



capital translator

Newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Translators Association
Vol. 22, No.3 April 2000

Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?

by Ruth Zimmer Boggs

If your pulse is beating a bit faster at the thought of a fat bank account, chances are you are not looking at literary translation as a short-range means to achieve your goal.

Translating literary works is a secret passion many translators share and few dare to admit to or act on. The fact is that literary translation is a noble pursuit that occupies a peculiar niche: Almost every translator would like to at least try it, but even assuming that technical skills and aptitude are not an issue, few could afford to do it on a full-time basis.

Notoriously underpaid (unless you really DO get continuous work translating Gabriel Garcia Marquez or similar powerhouses), literary translation remains beyond many a translator's grasp, while commercial, legal and technical work is what butters our bread.

This admittedly cliché scenario has crossed my mind at least once or twice: I rise at the hour of my choice to assume my position at the computer, with a scenic view from my window to the world. A cup of steaming java is in front of me and Sasha, my cat, is by my side. Then I

set out to translate the poetry of, say, Carolyn Forché or Rita Dove, the fiction of Barbara Kingsolver or Joan Didion, and—why not?—the latest thriller by John Grisham or Sue Grafton. I go about this, of course, in a completely unstressed and unhurried way, because I know that as soon as I finish a project, the publisher will send me a fat check and another manuscript. It goes without saying that I spend several months of every year traveling abroad—that is, when I'm not renting a cottage at the Outer Banks or a cabin in Canaan Valley, where I can renew my spirit and simply work away at my leisure. Last but not least, I get full credit for my work, with my name prominently listed below the author's once the work is published in the target language.

At that point, I usually snap myself out of it and start tackling the next patent or legal brief.

But—one can always dream. Just like many translators hold on to a steady job while testing the waters before eventually becoming full-time independent contractors, it is not impossible to try your hand at a new genre.

That's why the focus of this issue is on literary translation.

Liliana Valenzuela, a published literary translator (English >

...continued on page 7

Inside

President's Corner	2
Chapter meeting	3
Job Fair Success	4
Commandments	4
Assault	5
Onionskin	6
Getting started	8
WETA	9
Info Exchange	10
Clapping Hands	11
Calendar	12



ISSN 1095-4821

capital translator

The *Capital Translator* is a newsletter published by NCATA nine times a year from September through June with a combined issue for December and January. Letters to the Editor, short articles of interest, and information for the calendar and other sections are invited. Submissions become the property of the *Capital Translator* and are subject to editing unless otherwise agreed to in advance. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor, the Chapter, or its Board.

Editor: Ruth Zimmer Boggs
703-378-9305
REZB@aol.com

Assistant Editor: Dimitra Hengen
703-426-4938
DimitraH@aol.com

Production: Karin Wuertz-Schaefer
301-607-8036
wuertz-schaefer@erols.com

Deadline: No later than 5th day of
month before the issue

Membership: Alissa Martin
301-718-0405
amw6@gusun.georgetown.edu

National Capital Area Chapter of the American Translators Association (NCATA)

President: Scott Brennan
703-393-0365
sbrennan@compuserve.com

Vice President: Sangeeta Prasad
703-369-2068

Secretary: Kriemhild Zerling
202-543-7574

Treasurer: Yukako Seltzer
703-818-2306

Program Chair: John Vázquez
202-487-7878

Accreditation: Harvey Fergusson
703-849-8444

The **Chapter Address** is P. O. Box 65200,
Washington, DC 20035-5200,
Tel: 703-255-9290
Web site: www.ncata.org

The **National HQ Address** is American Translators
Association, 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590,
Alexandria, VA 22314-2840,
Tel: 703-683-6100, Fax: 703-683-6122
Web site: www.atanet.org

For address changes, please write to the chapter at
the above address, Attn: Membership

For advertising in the *Capital Translator*,
please contact Angelika Spears, Advertising
Coordinator, Tel: 301-464-8309,
e-mail: 102502.3224@compuserve.com



Printed on recycled paper.

President's Corner

by Scott Brennan



It was truly a pleasure to catch up with friends and colleagues at NCATA's 20th Anniversary celebration last month, and to have the chance to get to know some newcomers a little better. I want to thank our speakers — **Bill Cramer, Ted Crump, Martha Witebsky and Eric McMillan** — for sharing their reminiscences of NCATA over the years. And on behalf of the chapter I also want to express our appreciation to ATA President Ann McFarlane and ATA's board of directors and headquarters staff for co-hosting the evening. Without their participation we could not have celebrated NCATA's birthday, cake and all, in such high style!

