invigorated.

Another group of people who deserve a special thank you is the *Translorial* team (Yves Averous, Nina Bogdan, Steve Goldstein, Tatyana Neronova and the rest) for surprising us all with an even more beautiful issue in February. Producing a magazine of this caliber with a volunteer force and for a relatively small organization is not an easy task. However, our *Translorial* team has been able to do it issue after issue, providing us with interesting articles in a beautiful publication that we

should all be very proud of.

To top off my thank you list, I also wanted to thank all of you for renewing your NCTA membership—and if you did it without having to be reminded several times you deserve extra thanks!

As you probably already have noticed (unless you eagerly rushed to read this column as the first thing, as usual), the NCTA/CAT (Center for the Art of Translation) Literary Translation Workshop Series is back after a 2-year hiatus. This year's workshop is non-language specific and will provide a good opportunity for anyone to learn more about literature translation in general. For details, see our website under "Workshops". By the way, on the bottom of the same "Workshops" page we maintain a list of local non-NCTA workshops and courses for translators and interpreters. You might want to check the list regularly to see what else is available. If you don't find what you want, or have a suggestion for a workshop topic, let Norma Kaminsky, our new Continuing Education Director, know. We are constantly looking for new workshop topics to satiate our hunger for knowledge.

Last but not least, "hunger" reminded me of something I forgot to mention at the beginning: for dessert I will have (in a few moments) a piece of a chocolate ricotta pie. It's just yet another incredible treat that I found the other day in a small *pasticceria* nearby. I wish you could have a piece (not mine though). Ciao! ✓

continuing education points: how to

Workshops offer an affordable and local way to accrue Continuing Education (CE) points. All ATA-certified translators now need to accrue 20 CE points during each three-year period in order to maintain their certification (see <http://www.atanet.org/certification/>

[guide_education_points.php](#)). Many options are available to fulfill the requirements. If you can't come to every General Meeting, take a workshop or two each year. Just two 4-hour workshops a year will give you more than enough points, at less than \$100 a year. TK

BOARD REPORTS

At the January Board Meeting

- Discussed status of NCTA website redesign and proposals for potential new providers.
- Reviewed tentative schedule for 2008 workshops.
- Approved proposed guest speaker for February GM for a discussion on Machine Translation.
- Approved regular happy hour meetings alternating between San Francisco and Oakland to make it easier for members to attend.
- Discussed 2008 membership renewal drive.
- Reviewed 4Q/2007 budget report; association in excellent financial position.
- Approved 30th anniversary color redesign of *Translorial*, printed and online versions.

At the February Board Meeting

- Brainstormed for the organization of a 30th Anniversary Gala event in Fall 2008.
- Considered proposal to hold 30th Anniversary Retreat for all NCTA members.
- Discussed preliminary details of May 17th workshop on Literature in Translation.
- Reviewed a positive Treasurer's Report.
- Reviewed cost increase to colorized version of *Translorial* and response to new format.
- Finalized 2008 membership renewal drive and reviewed encountered issues.
- Finalized planning of February GM, with speaker Hany Farag on "The Interpreter Machine".
- Considered progress report from website redesign committee and established target deadlines for placement of new consultant.

At the March Board Meeting

- Approved hiring of part-time bookkeeper.
- Reviewed and gave contingent approval to Treasurer for improved accounting access and online banking services.
- Examined details of upcoming Legal T&I workshop, and considered future Literary workshop and Trados seminars.
- Discussed details for the production of the 2008 Directory of Membership.
- Commenced planning of May GM and potential speakers.
- Reviewed NCTA Marketing objectives to promote NCTA members' services.
- Approved proposed membership survey on 30th Anniversary scheduling preferences.
- Established next target dates for progress with website redesign efforts. ✓

LIT UP

BY STEVEN GOLDSTEIN, EDITOR

It's almost summer, and that means reading! To get you in the mood, we bring you our once-whenever-we-can Literature issue. And we're proud to feature two (among many!) of NCTA's literary translator lights as contributors.

Anne Milano Appel revisits an age-old question in literary translation, with some up-to-date thinking. And Alison Anderson reports on the Center for the Art of Translation's "Lit & Lunch" session with Edith Grossman, noted translator of many of the most important Spanish-language works of our time.

And of course, there's much more, including reports from first-time writers Angela Zawadzki and Quyen Ngo on the March T&I Seminar and the challenges of specialization, respectively. We also have perspectives from long-time NCTA members Tony Roder and Maria Luisa Boden on the early days of our association in our continuing coverage of NCTA's 30th anniversary. Speaking of which, please see our special insert: *Translorial* Vol. I, No. 2!

On a personal note, this issue will be my last as editor of *Translorial*, as I prepare to move onto new endeavors. I'm very pleased to announce that beginning with the September issue, Nina Bogdan will take over the reins, and NCTA couldn't be more fortunate to have someone of Nina's immense talent and enthusiasm. I, as you, look forward to great reading ahead! ✓

attention

TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS
OF ALL LANGUAGES AND SPECIALTIES!

Smart Umbrella Language Services (SULS) is a new T&I agency in Sacramento, CA that is recruiting Translators, Interpreters, Editors and Proofreaders of all languages and specialties.

Looking for qualified T&Is who are either ATA-certified, have a lengthy and successful relationship with agencies, or have graduated with honors from the Monterey Institute of International Studies. Please send your qualifications, CV and references to Reina Montes, President and CEO of SULS at:

Reinam.suls@sprynet.com
or
smartumbrella@earthlink.net

WELCOME

The following members have joined NCTA between January 1 and March 31, 2008:

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SPECIALIZING: CHALLENGES AND REWARDS

With rates under increasing pressure from globalization and other trends, many translators are turning to specialization. But the leap is not always easy. BY QUYEN NGO

This article was inspired by recent postings from several NCTA members inquiring about transitioning into certain fields, and the respective pay rates that one might expect. In today's general translation marketplace, with more competition and lower pay, translators are looking to focus their content expertise, and specifically in the specialized fields of medical and legal interpreting.

Many translators and interpreters are what I would call generalists. A random peek into their profiles shows the ability to work in a variety of fields, ranging from finance, engineering, and education to telecommunications, law, medicine, and science. These professionals tend to work on a few projects in each area, allowing them to (justifiably) tout the range of their capabilities.

