



CAPITAL TRANSLATOR

NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2005 ISSUE

SEATTLE ROUND-UP BY LORD STARLINK

I loved the Westin Hotel but, oh those elevators! On Friday night I was trapped in the North Tower, creeping up floor by floor, when I really needed to get to the South Tower penthouse for a committee meeting (or was I marooned in the South Tower, en route for the North?). As for the downtown restaurants, they either offered excellent food and crummy service or mediocre food and standout service, with little in between.

But enough of complaining. There was very little poverty-cult whining in the air: Starlink heard only one example.

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FROM THE EDITOR HARVETTA ASAMOAH



Over the past five months, there have been so many events for translators and interpreters that it makes my head spin. From NCATA's annual Summer Picnic at the

National Zoo to the NCATA Fall Seminar on International Trade, to the ATA Annual Conference at the Westin Hotel in Seattle, to Philadelphia for a Delaware Valley Translators Association seminar and then to the NCATA

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**SEMINARS AND PRESENTATIONS
AT THE SEATTLE CONFERENCE**

**TECHNICAL MANUAL TRANSLATIONS:
U.S. AND GERMAN PRODUCT LIABILITY LAWS
BY PAUL MERRIAM**

The main point of this pre-conference seminar by Dr. Matthew Kundinger at the ATA conference in Seattle was that simply translating the content of technical manuals between German and English is dangerous. Due to differences between German users and users in the United States and differences between the laws of the US and European Union (EU) standards, mere translation without adaptation to the culture exposes companies to legal liability.

The seminar was relevant for German and English technical translators as well as for translators who work in other European language combinations. Although the seminar focused on differences between German and U.S. product liability issues, German law and the German court system are paralleled in many European countries and there are product liability standards that apply throughout the European Union.

In German product manuals, it is common to leave out certain information that is considered obvious for users who are trained specialists. For example, German product manuals routinely do not include some types of basic instructions. For example, a German product manual may not instruct the product user to “turn off the machine prior to doing repairs” or a German product manual may not provide information about how to tighten screws. This is because German end users usually are *Facharbeiter* (trained specialists). As trained specialists, these users typically complete a formal apprenticeship until they eventually advance to the level of *Facharbeiter* (trained specialists) prior to using

specialized machinery. Therefore, it is assumed that they are familiar with the basics of the field before they read and use product manuals. This type of training system is not restricted to Germany.

In the United States, however, many workers start as “skilled laborers” without going through any formal apprenticeship or training program, doing a great deal of hands-on learning or on-the-job training. When such laborers begin to work, they may not have been instructed to “turn off the machine prior to doing repairs” or how to tighten screws. Thus, it is appropriate in American manuals to be as explicit as possible by including such basic instructions in order to protect the worker and to avoid litigation between the worker, the employer and the product manufacturer.

Kundinger compared U.S. and German laws. He explained that under product liability laws in the United States claims may be based on different bases of liability. Furthermore, in some U.S. jurisdictions, it is possible to sue for punitive damages, which increases the total damages payable to the plaintiff. This is not possible under German law. For example, in the U.S. a plaintiff may claim that the seller was negligent, or may claim that the seller is strictly liable, in which case there is no need to prove that the seller breached a duty of care to the plaintiff. The plaintiff needs only prove that the product was deficient and it caused the injury. This is one factor that encourages product liability lawsuits in the United States. For this reason, Dr. Kundinger stated that an attorney

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Holiday Party at the elegant Occidental Restaurant in Washington, DC on December 4, it has been a time filled with interesting educational programs and opportunities to meet colleagues. This issue's article on the Delaware Valley Translator's Association workshop on "How to Build Your Freelance Business" contains a wealth of information that should be useful to every translators and interpreter, including those who have recently started their careers. At the ATA Conference in Seattle, the program "Guerrilla Marketing for Translators" and "The General Theory of the Translation Company" program by Renato Beninatto and several other programs were filled, and some programs had to be repeated. Many translators and many companies are struggling.

There was a plethora of sources of information at the conference. Alexandra Russell-Bitting, our Acting President presented a pre-conference seminar on editing. Although only a few programs are covered in this issue, there were many more that deserve full coverage.

NCATA's Fall Seminar at American University was a great success. We had assistance from Dr. Jack Childs, Professor of Spanish Translation. The presentations by Martha Edwards, Joseph Mazza, Shuckran Kamal, and Ruth Harwood Cline from the State Department Office of Language Services are summarized in this issue.