Looking ahead, Program Chair **John Vázquez** will take over production of the print edition of NCATA's *Professional Services Directory (PSD)* from **Michael Wahlster** this year. Michael will continue as Webmaster, responsible for tending the searchable, online version of the *PSD*. Please note that June 1 is the deadline to proofread your entry online and submit updated information for the 2001 print edition, so it can be ready in time for the early ATA conference this year (see page 3).

Somewhat rested but nevertheless ready after organizing this year's

Job Fair, Vice President **Sangeeta Prasad** will be developing and targeting the list of buyers of translation and interpreting services into whose hands we put the *PSD*. By focusing initially on local tech companies racing to globalize, the goal is to collectively market our services in a way that complements, rather than competes with, ATA's *Translation Services Directory* in its new online and print "slice" versions. In my experience direct clients often prefer to work with local translators and, especially, interpreters. I believe the depth we can offer locally will greatly heighten the value of one of the NCATA's core products.

Finally, I also want to put in a plug for our upcoming chapter meeting on military/naval/aviation translation, to be held at the State Department's Office of Language Services and organized by **Paul Hopper** (see page 3). And as if the program weren't enticing enough, just the chance to spend a few minutes in their amazing library should have translators quivering with anticipation! ✍

Advertise in the *PSD*

From business-card-size to full-page spreads, NCATA individual and corporate members can advertise their services in the *PSD* at discounted rates. The print edition of the *PSD* goes out to over 300 buyers of translation and interpreting services locally and nationwide, and first goes on sale at ATA's annual conference, to be held in September this year in Orlando, Florida. Contact *PSD* Editor John Vázquez at johnvazquez@msn.com. ✍

Join NCATA's Electronic Mailing list

Sign up with NCATA's electronic mailing list to receive announcements on job leads, seminars, conferences and NCATA events. The list is opt-in: Go to **www.ncata.org** and subscribe under the "Mailing List" option. You can cancel your subscription or register a new e-mail address at any time. ✎

Lectures by Translator/Scholar Professor John Felstiner

Translating Neruda and Celan
Saturday, April 8, 7 p.m.
Borders Bookstore, 18th and L Streets,
NW, Washington, DC
(202) 466-2152

A Conversation on Paul Celan:
Poet, Survivor, Jew
Sunday, April 9, 1:30 p.m.
U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 100
Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW,
Washington, DC
(202) 488-2692

Paul Celan (1920-1970) was a brilliant and tragic figure whose writing has become the touchstone for poetry 'after Auschwitz.' He is Europe's leading postwar poet, and is becoming better known in this country. Professor John Felstiner of Stanford University will be speaking about Celan's life and work, reading translations, playing recordings of his stunning voice, and showing some unusual pictures.

NCATA Chapter Meeting Military/Naval/Aviation

When: 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 26, 2000
Where: Department of State, Office of Language Services
2401 E Street, NW, Washington DC
(Columbia Plaza Office Building,
not the main State Department complex)

The military, naval and aviation subject cluster is a niche translation specialty in the Washington area. At this subject-specific chapter meeting, some of the top practitioners in the field will report from the front lines and train us in tradecraft.

Joseph Mazza (Spanish, French, Portuguese, Russian) and **Paul Hopper** (German, Russian, Italian, Swedish, Dutch), both currently with the State Department and previously the Naval Intelligence Support Center, will cover reference materials and other topics.

Dimitra Hengen (French, Italian) has a background in aviation and experience with NATO and the translation of techno-thrillers.

William Cramer (Russian, German, French, Spanish) has over 40 years of experience translating within the defense-intelligence community, and will discuss professional development and how to go about building subject-area expertise.

The State Department's Office of Language Services is located on the 14th floor of Columbia Plaza Office Building SA-1 on the west side of 23rd Street at 2401 E Street, NW Washington DC. Street parking is free after 6:30 p.m., and a parking garage is available in the complex (do not park in spaces marked by PMI Parking). A 10-minute walk south from the Foggy Bottom Metro station (toward the Lincoln Memorial). Photo identification is required. ✎

Will you be listed in NCATA's *Professional Services Directory 2001*?

June 1, 2000, is the deadline to submit updated information for the 2001 print edition of NCATA's *Professional Services Directory (PSD)*. Check your listing on the searchable, online version at **www.ncata.org**, and send any changes in writing to Membership Co-Chair Alissa Webel at **amw6@georgetown.edu**. You are responsible for ensuring that your information is complete and accurate.