Other translators and interpreters, however, specialize in one or two fields at the most. A specialist can be a generalist, but not vice versa: even the slightest interpreting errors in fields such as medicine and law can have grave consequences for the limited English-proficient (LEP) client. As an interpreter in these two highly specialized disciplines, I know that success requires significant dedication, study, and training. It can take anywhere from four to six years to be a proficient interpreter in either of these fields.

The best medicine

Working as a medical interpreter, I am of course well-versed in medical terminology but am also familiar with many medical procedures as well. When a doctor gives an NOP order, I know exactly what that is (no oral products). When a patient requests a DNR order, I also know that he does not want to be resuscitated in a life-threatening circumstance. It's not reasonable to expect a translator who doesn't have such training—a generalist—to walk into a medical interpreting setting and be able to know what these terms refer to.

Other times, the medical translator specialist will be required to work in emotional and stressful conditions such as

emergencies or life-and-death situations. There was an occasion where I interpreted a religious prayer conducted by a hospital chaplain for a terminally ill patient. This event had nothing to do with medical interpreting, yet of course it was an important part of the job.

Rules of law

In the field of legal interpreting, many will find the compensation fairly good. Legal interpreting is one of the most comprehensive interpreting fields in that it requires broad knowledge of numerous other sub-fields. For example, family and probate law will require knowledge of financial terms. Criminal cases will require knowledge of science and medicine pertaining to forensic evidence. Civil suits involving worker's compensation or personal injury will require knowledge of medical, vehicle, and insurance terms. Immigration, small claims, juvenile, and other specialized areas all have their own terminology. And, needless to say, courtroom interpreting can be challenging and intensive when opposing lawyers, witnesses, and judge are all talking at once.

When generalists take on the work of specialists without the proper training, few of them will be able to render acceptable translations or interpretations. Once, a medical glossary translated by a generalist provided me with incredulous comic relief. The term *athlete's foot* was literally translated as "the foot of an athlete"; *hives* was translated as "disease of beehives"; and *speed* (methamphetamine) was translated as "velocity."

The client comes first

A generalist may go into a medical or legal interpreting setting believing that he can render an interpretation without the adequate training, and thinking that no one will know if he makes an interpretation error, but this may not be the case. I have known of some interpreters being sent away in the middle of a job for poor performance.

On one occasion, I provided interpreta-

tion for a couple whose child was hospitalized. At the end of the session, the father posed several questions to the doctor in perfectly good English. I inquired afterwards why they needed my services if the father was proficient in English. The father answered that my services were for the benefit of the mother, who did not understand English; that even though the father's English was good, it did not mean that he could accurately interpret for his wife. They were more comfortable employing an interpreter. Another time, while interpreting in a deposition, the client, client's attorney, and I all spoke the same native language. If an interpreting error was made, the client's attorney would definitely have noticed.

Some generalists will accept assignments that they are not qualified to do for financial reasons. I view being a translator or interpreter as a noble profession that is rewarding in so many ways. We are the conduits that enable LEP clients to have fair access to a number of services that might not have been possible because of language barriers. Without them, we wouldn't be working. Therefore, we owe it to them to be properly trained and qualified so that we can deliver the exceptional service that they deserve. ✓

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THE LEGAL T&I WORKSHOP

Our March workshop offered a crowd of enthusiastic NCTA members a hands-on approach to legal translating and interpreting. BY ANGELA ZAWADSKI

As a practicing interpreter and workshop provider, I was looking forward to attending the Legal Translation and Interpretation workshops to be taught by Corinne Cline, an instructor with the Sonoma State University Certificate Program. Before the event, all participants received via email the workshop handouts, which included the National Association of Judicial Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibilities, information about consecutive and simultaneous interpreting practices, and useful legal terms and phrases that interpreters and translators often encounter in English <> Spanish legal texts. Attendees were asked to bring a cassette tape recorder, as sample practice tapes were to be provided.

The morning session, which covered legal interpreting, began with a video created for judges and attorneys about working with interpreters in court. The video showed examples of interpreted hearings with both qualified and unqualified interpreters at work. Some important issues covered included the need to use the first person at all times (except in certain very specific circumstances), problems encountered when there are overlapping conversations, the need for a judge's intervention to avoid confusion, examples of an interpreter correcting his or her mistakes on the record, and the difference between certified and qualified interpreters.

Clarifying the role

In an important scene and one of the best examples I have ever seen of what is expected of a court-certified interpreter, a judge establishes an interpreter's credentials, asking questions regarding the interpreter's education, fluency in source and target languages, specialized training, and other pertinent issues. The video also addresses the importance of the interpreter as "clarifier" when he or she is faced with unfamiliar slang and the serious problems arising from changes of meaning when the interpreter edits, omits, or adds material

on the record.

Ms. Cline underscored the importance of the code of ethics with a capital E and reminded us that note-taking is part and parcel of our professional duty. I believe in the need to take notes as well, even when we feel confident that our memory will not fail us. The presenter also provided information about topics such as full-time employment, fees paid by the courts, and training opportunities. Afterward, we broke up into small groups and practiced "shadowing" (same-language simultaneous exercises) as well as target-language interpretation. Before the lunch break, the participants had a chance to ask more questions regarding the certification exam, compensation, and the use of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. Ms. Cline also provided us with an extensive list of print and online resources.

Translation basics

Because the presenter for the afternoon session was unable to attend, Ms. Cline also covered the topic of legal translation. Since this is not her area of expertise, she focused mainly on sight translation, both as an interpreting skill and as a preamble



Ms. Cline (center) gave the attendees practical exercises to perform in groups.

for good translation. Ms. Cline discussed ways to prepare to become a competent translator and interpreter, using both material from her own experiences and resources from the Monterey Institute for International Studies. Most of the workshop attendees were experienced translators, but it was nonetheless refreshing to review term-research techniques.