It has been very encouraging to hear positive feedback from so many members on the first issue of this newsletter. Thanks to everyone who has offered to contribute ideas or articles for future issues. We will consider all of your ideas and contributions. For the next issue in March, we plan to publish a member profile. Please feel free to contact me, or our Associate Editor Douglas McNeal, if you would like to be considered for a member profile for the June issue.

We plan to publish an article in the March issue on the District of Columbia Language Access Act. This legislation was enacted in April 2004. The law requires the DC government to make information available to the public in five languages in addition to English: Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Amharic. Please feel free to contact us if you are interested in contributing to this article.

Another idea for future issues is to include coverage of past, current or future professional or cultural events in the Washington, DC area of interest to our members. I learned that the Writer's Center in Bethesda, Maryland will be holding a number of events that should be of great interest to our members. Sunil Freeman of the Writer's Center kindly provided the information about these programs for our newsletter.

The NCATA Board continues to work on planning events for 2006. We are planning an educational event in conjunction with the ATA's Patent Seminar in Spring 2006. Our social events will include the annual picnic at the National Zoo in August and Holiday Luncheon and Annual Meeting in December.

NCATA ELECTION

NCATA members will soon receive ballots for the election of the board. The candidates are for President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary.

Membership renewals will be mailed in early in 2006.

DID YOU KNOW?

NCATA has an advertisement in the Verizon Yellow Pages under "Translators and Interpreters, American Translators Association – National Capital Area Chapter" to tout our website directory. Information Officer Donna Sandin picks up the voicemail messages. The ad appears in all editions for the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area.

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American Translators Association**

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**U.S. and German Product Liability Laws
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should examine any product manuals written for use in the United States. Dr. Kundinger stated that German laws do not encourage product liability lawsuits to the same extent as laws in the United States.

Another factor that encourages product liability lawsuits in the United States is that there is less financial risk for a plaintiff. In the U.S., many attorneys work on a contingency basis, agreeing to take the risk that the plaintiff will win the lawsuit and that they will receive a percentage of the damages awarded to the plaintiff as compensation for their services. In Germany, attorneys do not work on a contingency basis.

In the United States, courts do not routinely charge court costs to the litigants and court costs are not based on the amount of the damages claimed. The plaintiff, thus, has little or no incentive to limit the amount of damages claimed. In Germany, however, if the plaintiff loses, the plaintiff pays the defendant's attorney fees and all court costs. The court costs are based on the amount in controversy, so the German system does not encourage plaintiffs to inflate the amount of damages sought.

Dr. Kundinger is originally from Germany, where he was trained as a mechanical engineer. He is now an attorney in California and a consultant, assisting in the adaptation of technical manuals for various types of specialized machinery sold in the United States. Dr. Kundinger's seminar was extremely informative for legal translators as well as translators of technical manuals.

Paul Merriam is a German-English and Polish-English translator in Fairfax, Virginia. He specializes primarily in translations related to criminal law issues, and can be reached at **pmerriam@starpower.net**.

AN OVERVIEW OF THREE PRESENTATIONS AT THE ATA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

BY HARVETTA ASAMOAH

ADVANCED SPANISH LEGAL TRANSLATION

Past ATA President Thomas West III, author of the *Spanish-English Dictionary of Law and Business*, presented a pre-conference seminar at the ATA Conference in Seattle that focused on a comparison of the laws of contract and torts in the United States and Latin America. He explained the differences in legal education by stating that in Latin American countries these laws would be taught in a two-year course on the civil code of that country, which includes many other subjects. In the United States there are two first-year law classes on contracts and torts, respectively.

West's presentation provided the context required to accurately adapt translations of terminology so that terms from one legal system that do not exist in the legal system of the host country can be understood. In his interactive presentation, he clearly explained that there are major differences between the definition of an enforceable contract in the United States and the definition of a contract in Latin America. For example, a "unilateral contract" in the United States is not a contract in Argentina. In Mexico, if I tell you that you can stay at my condo in Acapulco and you accept, I can't change my mind; this is an enforceable contract called a "comodato" (a loan for use without consideration). This was surprising to me, because in the U.S., it would be considered a gratuitous bailment. In addition, certain arrangements that would be considered gifts in the U.S. are enforceable contracts in Spain and Latin America, such as a "contrato gratuito" (contract enforceable without good and valuable consideration). The presentation included a number of such comparisons and contrasts.