If you have not yet renewed your NCATA membership for 2000, your listing has been dropped from the online *PSD*. To renew or join, download a membership and *PSD* information form from **www.ncata.org**, or contact Alissa Webel to reactivate your listing. ✎

NCATA Job Fair 2000 A Recurring Success

by *Dimitra Hengen*

NCATA offered again great resources for success on February 19, as it recorded a large turn out for this end of the century NACATA Job Fair: 125 people attended our annual event, with 12 major recruiter agencies from all sectors of the economy.

As I was working my way from one agency to the other, talking with each representative, I realized how much information is actually passed between translators and recruiters. At each stop, translators offer their services and present their credentials in the form of a resume and in exchange, recruiters distribute brochures, letters of introduction, application forms for employment, etc.

The information contained in these leaflets varies depending on the agency. Meetings such as the Job Fair provide a unique opportunity for all to meet in person and discuss opportunities for future collaboration. Depending on the time each representative has spent talking with each translator, by the time he/she meets the twenty-fifth translator, conversations tend to be reduced to the minimum. However, translators should try to obtain as much information from the recruiters as they can, such as the location of recruiter's head office, languages needed, areas of specialty, type of interpretation services required, travel requirements, rates, translation tools required (Trados, Déjà Vu, etc.), turnaround time, sample translations required, etc.

Likewise, recruiters should prepare literature including these essential elements to help translators target agencies who most need their services.

This year, attending recruiters were: FBI (Cheryl Johns and Amin

Neshati), ASET International Service Corp. (Kevin Hendzel and Walter Stinkovic), Comprehensive Language Center Inc. (Kelly Jones Dresen and Tim Heath), I.B.D. (Frank Lanhof, Lauren Lankhof and Nora Lankhof), Language Learning Enterprises, Inc. (Heidi Lacy, Monika Long, Christine Michel-Gutierrez, Maggie Brunet), McNeil Technologies (Betty Boutros and George Washington), New Word Linguistics (Judi Rines and Kara O'Ryan), U.S. State Department (Kenneth Palnau), National Geographic Society (Kay Bazo and Camilla Bozzoli), PSC, Inc. (Franklin Lopez and Fred Lothrop), BTS – Wordhouse (Shaun Daggett and Wim Schrieks), and Inter-American Investment Corporation (Maridale Jackson).

We express our gratitude to our many partners for their participation in this yearly event, which is such a great opportunity to enhance our business relations.

Dimitra Hengen, a native of Belgium, is a French <>English, Italian > English translator and interpreter based in Fairfax, Virginia. She specializes in technical translations and has translated techno-thrillers such as the James Bond series, science fiction, and military adventure novels. She is a member of the Mons School for International Interpreters, Class of 1978, and has worked for NATO (Brussels), Disneyland Paris, and USAID (Africa). Dimitra can be reached at DimitraH@msn.com

The Ten Twelve Commandments of Literary Translation

- I Thou shalt honor thine author and thy reader.
- II Thou shalt not "improve" upon the original.
- III Thou shalt read the source text in its entirety before beginning.
- IV Thou shalt not guess.
- V Thou shalt consult thine author and other native speakers.
- VI Thou shalt consult earlier translations only after finishing thine own.
- VII Thou shalt possess—and use—a multitude of reference works.
- VIII Thou shalt respect other cultures.
- IX Thou shalt perceive and honor register and tone, that thy day as translator may be long.
- X Thou shalt not commit purple prose.
- XI Thou shalt maintain familiarity with the source-language culture.
- XII Thou shalt fear no four-letter word where appropriate.

Quiz

What is the longest word that can be spelled without repeating a letter?

See page 11 for the answer.

My Assault on the New York Publishing World

by Liliana Valenzuela © 1999

How do you get your foot in the door of those towering New York publishing houses? That was my first question as I considered my upcoming trip to the Big Manzana for the ALTA annual conference in October. Having already published two books of literary translation with a major publisher obviously helps, but the task still seemed daunting. Thanks to the sage advice of former NYC resident and literary whiz Marian Schwartz before, during, and after the conference, I was able to trace my own map with a minimum of wrong turns or missed opportunities. Here's how I tackled this:

First, I worried endlessly about what to wear, what the weather would be like, whether I needed a raincoat (hard to conceive of after 6 weeks of harsh drought in Central Texas), and when I should get a haircut. I even learned how to apply make-up.

Then I turned to secondary matters, such as how to get an appointment. I have worked on occasion with a well-respected literary agent in NY, so I e-mailed her for contact tips. She graciously obliged with the names of editors in major publishing houses working in Spanish for the U.S. market. With this valuable information in hand, I then looked up the publishers' addresses, history, phone numbers, and other pertinent information in the essential volume *Writer's Guide to Book Editors, Publishers, and Literary Agents*, by Jeff Herman (Prima, 1997-1998). In addition to the practical information, this book helped me tremendously in understanding the publishing hierarchy, and learning who owns whom, as well as which imprints or branches do translations.