The workshop ended with a lively Q&A session. Participants discussed strategies for sight translating repetitive English terms and approaching translation when there are no good target-language equivalents. Overall, novice interpreters felt that the workshop had been very helpful, while experienced interpreters were grateful to have had an opportunity to review the legal process and to go over specialized terminology. There is a continuing need for certified interpreters in federal and state courts, and the positive feedback confirmed that this type of workshop is extremely useful for aspiring interpreters. ✓

NEXT UP

Translating Poetry: A Primer

SATURDAY MAY 17, 1-4 PM

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE LIBRARY,
57 POST STREET, SAN FRANCISCO

University of Florida-Gainesville professor of poetry Sidney Wade will present a hands-on workshop in the art of literary translation, designed both for those who are new to the field and interested, as well as those more experienced with the undertaking. There will be an introduction to the most basic elements of the craft, as well as some of the more exasperating issues. Procedures, questions, and conflicts will all be discussed. This workshop will entertain the following sorts of questions:

Who is best qualified to translate poetry? How does one start? Why choose one language over another? What is a *literal trot*? How does a literal trot get translated into a fine poem in English?

Sidney Wade is the guest poetry editor of *TWO LINES: World Writing in Translation* for 2008. She is currently a professor at the University of Florida in Gainesville, where she teaches poetry and translation workshops. She translates Turkish poetry and wrote *Istanbuldan/From Istanbul*. She is a recent president of the Associated Writers and Writing Programs and the author of four other collections of poetry: *Stroke*, *Celestial Bodies*, *Empty Sleeves*, and *Green*.

Upcoming: ATA Certification Exam workshop, August 23rd. ✓

LIT & LUNCH

In a sparkling presentation, the distinguished literary translator Edith Grossman shared her insights at CAT's "Lit & Lunch" series in San Francisco. BY ALISON ANDERSON

In her introduction, Olivia Sears, president of the Center for the Art of Translation (CAT), told us that Ms. Grossman had not set out to become a literary translator; her dreams were more along the lines of "a sculptor, or (the blues singer) Bessie Smith." But in recent years she has been aptly referred to as the "Glenn Gould of translation"—a reference to the famed Canadian virtuoso pianist. Earlier this year she was invited to give a series of lectures at Yale on the art, entitled, "Why Translation Matters." A longtime resident of New York, Ms. Grossman told us she had been a student at Berkeley and was glad to be back in the Bay Area, although she missed her 24-hour jazz station.

The first part of the literary lunch was devoted to readings from books Edith Grossman has recently translated. The first, from *Manuscript of Ashes*, was by Spanish author Alberto Muñoz Molina, to be published by Harcourt this summer. Very evocative and atmospheric, set in part during the Spanish Civil War, it was a perfect introduction to Ms. Grossman's skill as a translator. She then read a more humorous excerpt from Mario Vargas Llosa's *The Bad Girl*, published recently by Farrar Straus and Giroux, and this in turn showed her wonderful versatility and ability to take on different styles.

Formalities

For translators, perhaps the most enthralling part of the presentation was the Q&A. Ms. Grossman displayed a wry, self-deprecating humor as she elaborated on a number of issues familiar to literary translators. Asked first about her relationship with publishers—and the certain clout which she can command as the translator of Cervantes, Gabriel García Márquez, and Carlos Fuentes, to name but a few—she pointed to the Vargas Llosa book and said that the publishers had agreed to display her name in large type and provide a short bio on the back flap. But when the book was published, her name was "too small, and there was no bio. The publishers apol-

ogized deeply," she sighed, mock-wistfully. Does she have a lawyer for the negotiation of contracts? At the beginning of her translating career she had "made the mistake of swimming in shark-infested waters" and quickly learned her lesson: she now has an attorney to guide her through the "make-believe language" of publishers' contracts.

Could she recommend a particular title to help novice translators in their career? "Guide for the Perplexed?" she quipped, and went on to elaborate that she is not an adherent of translation theory, nor does she feel that any one book can provide the guidelines better offered by the "school of servitude." By servitude she means constant revision and editing, reading out loud, checking for accuracy—and then more revision. And, if at all possible, a cooling-off period for the manuscript to settle, before more revision.

Authors and poets

How does she pick her titles? She does not pick, but is contacted by publishers directly. In earlier years she tried recommending authors she had discovered and loved, but this, she lamented, seems to be the "kiss of death." Now she never mentions an author to her publishers if she hopes to see him or her in English some day.

On the subject of collaboration with authors, Ms. Grossman said she finds them to be extraordinarily generous. She does not contact them until the final revision, to iron out the "ten or fifteen knotty places" remaining in the manuscript. Had it not been problematic then, translating Cervantes, since she could not question him? She laughed and said she once told García Márquez that it is easier translating Cervantes than a living author, because there is such a wealth of academic and scholarly work to refer to. But regardless of the "bodily state of the author," she feels a huge responsibility to the writer to get it right; it is less an issue of translating actual words than of translating the author's intention.

She does not believe you can be taught to



Literary translator Edith Grossman.

be a translator, any more than you can learn to be a poet. The craft can be taught, she said, echoing Gregory Rabassa's words, but to become a translator or a poet you either "have the impulse or you don't." Asked if she misses the sound of the language when working into English, she insisted on the necessity of putting the Spanish to one side after the second draft, to work solely on the English text; only when doing a final accuracy check does she return to the Spanish. She believes in maintaining the foreignness of proper names and place names, but does not subscribe to the position that a translation should "feel" foreign. "It should read like a domestic text" and provide the English-language reader with the same impact experienced by the Spanish language reader. If the text is in any way strange or eccentric, she tries to convey that oddness, too—but it must always read as smoothly as if it had been conceived in English.

Meanings

"The author and the translator are saying the same thing in two different languages," Ms. Grossman explained. While she hears the Spanish in her mind, it comes out in English. "It's a mistake to think you can match words." She illustrated her point by describing a cartoon she once saw in *The New Yorker*: a translator sitting across from the irate author says, "Do you not be happy of me as the translator of books of you?"

In Edith Grossman's case, there is no counting how many happy authors—and readers—she has shared her talents with. ✓

MEETINGS



MC (Stafford Hemmer) livened up this year's Annual Meeting marking the changing of half of the board of directors and featuring a fascinating report on the highest of technologies in interpretation.