West also mentioned several of the common errors that he sees in translations. "Lesion enorme" is not a huge lesion! It is "disproportionate consideration." The term could be used in connection with an unconscionable contract, where the price is completely exorbitant or deficient in relation to the contract. In the U.S., a court can void a contract for this reason, however, it is extremely unlikely. Thus, these terms are not exact equivalents. "Disproportionate consideration" is a much better translation than "unconscionable contract." West also mentioned that that a translator needs to give the client the translation that the client prefers.

Another common error that he has seen in translations was the misspelling of "tortious" as "tortuous." This really is not funny, it is very serious! Translating the text may be tortuous, but no translator wants to defend against a claim of tortious conduct based on negligent translation errors and omissions! He advised not to rely on spell checkers that are not customized. Many legal terms are not included in spell checking programs. He taught many Spanish terms related to civil wrongs (torts), including "el obrar antijurídico," or "tortious conduct." He also reported that the popular *Spanish-English Dictionary of Law and Business* has sold out, and that he will publish a new bilingual legal dictionary in the future.

A HOMICIDE IN MEXICO

The presentation by Aaron Ruby, a technical translator as well as a specialist in translations in

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Overview of Three Presentations at the ATA Annual Conference, continued from Page 5

the fields of criminal law and procedure covered the record of a criminal prosecution in Mexico which was used as evidence in Texas. It is very rare for a translator to have the opportunity to translate an entire case file. Ruby shared his knowledge about the way that the criminal justice system functions in Mexico. His handouts included a very detailed thirty-four page glossary of terminology as well as a summary of process and procedure and an overview of the participants. His outstanding delivery included very effective use of visuals using highlighted text. Ruby gave his suggested translations for some of the very challenging formulaic legal language used in Mexico as well as in other Latin American countries, which was extremely valuable. He also indicated that there are differences in the vocabulary used in various states in Mexico. There are 32 penal codes in Mexico.

A word of advice: Ruby asked what is the easiest way to make translation errors. Answer: reaching for bilingual dictionaries! Even so, he said that the *Diccionario de Terminología Jurídica Mexicana* by Javier Becerra is a “must have.” This is one of the very best dictionaries in my office.

Ruby informed the audience that he is planning a translators’ conference in Guadalajara, Mexico in 2006 that may include site visits to law enforcement, prosecutors’ offices and forensics facilities. For further information, he may be contacted at: aaronruby@swbell.net.

NOUVELLES RÉFLEXIONS SUR LES DICTIONNAIRES JURIDIQUES

One quotation in Frédéric Houbert’s paper states that, “dictionaries should occupy a space at the beginning rather than the end of the interpretive

process.” This session, conducted in French, covered French lexicography and the extent to which various monolingual and bilingual dictionaries explain terms that have no target language equivalent due to differences between legal systems. He used the colorful example of the “fruit of the poisonous tree,” which refers to the rule that requires courts to exclude evidence against a defendant in a criminal trial that is tainted because the police obtained it illegally without a search warrant. This colorful term comes from the landmark United States Supreme Court case, *Wong Sun v. United States* (1963). The term is forever implanted in the mind of every law student in the United States. If it is translated literally, however, it would be meaningless if not absurd to many French lawyers.

Houbert gave us an interesting overview of the history of lexicography and dictionary-making beginning with the eighteenth-century *Encyclopédie* or *Dictionnaire Raisonné* by Diderot and d’Alembert. He compared “classical” and “terminological” French dictionaries, referring to the amount of context that each type provides. This distinction is based on the organization of the material as well as the amount of context provided for each defined term. Some of the resources discussed were: the *Lexique Dalloz*, the *Harrap’s-Dalloz Dictionnaire Juridique Bilingue* and the book *Terminologie du contrat* by Sourioux & Lerat. His bibliography includes, among other very useful references, a current critical bibliography of bilingual and multilingual dictionaries for European languages, by Gerard-René de Groot and Conrad J.P. van Laer, *Bilingual and Multilingual Legal Dictionaries in the European Union*, available in PDF format at: <http://edata.ub.unimaas.nlwww-edocs/loader/file.asp?id=1053>.

Holiday Luncheon



Above, Richard Miller entertained us with beautiful melodies.



NCATA Acting President, Alexandra Russell-Bitting and Brigitte de Weille



Right, Alexandra Russell-Bitting, Donna Sandin, Florie McClung, Cheryl Hutchinson, Chari Voss, and Ninie Syarikin.