Three weeks before the conference I composed a one-page letter to each of these seven publishers, in

which I briefly described my background, mentioning the two books I have translated and how many copies have been sold to date. I offered my services as a literary translator, dropped my agent's name, enclosed a résumé, and let them know I'd be in New York on such and such a date and that perhaps we could meet. I told them I would be calling the following week. On a whim, I sent an additional

**...I waited
around...playing
a miserable game
of phone tag with
the editor...**

letter to an editor I got from the book—a cold call if you will—of whom I knew nothing, but who ended up being the only publisher out of eight with whom I actually got an appointment.

I wrote the eighth letter to a Simon & Schuster editor with a Hispanic last name (a good omen). I let her know that I recently read and enjoyed the book *Gardens in the Dunes* by the Native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko published by her house and was wondering whether I might be able to translate it into Spanish. I then included all the other standard information previously mentioned. Each letter went into a large brown envelope with my spotless résumé (an inadvertent mistake here or in the letter itself is

“the kiss of death,” as Marian warned me), a color photocopy of the covers of my two previous books (it costs more than a B&W copy, but it's well worth the extra attention you might get), a copy of a review of one of my books by Austin colleague Tony Beckwith, an article I wrote for the *ATA Chronicle* about some of the issues I had to deal with when translating *Woman Hollering Creek* by Sandra Cisneros as *El Arroyo de la Llorona* (Vintage Español/Random House, 1996), plus a copy of my ATA certificate of accreditation for good measure. I kissed the packets and sent them on their way.

In between I was swamped with work, but managed to order new business cards and fine-tune my résumé. I also prepared several packets with my own poetry and fiction to slip to unsuspecting editors or literary agents at the conference.

The week before the conference I followed up via telephone. I kept a log of each phone call, whether I had left a message with machine or human, whether the editor I wanted was out of town, on maternity leave, or soon to leave the company. More than half of the editors had the great courtesy either to reply by e-mail or through their assistants, saying that they would keep my records on file for any future translation projects, but that at the moment there was no work for me. One editor didn't reply at all and another one asked me to resend the materials to another person in the company. I also made an appointment with the project director at one of the museums for which I have done translations.

Once in NYC, I made some more phone calls to let the remaining editors know that I was already in town

...continued on page 7

Onionskin

Germany: Test case shaping up for literary translators

by Chris Durban

The Onionskin is a column in the ITI Bulletin (UK). ITI is the UK's foremost association of professional translators and interpreters. —Ed.

One step forward, three steps back: far from reaching a satisfactory conclusion, as announced in our August article ["More sleight-of-prose in Germany?"], the conflict pitting translator Karin Krieger against German publisher Piper Verlag has moved up a gear and is now in the hands of the German courts. Their ruling will be announced on March 28.

In early 1999, Krieger sought to benefit from "unexpected success royalties" for her translation of *Silk*, a best-selling novel by Italian author Alessandro Baricco, as provided under Article 36 of German copyright law. Piper Verlag eventually agreed and made an initial payment of DM 22,000 (roughly \$11,200), only to announce two days later that it was withdrawing not only *Silk* (*Seide* in German) but all of Krieger's Baricco translations from the market. In what the German literary translators' union described as "punitive action", it replaced these critically acclaimed texts with hastily commissioned versions that most observers agree are inferior. The new translations have identical book jackets and ISBN numbers, which in Ms. Krieger's words "annihilates" her work—not to mention the royalties Piper had agreed to pay.

Krieger's lawyer Peter Beisler points out that booklovers who read rave reviews will not know they are buying a completely different prod-

uct until they have passed the cash register. Piper Verlag reneged on agreements hammered out over the summer, says Beisler, who describes the publisher in unflattering terms: "Here we have a big landowner who steals five cows from a farmer and then wants to negotiate whether he has to give back all five or only three." At present only two of the five Krieger translations—*Seide* and *Land aus Glas*—are back on bookshop shelves, he notes.

Piper Verlag's Viktor Niemann has a different explanation: "The claims of Ms. Krieger and her attorney initially concerned only *Silk*," he told the *Onionskin*. "We agreed to her financial claims for participation in the book's success, and, as in the past, kept Ms. Krieger's translations in print. But through her lawyer, she then extended her claims to include all other translation contracts to which she was a party. We were not in a position to agree to all of these claims in full." It was at this point that Ms. Krieger and her lawyer went to court, he said. Mr. Niemann added that in mid-1999, Piper Verlag revised its contracts to include a provision under which translators receive a percentage.