Hany Farag (upper right) insights on the US Army

INTERPRETING MACHINES (BESIDES US)

The first NCTA meeting of 2008 took place on February 9 and featured—in addition to our election results and news of ongoing projects—long-time NCTA member Hany Farag's presentation on new developments in machine translation. BY SARAH LLEWELLYN

NCTA Secretary Stafford Hemmer, standing in for the absent Vice President Yves Avérous, began the meeting with a series of announcements, including details of upcoming NCTA workshops, a call for volunteers to present future NCTA workshops and also to contribute to *Translorial*, and a reminder about the monthly happy hours that take place the last Monday of every month in San Francisco and Oakland.

Alison Dent announced the results of the recent (uncontested) election, and welcomed each of the new board members, who will begin two-year terms effective immediately. Dagmar Dolatschko will take over from Song White as treasurer; Paula Dieli will take over Naomi Baer's position as membership director; Norma Kaminsky will be responsible for continuing education in place of the outgoing Mateo Rutherford; and Diane Montgomery will take on a new role of director of marketing. Stafford Hemmer will continue in his capacity as secretary. Stafford thanked each of the departing members of the board for their valuable and often inspirational con-

tributions during their tenure.

The Interpreter Machine

The meeting's featured presentation was given by long-time NCTA member and former board member Hany Farag. Hany works in the fields of language and technology and is a translator and state-certified Arabic interpreter, as well as a technologist specialized in automation and control systems.

Hany's presentation focused on recent efforts in the development of an automated, real-time speech-to-speech translation device—an "interpreter machine"—under the auspices of DARPA, the U.S. government's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. While machine translation in various guises has been around for some 50 years, the development of such a system was hastened by an urgent need for Arabic-language interpreters in Iraq after the 2003 U.S. invasion of that country.

Iraq: Facts and Challenges

One of the challenges facing the ground forces in Iraq was how to rebuild a nation

of 20 million people, while having virtually no knowledge of the native language, Arabic. The number of interpreters needed—more than 5,000, based on U.S. troop deployments—was an unrealistic target, particularly given that in the whole of California there were, at most, 500 Arabic-language interpreters. And using local interpreters posed a variety of problems, not least of which was the reliability of their information for intelligence purposes. In response, DARPA instigated a project entitled Global Autonomous Language Exploitation (GALE) to develop an interpreter machine that could communicate spontaneously in real time in tactical—that is, war or battle—situations.

Competing to Succeed

Three teams of researchers were hired to develop systems: IBM, The Stanford Research Institute (SRI) and Bolt Beranek & Newman (BBN). Each year, their progress would be evaluated, and the worst-performing team could be eliminated—or, the program could be shut down entirely. At any time, up to 200 people have been

HOURS OF PLEASURE

BY RAFFAELLA BUSCHIAZZO

On February 25 at 5:30 PM, a group of NCTA members, all aficionados of our monthly Happy Hours, met in Oakland at the Pacific Coast Brewing Co. The pub is in an elegant 1876 building where several museum pieces are on display. It's conveniently located downtown, a block from the 12th Street Bart Station in an area that has been renewed and now hosts cafes, restaurants, and interesting shops, from the well-known Ratto's European Deli to an exotic African products boutique.

After a hard day of work we enjoyed a drink while relaxing and chatting with colleagues who share the same interests. You can't talk with just anyone you meet about the difference between cognates and "false friends," their important role in learning languages, and how excruciating it is to see them badly translated. But at our Happy Hours you have an attentive audience ready to start an intelligent discussion on these sorts of topics. Bob Killingsworth, Sylvia Korwek, and Sharlee Merner Bradley were the key participants in this interesting debate.

I particularly enjoyed exchanging book titles such as *Suite Française* by Irène Némirovsky and trying to remember the name of that Nobel-laureate Portuguese writer ... Salgado? Salvado? We all had his name on the tips of our tongues and Sharlee satisfied our curiosity on the spot by consulting Wikipedia directly on her iPhone. We all exulted when she pronounced the name of the well-known author of several masterpieces: José Saramago!

If you wish to organize a Happy Hour where you live, just drop me a message at events@ncta.org. ✓

working around the clock on this initiative: the largest language project in existence.

Due to the fact that the only existing, related technology was machine translation for text, the interpreter machine had to be developed using a series of building blocks. The first was ASR (Automatic Speech Recognition). Machine translation was the second component, involving the creation of a corpora, or body, of words in context to improve the translation. The third building block involved text-to-speech synthesis (TTS), which was already of exceptionally good quality.