Right, Marjon Van Den Bosch, Alicia Youdale and Cheryl Fain



**NCATA and American University Fall Seminar
"Translation and Interpretation in Free Trade Negotiations"
September 24, 2005**



**Martha Edwards and Joseph Mazza of the
U.S. State Department Office of Language
Services**



**American University Professor
Jack Child welcomes the participants**



Attendees enjoy a scrumptious lunch

NCATA and American University Fall Seminar: Translation and Interpretation in Free Trade Negotiations Celebrating the Year of Languages 2005

On Saturday, September 24, four linguists from the U.S. Department of State Office of Language Services, which provides support to several government agencies involved in international trade negotiations, spoke at the NCATA Fall Seminar at American University in Washington, DC.

Joseph Mazza, a translator, was appointed Chief of the Romance Language Translations branch of the Office of Language Services (LS) in 2003. He is a frequent speaker at ATA events. He joined LS in 1989. He was an official translator to the U.S. delegation at the two of the Summits of the Americas in 1994 and 1998. He has translated numerous trade-related texts and supervised the certification of U.S. free trade agreements with Morocco, Central America and the Dominican Republic, and Chile. Mazza focused primarily on explaining the challenges of translating the specialized terminology in this technical field and of handling the unusual syntax often found in trade agreements, using Spanish examples. He also briefly discussed the certification process. He told us that the website of the State Department Bureau of Economic Affairs (EB), has a treasure trove of linguistic resources.

Mazza spoke together with Martha Edwards, a translator and an interpreter for LS. She said that for negotiations interpreters must be able to work into and out of the languages they interpret. She gave us valuable insight into the challenges she faces as a simultaneous and conference interpreter when handling regional variations and “Spanglish” in the interpreting booth. Another huge challenge is interpreting for digital video-conferences. She also interprets for telephone conferences, signing ceremonies and press

conferences, and she translates the numerous E-mail messages sent by the negotiators.

The treaty certification process was the focus of Ruth Harwood Cline’s presentation, which focused on French. In this highly interactive discussion, the attendees had the opportunity to participate in revising texts and identifying both obvious errors and the nuances of differences in meaning that a reviser must resolve when certifying that both the English and foreign language versions of a document accurately reflect the parties’ mutual agreement. She provided an overview of the provisions of the Morocco Free Trade Agreement and referred to the law that requires treaty certification, which is discussed in the State Department’s Foreign Affairs Manual at 11 FAM 720, Section 1722.6(a). In the exercise, she pointed out specific challenges, such as the fact that in Romance languages repetition is considered to be a stylistic error, whereas in English this is not the case. She highlighted the importance of closely examining translations from Romance languages to ensure that meaning is not lost when the word order is changed to syntax that is more natural in English.

Shuckran Kamal addressed “Adventures in the Language of Free Trade.” Focusing on Arabic translations, Shuckran’s presentation also focused on the treaty certification process. A senior Arabic translator with LS since 1998, she chaired the ATA Certification Committee for three years and is a grader for the Arabic-English certification exam.

We learned that the Office of Language Services employs about 1,500 contractors which makes this Fall Seminar a very relevant program for all NCATA members.

**HOW TO BUILD YOUR FREELANCE BUSINESS:
A WORKSHOP PRESENTED BY MARIAN GREENFIELD
BY GINA DEMARCO**

It was a pleasure to attend the workshop called “How to Build your Freelance Business,” at the Holiday Inn in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on Saturday, November 19, 2005 organized by the Delaware Valley Translators Association (DVTA). The workshop was presented by Marian Greenfield, President of the ATA and a successful and experienced freelance financial translator with over 25 years in the translation industry. Approximately 50 translators and interpreters attended the workshop, including some who work full-time in translation companies. Many of the attendees indicated that they work as interpreters as well as translators.

The three-hour presentation in an informal question-and-answer format gave the attendees the opportunity to raise specific, detailed questions about the translation and interpretation industry. This article provides a brief overview of some issues discussed.

Résumé Preparation

The first step in building a successful business is developing a well-written, well-designed résumé. Marian began by explaining how to tailor your résumé to the market in the U.S., as opposed to Europe or South America. A freelance translator’s résumé must address the specific needs of the industry and indicate the translator’s specialization. Marian passed out an article on the subject entitled “Effective Freelancer Résumés” she had written with Teresa Waldes that was published in the November/December 2002 issue of the *ATA Chronicle*.