Tempers are clearly running high. A resolution in support of Krieger voted by the International Federation of Translators (FIT) meeting in Mons, Belgium on August 4 termed Piper Verlag's sanctions "an act of cultural vandalism." For Peter Bush, chair of FIT's literary translation committee, the suit is "a very important test case for literary translators throughout the world, not just Europe."

Industry observers note that publishers everywhere are under orders from their owners—increasingly large press and multimedia groups—to tighten cost controls. Piper Verlag's parent company, Sweden's Bonnier Media, had no comment. A contact at competitor Bertelsmann said that in view of pressure on prices he could understand Piper Verlag's hard line.

Yet according to Karin Krieger, fellow publishers have not shown much solidarity with Piper so far. "I'm now working for a number of other serious, reputable publishing houses and am having no trouble finding other interesting translation jobs, with good conditions," she noted, adding, "That's very important to me because I love my profession—and I have three children!"

Author Alessandro Baricco, whose novels lie at the heart of the controversy, has opted for a lower than low profile. After a tight-lipped "I have no comment except that I have always been happy with my German translations" to weekly newsmagazine *Der Spiegel* (June 9, 1999), Baricco left Piper Verlag once the ruckus began. While acknowledging that translators are generally

Chris Durban is a French > English translator specializing in finance and capital markets. Based in Paris, her extracurricular translation activities include coordinating the Paris Bourse workshop for financial translators (next event: Spring 1999), promoting signed work, and encouraging client education in general. Chris can be reached at 101327.35@compuserve.com

poorly paid—without royalties, Karin Krieger would have pocketed a grand total of DM 3234 (about \$1640) for *Silk*—he clearly finds the whole fuss distasteful. Insiders say that when his new German publisher asked Karin Krieger to translate his latest book and she happily agreed, it was Baricco himself who nixed the deal. ✎

Millionaire ...continued from page 1

Spanish) and member of the Austin ATA chapter, tells us about her “assault” on NYC publishing houses.

Our very own Dimitra Hengen, who has translated two James Bond novels into French, shares some of her experiences with us.

An *Onionskin* article by Chris Durban also deals with the subject of literary translation, or more specifically, payment issues related thereto.

We’ve included a partial reprint of an article about Getting Started, which appeared a few years ago in the *CT*.

Last but not least, this month’s Information Exchange, which comes courtesy of the AATIA website, provides you with a number of links to organizations and publications where you can get help, information and/or — yes indeed! — published! ✎

Assault ...continued from page 5

and would be happy to meet with them at their convenience. I had a wonderful time in the city I hadn’t visited since I was 12, and I could feel my old “urban blood” from growing up in Mexico City begin to bubble. I arrived two days before the conference so as to have ample time to visit and go to appointments.

After the conference got into full swing the days were packed to maximum capacity and my attention divided between fascinating panel offerings and enticing city attractions. Toward the end of the week, after a call home, my family informed me that I had a message from someone who wanted to give me work. Here was my chance: an editor was actually excited to meet me and was positively impressed by my credentials.

It was Friday. The chances of actually meeting were slim, but I waited around the phone playing a miserable game of phone tag with the editor until finally we spoke. The only time she could see me was between 3 and 4 that afternoon, as she had an author from out of town and was busy showing her around and accompanying her to meetings with different people at the publish-

ing house. I had agreed to read the story for the Spanish workshop led by Sam Zimmerman that required someone to imitate a Mexican sportscaster narrating a soccer game, but this was my chance, my only chance. I found Sam and explained my predicament. He generously let me wiggle my way out, and I was able to call the editor to confirm our appointment for that afternoon.

I was nervous, didn’t feel like eating, so I thought about walking around New York for 2 hours, but figured I would probably be too exhausted and too wired from all that city energy. So I did some yoga in the hotel room (otherwise known as an Old World closet with a view), relaxed, and waited another hour. At 2 o’clock I set off on foot to cover the fifteen or so blocks to my destination. I was by now well oriented in the city, so it was an enjoyable walk. The autumn air was a bit nippy for us Texans, but the sun shone brightly through the grand architecture.

The meeting was promising and full of possibilities. The bright, young editor, a daughter of Ecuadorean immigrants, had just replaced the one I had found in the book and was eager to get to business and take the Spanish imprint,

Aguilar Libros en Español, to new heights. She gave me a pile of books as samples of her publisher’s accomplishments in Spanish so far and said that hopefully she would soon have a project for me that would get my juices flowing.