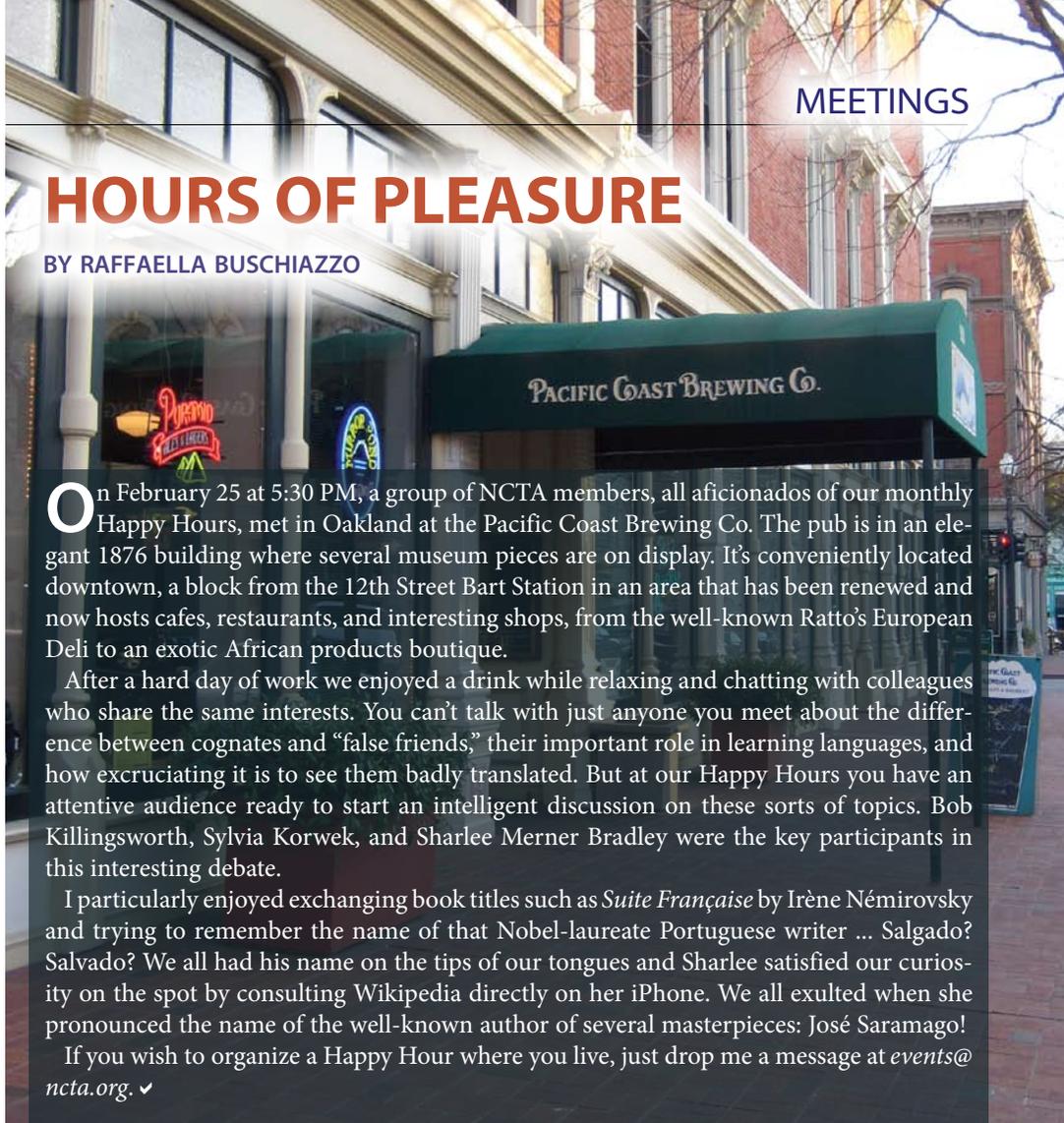
By late 2006, two machines were ready for deployment in Iraq: IBM's MASTOR and SRI's IRAQCOMM, each using a different technology, and each having an accuracy level for text estimated to be around 75%. R&D is still in progress, with the goal of reaching 95% accuracy—comparable to a human interpreter—by 2010.

Hany concluded his presentation by suggesting that no one can stop the progress of technology, and that we need to embrace innovation by understanding it and contributing to it if we can. Researchers, after all, are not practicing interpreters!

After a brief Q&A session, NCTA presented Hany with a box of Valentine's Day Joseph Schmidt chocolates, to thank him for his presentation. ✓



corner), a former board member himself, offered detailed updates on his progress in machine translation.



From Oakland to San Francisco, familiar and new faces mingle once a month.

PARADOXICALLY INVISIBLE: THE LITERARY TRANSLATOR'S PROVIDENCE

It is one of the oldest dilemmas in literary translation: if it is the translator's mission to remain invisible, how does one recognize—and value—the translator's work?

BY ANNE MILANO APPEL

"Good humor is a paradox," writes humor aficionado Mel Helitzer. "The unexpected juxtaposition of the reasonable next to the unreasonable." The literary translator must indeed be equipped with good humor to be able to hover in that paradoxical and perpetual state between visibility and invisibility. If I needed yet another reminder of this chronic condition (which I don't!), it came in the form of a recent article by Umberto Eco in the Italian weekly *L'espresso*. In it the well-known semiotician, philosopher, medievalist, and writer (perhaps best known for his ambitious novel *The Name of the Rose*) makes a statement whose obviousness on the surface may seem equivalent to *aria fritta* (fried air), as the Italians say when they mean "so what else is new?" Something that is *fritta e rifritta* (fried and refried) is an old story, old news. As Eco puts it (I'm translating, of course):

"The translator's job is therefore difficult and paradoxical, since he should do all he can to make himself invisible ... and yet

he would (justly) like this invisibility to be rewarded with a certain visibility. Yet the translator's success lies precisely in achieving invisibility ..."

Now I have two reactions to this statement. The first is the duh-uh factor: so the translator's job is difficult and paradoxical. Tell me about it. The second and more serious issue has to do with the use of the word "rewarded" (*premiati*). As I see it, the "certain visibility" sought by the translator should not be considered a "reward," but something he rightfully deserves for his success at being "invisible." Eco himself uses the word "justly" in describing the translator's desire for visibility. Indeed, it seems to me that a distinction should be maintained between the invisibility of the translator's hand in the work he produces—something that is decidedly desirable—and the fair, just and merited attribution of the work that is rightly due him. There is a vast difference between striving for invisibility in the act of translation (not letting your hand show through) and being treated as invisible when it comes to having your name identified with the work you've produced. Unfortunately, the "invisibility" that is most associated with the translator is all too often not his skill in hiding his hand but rather the lack of attribution. For example, some publications, here and abroad, regularly neglect to include the translator's name when referring to a book, and many publishing houses refuse to put the translator's name on the cover. As a

colleague recently put it: this type of recognition should not be considered a "reward" but, given the circumstances, it often ends up being regarded as such. And therein lies the intriguing paradox: if the translator is invisible ("good," in Eco's world), who then is able to notice him, and presumably accord him some form of visibility?