As an experienced professional who has both written and reviewed many freelance résumés, Marian had useful tips and guidelines to follow. Although some of the tips were quite elementary, such as avoiding typographical errors, others were not as obvious. She gave examples of embarrassing typographical errors, which completely undermine a translator’s credibility, saying that as a translation manager she would discard such applications immediately. She also showed excerpts from her own résumé to illustrate these different tips. For instance, specific non-translation work experience may be emphasized on a résumé if the translator wants to do translation work in the same field, she said. She prefers to recruit translators directly, in person, at conferences.

Ways to Build Your Client Base

In the second part of her presentation, “Building Your Client Base,” Marian reviewed effective strategies for marketing, including which clients to target and who the “good translation agencies” are, as well as things to keep in mind when working with translation companies. She also seeks clients directly, in person, at conferences.

Language professionals need to network by doing volunteer work, not only through the ATA, but also by volunteering to translate or engaging in any other type of volunteer activity, Marian emphasized. Marketing has to be done by networking and word-of-mouth, for instance through professional association listings, courses

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How to Build Your Freelance Business: A Workshop Presented by Marian Greenfield, continued from Page 10

trade associations and trade fairs, chambers of commerce and volunteer work (whether work-related or not). In response to a question from the audience, Marian pointed out that advertising should be targeted. For example, Yellow Pages advertising will probably lead to work translating birth certificates, transcripts and similar documents, rather than assignments for business clients.

Marian continually builds her client base, in part, through her years of dedicated service to the ATA. She also relies on continuing education activities. According to her, language professionals should be doing marketing whenever they are not translating or interpreting. It normally takes about two years to build a client base.

Financial Issues

Of course, there are other issues to consider when launching a freelance business, and one of the first is to determine what your translation services are worth. How do you do the math? That, of course, leads to the issue that all freelance translators deal with: making sure you get paid. In the basic general discussion of prices, she said that there is no “going rate” for translation services. She also advised translators on how prices can be negotiated for “editing” assignments. Because these assignments often require a complete revision of the translation, she suggests charging an hourly rate.

Marian gave us very practical advice on how translation prices can be calculated, based on a translator’s daily, or even hourly, production (number of words per day). She advised us to be realistic, and not to forget to include time for proofreading and for administrative chores such as invoicing and accounting. Some options for

receiving payments were mentioned during the discussion, including foreign bank accounts, PayPal and Moneybookers.

There was a brief discussion of available resources for doing due diligence of potential translation agency clients, such as the Proz Web site (www.proz.com) and the Payment Practices listserve. Marian also asks new agency clients to provide references before she agrees to work for them.

Non-Compete Clauses

When an agency proposes a contract with ridiculous clauses (including non-compete clauses), you should attempt to strike them out or amend them. Translators and interpreters should refuse to sign any “ridiculous” terms or terms that we can’t “live with.” One translator said that when she could not get an agency to agree to her terms, she suggested that they just use the ATA model contract, which worked very well. Marian agreed with her approach, stressing that anything that is a blanket non-compete clause (no competition with the agency for its clients at any place, any time) is absurd. She also said that if a company that is a client of a former employer approaches you without you soliciting them, then you haven’t violated the non-compete clause.

Technology

Translators must spend money to make money. Marian urged language professionals to upgrade their hardware and software, as well as their telecommunications equipment in order to increase their productivity and build their client base. The message is simple: if potential clients

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Volunteer Translators Join the Fight Against Hunger With Action Against Hunger USA

BY HARVETTA ASAMOAH

A superb way to refine translation skills and develop expertise while helping to support the world's most vulnerable populations in their quest to achieve long-term self-sufficiency is to work as a virtual volunteer translator for Action Against Hunger USA (also known internationally as Action Contre la Faim, or ACF). Over 350 professional volunteers including about 30 translators, as well as accountants, Web site managers and strategic planners, media and human resources professionals, 4,500 local staff, and many other people offer their skills and experience to make this goal a reality. Eleven professional organizations, including J.P. Morgan Chase, Longchamp and Crédit Lyonnais dedicate resources in partnership with ACF.

On October 21, 2005, NASDAQ recently recognized Action Against Hunger International Network as a recognized world leader in international humanitarian assistance by inviting Executive Director Cathy Skoula to ring the opening bell in recognition of the organization's solid record in responding to emergencies and to highlight the need for emergency assistance in response to the recent earthquake in South Asia. ACF provided assistance in Guatemala after Hurricane Stan, in Indonesia after the December 2004 tsunami, and in Congo, Mali, Niger and Southern Sudan due to the food security crises in those countries in the past year.