I had done my homework and it had paid off. I didn’t yet have a new book project under my arm or a book contract in hand, but I had managed to get in the door with what had been, in essence, a cold call. I made other valuable contacts at the conference, including a literary agent from *Writer’s House*, a translator colleague from Barcelona, another colleague who lives in Mexico City, an art catalog editor, as well as other famous and not so famous translators, all equally passionate about languages, words and cultures. ✎

Reprinted with permission from
AATIA newsletter

Liliana Valenzuela is an English>Spanish Translator who lives and works in Austin, Texas. She can be reached at 102706.3505@compuserve.com.

Getting started

by Ruth Zimmer Boggs

There are ways to succeed in adding those magic words “Published in...” to your résumé. At the 1997 ATA Conference in San Francisco, CA, Clifford E. Landers and Alexis Levitin, two seasoned—and published!—New York literary translators, provided some strategic tips on how to get published.

First, you need to decide whose work you want to translate. Proficiency in the target language is generally considered more important than proficiency the source language. Ideally, you should spend some time in the country of the source language, immerse yourself in its culture, and find an author who is attractive to you. If you can’t spent a summer in Spain, Portugal, or wherever your creative juices tend to flow faster, you need to familiarize yourself as much as possible with your subject through the means that are available locally. This could include poetry readings, perusing foreign language publications, and generally “getting into” your subject.

Once you’ve chosen a poem or short story that you would like to translate, it’s time to get to work. But wait—what about copyrights? For lesser-known living authors, it usually suffices to get the author’s written permission. With well-known or deceased authors, things get a bit more complicated and it’s a good idea to consult a copyright specialist before you attempt to publish your translation of, say, Paul Celan or Allen Ginsberg.

Clearing the copyright hurdles and actually translating the work are a piece of cake compared to what comes next—getting it published. Landers and Levitin suggested the *International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses* and the

Directory of Literary Magazines as good starting points to look for a publisher (see Information Exchange for contact information).

Before needlessly spending time and money on random submissions, you might want to consider testing the waters with a query letter first. If you do decide to randomly submit your work, there should be a method to your madness, and it’s called “cross-referencing.” Make five copies of every translation. Send out one, mark one as a file copy, and keep the rest in reserve. If your submission gets rejected, make a notation on the file copy to keep track of your submissions.

...don’t turn down any widget translations—yet.

Do not send submissions to several publishers simultaneously. If you should hit the jackpot and get accepted by two publishers at once, you would have to turn down one of them. After having taken the time to read your work and respond to you, that publisher is not likely to consider your work again if you turn him down.

Your submissions should be accompanied by a cover letter stating the name of the author, the title of the poem or short story, a paragraph about the author, and a paragraph about yourself. Don’t get discouraged! When you receive a rejection, sit down immediately, on the

same day, as Landers stressed explicitly, and send out another submission.

To cushion the hard blow of rejection, Landers and Levitin suggested some literary publications that welcome submissions from unpublished translators. They include *The Massachusetts Review*, *The Seneca Review*, *The Minnesota Review*, *Beacons*, and *Two Lines*.

Finally, what can you expect as payment for your labor of love? Not wanting to violate any laws, I can safely tell you this: generally, your proceeds from the translation of a poem by an unknown poet might buy you a tall latte and a biscotti at Starbucks. If you’re lucky, lunch at the Red Sage. If you’re very, very lucky, it’s a long poem, and you can get it into *The New Yorker*, maybe dinner at La Côte d’Or. But by all means, don’t turn down any widget translations—yet.

Reprinted from the
December 97 CT

Errata

When we published the list of members who served as NCATA officers since 1980 in last month’s anniversary issue, we left out a name: Karin Burchard, who served as Secretary in 1983. Our apologies for the oversight! ✎

Going Public with WETA

First NCATA PR Project A Success

by *Lillian Clementi*

If you tuned in to WETA television on the evening of March 8, you're very likely to have seen NCATA's name and logo interspersed among the Broadway singers featured that night. And if you looked a little closer, you'd have found some very familiar faces on the set behind the WETA emcees.

About thirty NCATA and ATA members stepped forward to answer phones in the PBS affiliate's studio during its pledge drive last month. In exchange for our support, WETA acknowledged us on the air and displayed our logo several times during NCATA's volunteer shift. WETA TV is the leading public broadcasting station in our area, and its weekly television audience of 1,016,000 viewing households includes many Washington decision-makers. In taking this step, NCATA joins a wide variety of local businesses and organizations that use WETA's pledge drive as a source of public exposure. Although it's possible to join forces with another group to reach the required number of volunteers, our strong turnout meant that NCATA did not have to share credit for the shift with any other organization.