Erasing the tracks

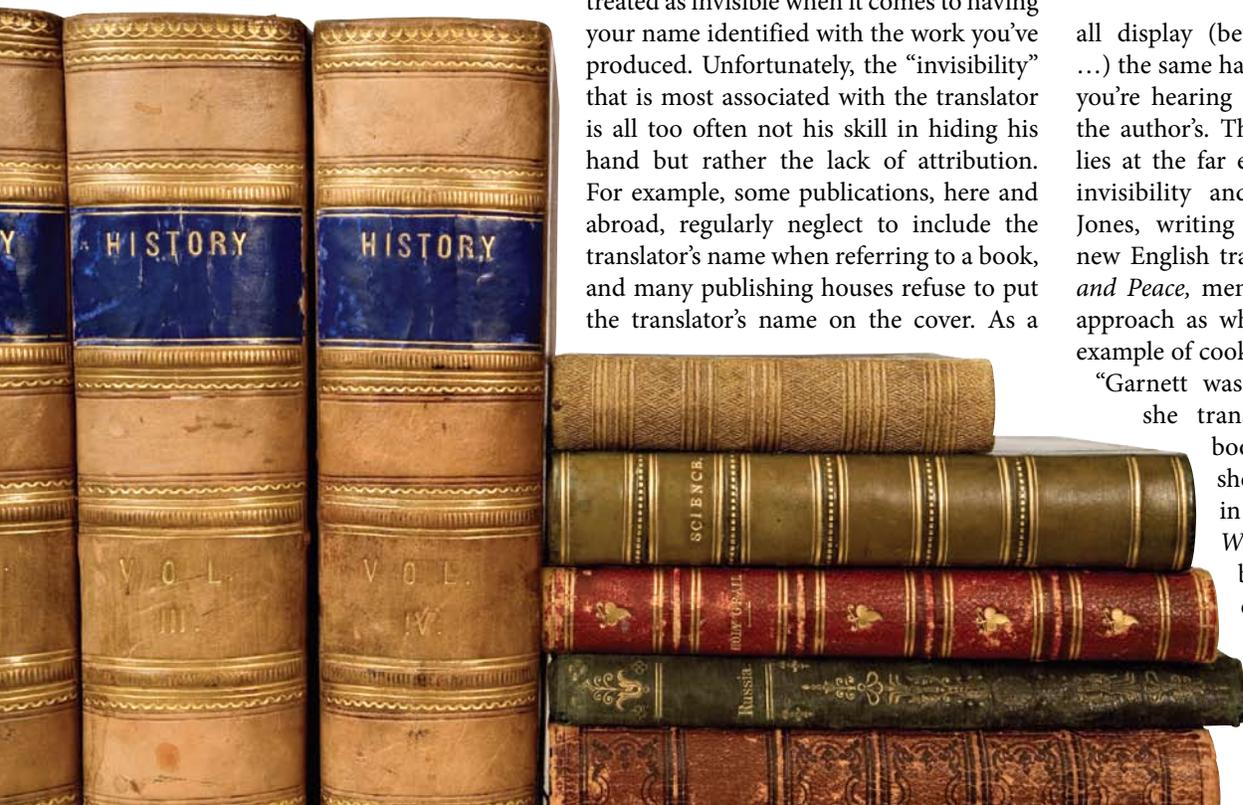
Invisibility in the text is certainly something to strive for. One way to see if a translator has "erased" his own tracks is to check his body of work. If the translations are of works by different authors yet they

It has been said that the act of translation allows the translator to have a love affair with the author's words.

all display (betray? *traduttore, traditore* ...) the same hand, chances are the "voice" you're hearing is the translator's and not the author's. This cookie-cutter approach lies at the far end of the spectrum from invisibility and transparency. Malcolm Jones, writing in *Newsweek* about two new English translations of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, mentions Constance Garnett's approach as what may be considered an example of cookie cutting:

"Garnett was a woman in a hurry—she translated some 70 Russian books into English—but what she gained in speed, she lost in subtlety. Her version of *War and Peace* isn't bad, but it's not exactly Tolstoy either. It has a one-size-fits-all quality."

Invisibility in render-



ing the author's text is prized and justly so. Wyatt Mason, for example, reviewing in the *New York Times* Margaret Jull Costa's translation of Javier Marias' *Your Face Tomorrow: Dance and Dream*, notes that Marias' style is "faithfully rendered by Margaret Jull Costa, his principal English translator, who achieves a rare feat: presence and near invisibility." More recently, Kathryn Harrison's review in the *New York Times Book Review* of a new work by Mario Vargas Llosa praised translator Edith Grossman as having produced "the fluid artistry readers have come to expect from her renditions of Latin American fiction." The reviewer goes on to speak of "a remaking rather than a recycling," and though she is referring to Vargas Llosa's recreation of Emma Bovary's story, the words could readily be applied to the translator's craft as well.

"The genius of 'Madame Bovary,' as Vargas Llosa describes it in 'The Perpetual Orgy,' is the 'descriptive frenzy ... the narra-

Indeed, there is a sensual component to the process, since words appeal to the senses and have a voluptuous quality.

tor uses to destroy reality and recreate it as a different reality.' In other words, Flaubert was a master of realism not because he reproduced the world around him, but because he used language to create an alternate existence, a distillate whose emotional gravity transcends that of life itself."

The writer creates an alternate existence, much like that created by the literary translator. Just as A is to B (the real world is to the author), so C is to D (the author's text is to the translator). By engaging in a form of rewriting or re-creation of the original text (while remaining invisible) the translator gives the writer a voice in another language. It has been said that the act of translation allows the translator to have a love affair with the author's words. Indeed, there is a sensual component to the process, since words appeal to



the senses and have a voluptuous quality. On one level it is all about seduction and attraction. It is paradoxical then that the translator should vanish after weeks and months of living in close, intimate contact with the author, attempting to render the subtle meanderings of his mind ... after the "I" has become "we" and distinctions have blurred.

Part accomplice

The invisibility of the translator in the text stands in contrast to the invisibility that is all too often represented by the denial of due recognition for the work he has produced—a recognition that is not only fair but merited. In his article Eco also writes: "For years one of the battles translators have waged has been that of having their name on the title page (not as co-author but at least as an essential intermediary)..." This "not as co-author" is interesting and telling. Certainly many authors (and many translators) would agree with Eco. Others, on the other hand, are more acknowledging. For Claudio Magris, for example, the translator is a co-author. In Ilide Carmignani's interview of Magris which I translated for *Absinthe: New European Writing* (March 2007), the writer states: "unquestionably, both when one translates and when one is translated, there is a strong sense that the translator is truly a co-author, part accomplice, part rival, part lover ..."

Accomplice, rival, lover ... heady stuff. Definitely at the other extreme from the

prosaic intermediary, middleman or go-between. There is perhaps a second paradox to be noted here. Without the translator, the author would be invisible! José Saramago, the Portuguese novelist and winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize for literature, once stated that writers create national literatures with their language, but world literature is written by translators. French filmmaker Robert Bresson, whose films were characterized by a profound intensity, wrote that his aim was to "Make visible what ... might perhaps never have been seen." The translator too "makes visible" the author.