ACF originated in Paris in 1979 and was founded by a group of French doctors, scientists, journalists, and writers with Professor Alfred Kaestler, Nobel Prize recipient for physics, as the first chairman. The organization is now an international network with offices in Paris, New York, London, Montreal, and Madrid. In 2004, Action Against Hunger USA alone provided over \$11 million of program services in 12 countries.

ACF directly delivers emergency aid and longer-term assistance by providing nutrition, water and sanitation, food security and health programs to people suffering due to natural disasters or man-made crises in 44 countries. The network adheres to the principles of independence, impartiality, nondiscrimination, professionalism, direct access to victims, as well as transparency.

As an international network, the organization has a continual demand for translation services. Most of the translations are between English, French and Spanish. ACF currently hires expatriate agronomists, water and sanitation engineers, administrators, nurses, nutritionists, logisticians, and medical doctors to work with local staff to carry out programs. Each of these positions is defined by the required expertise as well as the required language (*i.e.* French administrators). Currently, ACF employs approximately 500 expatriates. More than 150 people with experience in disciplines such as

**Volunteer translators
have given over 300
hours of service in 2005,
which is quite impressive
by any standard.**

**James Phelan, Action
Against Hunger USA**

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**Volunteer Translators Join the Fight Against Hunger With Action Against Hunger USA.
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anthropology, public health, international relations and political science work at the head offices in Paris, London, Madrid, Montreal and New York.

James Phelan, the Web site and database manager in New York, administers the volunteer translator program. He is fluent in Spanish and has worked in communications and development for ACF-USA since January 2003. He states that ACF-USA began collaborating with students and professional translators in 2003 “out of sheer necessity.”

According to James Phelan, ACF-USA did not have funds to pay for the translation help that was needed, so ACF-USA began soliciting translation support from volunteer-oriented Web sites such as Idealist (www.idealists.org) and Volunteer Match and (volunteermatch.org). “We were surprised at the positive responses—which quickly grew to more than 30 people—and volunteers still contact us to offer their services on a regular basis,” he states. Although the monetary value of these services is difficult to estimate, in 2005, volunteer translators have given over 300 hours of service, which is quite impressive by any standard. He emphasizes that it has been an amazing experience, and the volunteer translators have dedicated substantial time and effort to helping ACF improve the quality of communications within the organization.

The types of translations required include press releases, country profiles, and financial reports (including reports subject to French financial regulations). Certain documents must be translated for publication, which requires a higher level of quality than translations for ACF’s internal use. In any case, volunteers will

greatly benefit from having prior translation experience. Although experience translating documents on nutrition, water, sanitation, or agricultural techniques is not required, it would be helpful. Most of the specialized vocabulary can be easily located in English on the ACF-USA Web site. For French, the monolingual *Petit Larousse*, *Google*, and the bilingual *Grand Dictionnaire Terminologique* on the Internet at www.-granddictionnaire.com are good resources. The translations are often revised by a volunteer editor and reviewed by staff.

ACF-USA expects volunteers to have a good knowledge of the source language (French, Spanish or English) and to translate into their native language. They must have access to a personal computer and be able to receive and send translations via email. Once accepted into the ever-expanding translation support team, volunteers receive occasional e-mail requests



sent to the team for the language combination indicated in the request. Typically, such a request may be sent out once or twice a month. Each request briefly describes the type of document to be translated and the deadline. The documents are in MS-Word format. The majority of requests

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**NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES:
THE WASHINGTON FOREIGN LAW SOCIETY
BY HARVETTA ASAMOAH**

On September 22, 2005, the Washington Foreign Law Society hosted a reception in honor of President Judge Mr. Philippe Kirsch of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, with support from the United Nations Foundation, Barnes & Thornburg LLP, and the American Bar Association Section of International Law. The reception, preceded by remarks by Mr. Kirsch, was held at the American Bar Association's offices in Washington, DC.

Language Services at International Criminal Court

The August 2005 issue of the **ICC Newsletter** contains an article entitled, "Interpretation and Translation: The Challenges Ahead." The article provides an overview of the court's two language departments, the Language Services Unit of the Office of the Prosecutor (LSU) and the Court Interpretation and Translation Section (STIC). It mentions that translators will use a

customized memory-management tool developed by MetaRead. All court proceedings will be recorded, and French and English transcripts will be prepared. Some witnesses will testify via video link and video conferencing.