NCATA volunteers arriving at WETA's studios were given a warm welcome and then ushered into a break room filled with refreshments ranging from the nutritionally correct (raw baby carrots) to the utterly decadent (gourmet chocolate-chip cookies). After some socializing and a brief orientation session, the group went straight to work answering calls and taking pledges. On-air pledge breaks alternated with generous periods of leisure for the volunteers, who generally spent the time chatting with each other, relaxing and raiding the refreshment table.

About halfway through the shift, one of WETA's engineers treated the volunteers to an unexpected tour of the studio, including the control room and the set of the Lehrer News Hour. And at the end of the evening, the station raffled off door prizes to two lucky members of the NCATA contingent.

WETA volunteer coordinator Christine Wolski was pleased with the group and thrilled to have an entire shift filled from a single source, and the volunteers seem to have enjoyed spending the evening together and getting a glimpse of the station from behind the scenes. Given the success of this first outing, NCATA hopes to make the WETA pledge drive an annual event. We have already begun to explore the possibility of taking pledges in languages other than English and are looking for other new ideas. If inspiration strikes, contact NCATA PR Chair Lillian Clementi at **LClementi@compuserve.com** or 703-820-8663.

*Lillian Clementi is an accredited translator for French <>English who lives in Arlington, VA. She can be reached at **LClementi@compuserve.com***

Many thanks to all of the NCATA and ATA volunteers who made this PR project a success.

Jessica Abreu
Alicia and [Marina] Agnese
Scott Brennan
Alison Carroll,
Lillian and Vito Clementi
Ted Crump
Chantal Dussuel
Terry Hanlen
Cheryl Hutchison
Carmen Kosik
Paul Merriam
Tunde Mogan
Vilma Molfino
Meg Moquete
Barry Olsen
Julie Porter
Sangeeta Prasad
Judi Rines
Sally Robertson,
Ewa Rurarz-Huygens
Donna Sandin
Heidi Schultz
Mark Stafford
Sandra Burns Thomson
John Vázquez
Chari Voss

<p>DR. ASLAN ASLANIAN ARMENIAN, FARSI, DARI, PASHTU, ARABIC فارسی - العربی - ՀԱՅԵՐԵՆ Translations & Interpretations Since 1976 (Travel) FAX/PHONE: 818-353-5862 PAGER: 1-888-953-4005 9673 Crystal View Dr. Tujunga, CA 91042</p> <p>MEMBER: ATA, NAJIT, CCIA, SFL, SOMI, NOTIS, CATI ASLANIAN@PACBELL.NET A Translator for All Seasons, An Interpreter for All Reasons</p>
--

Information Exchange

Literary Organizations:

ATA Literary Division
American Translators Association
1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 220
Alexandria, VA 22314-2840
tel.: (703) 683-6100
fax: (703) 683-6122
<http://www.literarydivision.org>

Literary Translators Association
of Canada
3492 Laval Avenue
Montreal
H2X 3C8

PEN Translation Committee
PEN American Center
568 Broadway
New York, NY 10012-3225
tel: (212) 334-1660
<http://pen.org>

Publication:
A Handbook for Literary Translators

Translators Association
Gordon Fielden, Secretary
c/o In Other Words
The Society of Authors
84 Drayton Gardens
London SW10 9S8
tel: 01713736642
fax: 01713735769
authorsoc@writers.org.uk

Journals of and About Literary Translation

AGNI Magazine
Askold Melnyczuk, Editor
Boston University
Department DB
236 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215

This magazine has a special interest in international writing and so publishes translations regularly. Publishes an entire Translation Issue on an occasional basis. Like *AGNI's* other awards, the William Arrowsmith Translation Award is chosen from *AGNI* pieces that have appeared over the last year and is announced in the spring.

Beacons: A Publication of the American Translators Association's Literary Division
American Translators Association
1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 220
Alexandria, VA 22314
tel: (703) 683-6100
fax: (703) 683-6122
73564.2032@compuserve.com

Dimension2: Contemporary German-Language Literature
Ingo R. Stoehr, Editor
P.O. Box 2038
Kilgore, TX 75663-2038

Glas
Contemporary Russian literature in English translation
Natasha Perova, Editor
Glas Publishers (Russia)
P.O. Box 47
Moscow 119517
Russia
tel/fax: (095) 441-9157
perova@glas.msk.su

Glas Publishers (England)
Department of Russian Literature
University of Birmingham
Birmingham B15 2TT
United Kingdom
tel/fax: (121) 414-6047
a.l.tait@bham.ac.uk

Luz en Arte y Literature: Revista Bilingüe Internacional
Verónica Miranda
P.O. Box 571062
Tarzana, CA 91357-1062

Two Lines: A Journal of Translation
P.O. Box 641978
San Francisco, CA 94167
<http://www.twolines.com/>

Original translations into English of reportage, anthropological data from the field, legal documents, advertising, oral history, diaries, proverbs, case studies, poetry, fiction, essays and short articles concerning the translation process will be considered. Especially sought are works that bring to the attention of the reader new genres and rare languages.