Another way to think about how the translator brings visibility to the author while remaining in the shadows is to imagine the act of translation as a mask. The mask as an age-old form of disguise and masquerade is worn over the face to conceal an individual's identity and, by its own features, create a new persona. In this metaphor, when the wearer (translator) is attired in the mask (engaged in the act of translation), there is a loss of his previous identity and the birthing of a new one (the author's new voice). And so we have the masquerade of translation.

If there is indeed a second paradox to be found in the literary translator's craft, the words of physicist Edward Teller come to mind: "Two paradoxes are better than one; they may even suggest a solution." Solutions, anyone? ✓

Read the full annotated article online at translorial.com

THE TRANSLORIAL TOOL KIT

The Tool Kit is an online newsletter that comes to its subscribers' mailboxes twice a month. In *Translorial*, we offer a quarterly digest of Jost's most helpful tips from the past season. BY JOST ZETZSCHE © 2008 INTERNATIONAL WRITERS' GROUP, COMPILED BY YVES AVÉROUS

Savor This!

Backups—we know we've got to do 'em, but we just don't quite know how. Long gone are the days of the floppy disk, and I would venture to say that with the newly released MacBook Air without a CD-ROM drive, another era may also soon be over - we've long sensed that CDs and even DVDs are sort of "yesteryear."

So what's hip, especially when it comes to backing up your data? There's no doubt that it's got to be online backups. However, the hippest thing does not always have to be the best, so I spent some time last week looking at online backup services.

Two of the most popular products at the moment are Carbonite and Mozy. They offer a similar service: with Mozy you have the option to get a free account if you only need to store 4 GB (you'll need more), but otherwise they are each approximately \$5 a month for unlimited storage. They both require to download and install a small program.

Once you have the small program installed, the backup process starts right away. You'll see a little notification that the first backup may take several days. In my case it took about five days. I disabled it while it was working during the day because it requires quite a bit of processing power and continued the backup at night. It all works seamlessly, and once the initial backup is complete each file that is modified is flagged to be backed up either right away or at a time of your choosing. The restore function also is super-easy: a new virtual drive is created that gives you immediate access to all of your files.

But here's why I decided to return to my exterior hard drive backup: If you work with large translation memories and/or use Outlook, which stores everything in a large database-like file, the nightly backup may just not be enough to get everything that has been changed written back to the Carbonite server. Then you will have to have the backup run constantly, which tends to steal from your processing power.

This may not be true for you. You may not deal with very large files. In that case, Carbonite, Mozy, or some of their competitors may be the right solution for you.

There is one more thing, though. With the product that I use to run backups on my external hard drive, Acronis True Image, I can do incremental backups that not only keep the data from yesterday, but also from the day before and before and . . . (you get the picture). Quite often I realize that I need to dig much deeper than just a day or even a week to get something that may have been changed many times since, and that's no problem. Of course, there are



limitations, too (at some point the largest external hard drive is full), but these are things I can deal with.

Of course, if my office burns to the ground and wipes away both my computer and the external hard drive, I may regret what I just wrote -- so I do use the good old CD drive to burn CDs with the most important files that I store outside the house.

(F)utilities

Working on revising my Tool Box book recently, it really got me thinking: of all the tips and tricks and programs that I mention (or have mentioned) in the book, which do I really use myself on a regular basis?

On my computer, the first group of die-

hard utilities are those that I've been using on a daily basis for the last few years: TrayIt to make room on my taskbar, PushPin to allow windows to stay on top of other active windows, Skype to communicate via voice and IM, IntelliWebSearch to speed and consolidate my dictionary searches (more on that below), and Lookout to index my Outlook mail (sadly this isn't available as a separate application anymore, but it's now integrated into Outlook 2007).

Then there are those utilities that I still have on my computer but don't use the way their developers would like me to. They would like me to start these every time I start my computer, but I prefer to have them come up only when there's a definite need for their specific function. These include ClipMate for managing my clipboard, SnagIt to manage my screenshots, and AllChars to enter some uncommon special characters or text strings. I've found that if I run these applications all the time, they tend to hog my system resources or have conflicts with other programs.

And then there are the plethora of utilities that are not designed to run all the time but are used for specific and relatively rarely occurring purposes. These include programs to convert measurements, data, and files; manipulate keyboards; search/replace text; manage, split, merge, and rename files; crack passwords; count words; track time; backup data; or manage downloads. Since these are used only in specialized instances, they usually don't run into conflicts with other programs. And if they are well written, their footprint is so small that they don't use any common resources. These are still installed on my computer as well.

More

If you would like to subscribe to *The Tool Kit*, visit www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit/ and mention *Translorial* during the subscription process; Jost will put your name in a drawing for one free *Tool Box* book per edition. ✓

THE TRANSMUG REPORT

APOLOGIES TO PC USERS

With the advent of Spring, Mac OS X celebrated its seventh anniversary—the Age of Reason, as we call it in France. How appropriate for version 10.5, Leopard. I still remember my first “back to the Mac” purchase in 2002, the articulated iMac, with the second iteration of the OS, 10.1. The machine couldn’t smooth fonts properly and went into kernel panic as soon as I tried to impose Virtual PC on it. So I returned it.

Times have changed! I finally found a good replacement for my five-year old PowerBook G4 12” in the shape of a gorgeous MacBook Air, and getting Windows to work on that new slim machine was a breeze—not to mention that everything else working smoothly under Leopard.

And this is where I need to apologize to my PC-toting colleagues: six years ago, they could smile at my renewed enthusiasm for the Mac, as there were still enough reasons for a translator to find that a Mac was coming up a little short of their expectations. Not anymore, and the comparison is not even fun. Following one



misstep after another, Microsoft has left PC users very frustrated, and the delight Mac users are expressing with their machines is only adding salt to their wounds.

So I try to restrain myself, but it is difficult. My new MacBook Air is a dream! Even with the slowest chip in the Mac lineup, it is still one of the fastest machines I have ever used, with one of the best screens I have ever enjoyed. Add to the mix Quick Look, Spaces, the new Safari, the enhanced Mail, iCal, oodles of beautiful and convenient third party applications, and you will find a happy camper. I’m sorry if I can’t hide my enthusiasm.