The **ICC Newsletter** article also reports that the LSU and STIC have a joint accreditation program to source, recruit and train field interpreters, with additional training in court interpretation. Interpreters are trained with video and audio recordings. Two staff members are learning Swahili, and three are taking courses in law. The article is available on the ICC Web site at **www.icc-cpi.int**.

Remarks by ICC President Judge Kirsch

At the WFLS reception, President Judge Kirsch covered the current status of the development of

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The ATA encourages translators to consider membership in professional associations related to various subjects as a way to acquire and maintain the knowledge required to provide specialized translation and interpretation services. The ATA gives up to two continuing education points per three year period for membership in such organizations. For non-translation/interpreting professional associations, prior approval may be obtained by providing a description of the association and how it relates to your translation work. The Washington Foreign Law Society (WFLS) provides an excellent opportunity to translators interested in law and international affairs. General information about WFLS programs and membership is available on the organization's Web site, **www.wfls.org**, or from **mail@wfls.org**.

WFLS brings together members of the Washington, DC legal and non-legal communities who are interested in international legal matters, comparative law and foreign law. WFLS members include attorneys from private law firms, corporations, government agencies and international organizations, as well as non-lawyers who have a passionate interest in international affairs. WFLS holds monthly luncheons as well as other events, including an embassy round table, a dinner gala, an annual meeting, a diplomatic reception, and a garden party.

PANEL DISCUSSION AND WORKSHOPS LITERARY TRANSLATION

The **Writer's Center** is presenting a panel discussion and three workshops focusing on literary translation in the Winter 2006 season. Events are held at the Writer's Center, 4508 Walsh Street, Bethesda, Maryland 20815. For more information, please visit www.writer.org or call 301-654-8664.

PANEL DISCUSSION Thursday, February 5

2 p.m.

The Writer's Center presents a panel discussion on literary translation. Panelists will include Barbara Goldberg, Vladimir Levchev, C.M. Mayo, and Yvette Neisser. Free Admission.

C.M. Mayo will give a reading from her book, *Miraculous Air: Journey of a Thousand Miles through Baja California, the Other Mexico*, on Wednesday, January 25 at 7 p.m. at Riverby Books, 417 East Capitol Street SE, Washington, DC.

Poetry in Translation: Eastern Europe

Two Thursdays, 7:30 to 10 p.m., March 16 and March 23

Fee: \$80 (\$65 for Writer's Center members)

The principles of poetry are very closely related to translation. Poetry itself is a translation of a nonverbal, psychological reality into a verbal language. Many of the best English translations of European (including Eastern European) and world poetry will be read and discussed in this class. In addition, some theoretical works may be discussed. Students will be urged, but not

required, to bring in their own translations of poetry. Instructor: Vladimir Levchev's poems have appeared in Poetry, Poet Lore, Poet's Attic, WordWrights! and other journals.

THE ART OF LITERARY TRANSLATION: SPANISH TO ENGLISH

Two Saturdays, 1:30 to 4 p.m. February 25 and March 4. Fee: \$80 (\$65 for Writer's Center members)

This two-session workshop is designed for creative writers who want to explore the exciting, mysterious art of literary translation. Participants should have experience writing either poetry or creative prose in English (and have strong knowledge of Spanish). By examining different translations of sample texts, doing in-class exercises and experimenting with our own translations, myriad questions that a literary translator faces, such as word choice, sentence structure, tone, rhythm, and sound will be discussed. Instructor Yvette Neisser is a poet, translator, writer and editor. She is currently translating the work of local Argentinian-born poet Luis Alberto Ambroggio for a bilingual collection of selected poems to be published in 2006. She has also translated several sonnets by Pablo Neruda, and some poems from Hebrew and Arabic, which were published as part of a critical essay in the Palestine-Israel Journal.

TRANSLATION: KISSING THE BRIDE

2 Mondays, 7:30 to 10 p.m., March 6 and March 13 Fee: \$80 (\$65 for Writer's Center members)

Translation has been likened to kissing a bride through a veil. They also say that if the bride (the translation) is beautiful, she is not faithful (doesn't stick to the literal), and if she is faithful,

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**Workshop: Literary Translation
Continued from Page 15**

she is not beautiful. Are beauty and fidelity mutually exclusive? How to transform the literal and make it "sing"? How to preserve the poem's underlying core? The Hebrew language presents unique challenges: it is based on the Hebrew Bible (also known as the Old Testament), is roughly one-third shorter than English, and reads from right to left. A successful translation must make it seem as if the work had been written in English in the first place. We will compare different translations and take a hand in doing it ourselves. Instructor: Barbara Goldberg is an award-winning poet and translator with five books to her name and publications in Poetry, Gettysburg Review and the Paris Review.

**Seattle Roundup
Continued from Page 1**

Perceptive students of ATA history know that the grander the venue, the bigger the turnout, and this year's 1,620 attendees was a near all-time record. The ATA gathering has clearly evolved into a *de facto* international congress for the translation and interpretation community. In the halls, on every floor, there was a pleasing sense of critical mass being achieved, of important business being conducted. Only the exhibit halls seemed leaner than before. But if that means that translation memory vendors have fallen on hard times, who will grumble? ATA conferences afford opportunities to cement ties with colleagues and to make new friends, in translation and interpretation and elsewhere; to stay abreast of incoming buzzwords and technology; to consider, purchase or dismiss the latest books; and to spend quality time with friends and acquaintances for whom our packed routines leave scant openings. Last, but by no means least, conferences provide continuing education credits. Attendance is a win-win situation, so start making plans for next year, folks!

**Welcome, Margarita Tobar
New NCATA Team Member**



Margarita Tobar has generously offered to work with the NCATA board. She will assist with the upcoming election.

**Networking Opportunities: The Washington
Foreign Law Society, continued from Page 14**

the International Criminal Court (ICC) established in 1998. Since 2003, the ICC's development has proceeded more quickly than the development of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia established in 1993 and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda established in 1994. The ICC has started its judicial work, and the trial phase of cases involving abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Uganda by the Lord's Resistance Army, and in Darfur, Sudan will begin soon.

Mr. Kirsch mentioned the limits of the ICC's jurisdiction, how the court is expected to operate, and due process guarantees. He stated that the ICC needs governmental support and that it is crucial to keep civil society informed. The ICC official languages are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, and the working languages are French and English. The court's budget for language services is 11 million euros out of the ICC's total budget of 83 million euros.

How to Build Your Freelance Business: A Workshop, continued from Page 11

cannot reach you or if you cannot meet deadlines, you won't get any business. There was also a discussion of some free or low-cost alternatives for communicating with clients and contacts abroad through the Internet, such as Skype.

In addition to these aspects of the freelance business, freelancers must produce quality translations. Marian provided numerous resources, such as Internet links, including links to glossaries and other helpful sites, to help freelancers produce quality translations which is the key to building and maintaining a solid client base.

How valuable was the information Marian shared? The fact that I chose to attend the workshop for the second time should give you an idea. I had previously attended the workshop Marian gave in New York City this past June, but this second presentation gave me the opportunity to attend a DVTA function and to get re-acquainted with local professionals in the translation and interpretation industry.

Gina DeMarco is a Legal Assistant at Duane Morris, a full-service law firm with headquarters in Philadelphia, PA. She is also a part-time French-into-English translator specializing in legal, business, financial and technical translations. She has a B.A. in French from Immaculata College and a Certificate in French to English Translation from the New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies. She has been a member of the ATA and the DVTA since 1997 and the New York Circle of Translators since 2004. Her e-mail address is: **gad.trad@gmail.com**

Volunteer Translators with Action Against Hunger USA, continued from Page 13

are accepted by a volunteer within minutes after the request is sent out. Requests are declined by simply deleting the message.

There is no minimum time commitment. The turnaround ranges from 24 hours to 2 weeks (for longer documents). Some requests are for proofreading and editing translations, which normally takes less time than translation.

After working as a volunteer translator with ACF-USA for one year, I believe that the experience has been mutually beneficial and highly rewarding. I highly recommend ACF-USA's program because the professional and friendly staff truly values our work. It has once more opened my eyes to the importance of humanitarian assistance in these trying times. As Mr. Phelan noted, "beyond the value that our Translation Support Teams bring to ACF, our volunteer translation program is simply a wonderful vehicle for channeling volunteer support—it's a great way for people to get involved in ACF's mission to address malnutrition and end global hunger. Our translators add tremendous value to these ends, and we try to recognize their vital contributions as much as possible through feedback from thankful ACF staff. We're very happy that the translators get something out of this arrangement, too: a chance to hone their skills as well as add concrete experience to their résumés, and that's how a collaborative relationship is supposed to be."

To participate as a volunteer virtual translator, please send your résumé and cover letter by e-mail to: **volunteer@actionagainsthunger.org** with "Attn: Translation Volunteer" in the subject line, and sign up at the Web site **www.actionagainsthunger.com**.