With all that there is to talk about in the Mac universe these days, do not miss our next TransMUG meeting, on Saturday, May 10 at 11 AM, just before the General Meeting, at The Center (see back cover). We would love to hear about your best experiences with the current tools at our disposal and answer your questions. Don’t miss it! YA

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THAT WAS THEN

Two of our earliest members look back to the very beginnings of NCTA—and before.

BY MARIA LUISA BODEN AND TONY RODER—NCTA CLASS OF 1978

Roots ...

Back in the dark ages of 1978, many talented translators in Northern California toiled in isolation. There was no forum, no place to be heard, nowhere to share knowledge and resources, opportunities, encouragement, and friendship. ATA accreditation was out of reach unless you could afford traveling to the annual conference.

When I arrived in San Francisco in 1975 with my husband and a two-year old daughter who had moved nine times in her short life, I wanted to settle down and resume my freelance translation career. It looked like an uphill battle. What do you do when you don't know anyone?

No local association meant no local seminars, no roster of colleagues, no built-in exposure to potential clients, and no standards and ethics committee ... all the things we now take for granted. Networking was a slow process. There was little reaching out, you might be viewed as a competitor, and even the good translation companies were not in business to help you meet other potential clients. It was you and your typewriter!

I count myself very lucky to have stumbled almost immediately upon The Lanfranco Institute, which would later become one of NCTA's first corporate members. This led to meeting Tom Bauman, then head of the translation department at Wells Fargo Bank, and ultimately to a good in-house job. At the ATA conference held at Stanford in 1976, Tom was the de facto representative of the Bay Area translator community, most of whose members did not know each other. The idea of starting a local association was gestated during those brief days of learning and networking together.

A colorful crowd of 60 to 70 people attended that first meeting at the Chinatown Holiday Inn on March 4, 1978 in an upbeat mood. Our motives were as varied as our circumstances. Not all the talk was positive behind the scenes. There were the altruists, the self-interested, the simply curious, and the defeatists who predicted failure. This last group was soon out of commis-



sion as of course the NCTA thrived thanks to generous and competent leadership. Among others, Hélène Riddle, Kelly Gray, Deolinda Adao, Greg Eichler, and Irene Vacchina were decisively instrumental as early Board members and language group coordinators. Steve Goldstein took on the crucial role of editor of *Translorial*, which glued the membership together from the start. Read about them in the first few issues now starting to be available at the website. [MLB](#)

... and branches

The Saturday March 4 entry in my 1978 appointment book reads: "2 PM-6 PM Thomas Bauman's North. Calif. Xlator Assoc., Washington Room, Holiday Inn, Chinatown." Thus it came to pass that I was present at the creation ...

I recall a very dark green room and a modest attendance. I don't recall what was said and vaguely recollect some of those who were present. I left thinking that it was a good idea, but not for me, only a part-time translator on occasional evenings. Which is why I did not get to sign the association's charter. But having signed in at the meeting, I eventually received notice of upcoming meetings, one at the Hall of Flowers in Golden Gate Park, and subsequent ones on weekend afternoons in a room at the Main Library.

George Kirby, who was president after the initial period, recruited me to the board of directors. When the library room became unavailable, Edith Fried, a founding member, offered the haven of her dining room for the board meetings. My appointment books provide only vague details for the 1980s, but I well remember the realization that we were laying the building blocks of a vigorous organization. We continued *Translorial*, we published a directory from a rudimentary database, we hired an administrator, we defined our responsibilities, and we organized events.

These events included the formal annual General Meetings, held at the University of California Extension, and my favorites, the Post-Christmas Christmas parties with their buffets of national dishes brought by the guests. These were traditionally held at Ines Sweeney's house in Oakland, and later at our house in Palo Alto, with truly impressive turnouts. There was also a memorable (10th or 15th?) anniversary banquet in Chinatown, attended by the ATA president; and a party with entertainment held at the Basque Cultural Center in South San Francisco.

I served on the board for about 10 years that included two terms as president, during which time we became a chapter of ATA, evolved to adopt current technologies, and saw our membership grow from about 50 to about 500.

It is a tribute to the founders that their vision bore such fine fruits. [TR](#) ✓



JUST ANOTHER CERTIFICATE?

For those who remember UC Berkeley's program, last September Princeton launched its own translation education curriculum. We check it out. BY STAFFORD HEMMER

Princeton calls it “the largest, most extensive effort in the country to educate students about the important role that translation plays across academic fields and in cultural understanding.” But in spite of the exalted optimism of yet another translation certificate program to arise in American academia, a truly objective, government-run certifying body, administering U.S., or better yet, international, standards, is still woefully absent in this country.

Similarities and differences

To those of us NCTA members who graduated from the now defunct Certificate in Translation and Interpretation Studies Program offered by the University of California at Berkeley (through its Extension campus), whether as students,

instructors, administrators, or conspirators, the philosophy, approach, structure—and optimism—behind the new Princeton program is hauntingly familiar. Like Berkeley, Princeton offers a two-year program, but unlike Berkeley, the Princeton program is not designed for adults seeking continuing education credentials on top of their busy home and work lives, but instead for current undergraduates (mostly juniors and seniors) who are complementing their degrees in the humanities, sciences, or engineering.

Other important differences between the programs also augur well for Princeton's future. Princeton runs an executive committee of department members or chairs, whereas Berkeley's program was ultimately controlled by the Board of Regents for the University of California—making it

virtually impossible for administrators to respond to important program changes or student demands, simply because they could get not get on the Regents' quarterly meeting agenda.

An environment of success?

The Princeton program also offers the structured environment of an undergraduate setting, with students eager to succeed, whereas the Berkeley program had to be fit in with the responsibilities of work, family, and the rest of everyday post-graduate, real-world living. It was frustrating to see so many Berkeley students who held immense potential to be so discouraged—whether because they had been out of college for too long, or they had to commute three hours each way for class twice a week, or they were simply enraged at the administration's inability to advocate for the changes the program needed. The program was terminated in 2002, after graduating a mere three cohorts. May Princeton enjoy a greater success. ✓

Read the full version article online at translorial.com



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Learn more about our speaker, K.D. Sullivan, at the NCTA web page for the event: <http://tinyurl.com/5cx6st>



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See <http://ncta.org/calendar.cfm> for up to date information.

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