HEAT
HEAT is a new Australian literary magazine with an international orientation. It is committed to the publication of good writing, in English, and in translation into English. *HEAT* publishes poetry, fiction and essays: writing that is experimental, provocative, intellectual and passionate.
www.ozemail.com.au/~indyk/index.html

The Directory of Literary Magazines (Council of Literary Magazines and Presses, P.O. Box 8843, Emeryville, CA 94662).

The International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses (Dustbooks, P.O. Box 100, Paradise, CA 95967)

Renditions

Salt Hill Journal

Publishes short fiction, poetry and “hypertext.” Awards prizes for the best short fiction (deadline is September 15, annually), poetry (deadline is 1 May annually) and hypertext (deadline is January 31 annually) that appears in the journal.

Submit to: *Salt Hill Journal*
English Department
Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York 13244-1170

Related Materials

Small Press Distribution, Inc. is a non-profit organization located in Berkeley, California. Their mission is to nurture a cultural context in which the literary arts are valued and sustained. SPD provides services to literary audiences, writers and publishers via its book distribution activities, public programming and advocacy efforts. SPD is the only wholesaler in the country exclusively dedicated to independently published literature, distributing books from nearly 500 publishers to bookstores, libraries and individuals. www.spdbooks.org

Related Websites

LitTrans Mailing List

The LitTrans Mailing List is an informal list server dedicated to literary translation, from and into any language. The list is not affiliated with any translation organization and welcomes input from translators at all stages of their career, from beginner to pro. Topics include questions of terminology, style, translation theory, publishing, resources and anything else that might be useful to literary translators.

Reprinted with permission from
AATIA Website.

Clapping Invisible Hands

by Chris Durban

The Onionskin is a column in the ITI Bulletin (UK). ITI is the UK's foremost association of professional translators and interpreters. —Ed.

Robert Wechsler's *Performing Without a Stage: The Art of Literary Translation* has obvious appeal for the *Onionskin*, given the book's repeated reminders of the heavy toll taken by translator invisibility.

For Wechsler, literary translation is an art—a “performing art” equivalent in many ways to a musician's interpretation of the work of a great composer. With an important difference: the translation “performer” is most lavishly praised when the public has not even noticed his or her input.

Well-known literary translators including William Weaver have stated as much. In an interview, Weaver mused that reviews omitting any reference to a work's translator can be a compliment—a sign the reviewer wasn't aware that the book was written originally in another language. “For the translator,” he commented, “this kind of anonymity can be a real achievement.”

Yet for translation scene commentators like Lawrence Venuti (*The Translator's Invisibility*) and now Wechsler, such “self-annihilation” deserves a sharp second look. Ultimately, argues Venuti, “[invisibility] contributes to the cultural marginality and economic exploitation from which translators suffer today.”

In actual writing translators are submissive partners, conduits for an

author's aesthetic and philosophical ideas. But when they fail to speak up in public, “off the page”, they perpetuate their own often lamentably poor working conditions and “lack of respect” (a common complaint).

What better way for literary translators to expand their audience than by educating people about what translation is and forging a strong and positive public image? Robert Wechsler lists ways in which they might achieve this: by writing translators' prefaces explaining why they opted for this or that approach to a particular book; by arranging with publishers to make appearances at bookstores and in the media; by insisting that publishers note translation prizes on book covers; etc. His exasperation with translators' general humility and tendency to grumble away in the shadows certainly rings a bell.

Yet suggestions on how translators might move into the spotlight is only one thread of this thoughtful and lively book. Robert Wechsler has read widely and draws on his own experience as an editor of translations from German and Czech. Best of all, his interviews with a host of literary translators feature illuminating examples, engagingly presented. Reading *Performing Without a Stage*, the *Onionskin* was impressed once again with how articulate translators are. Here, with a sympathetic and knowledgeable author, the expertise they bring to their art comes over loud and clear.

Our only quibble: like the shy translators he takes to task, Mr. Wechsler and his publishing house have done far too little to promote this thought-provoking book (ISBN 0-945774-38-9; Catbird Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1998. 320 pp (cloth) \$21.95. catbird@pipeline.com).

Answer to Quiz on page 8:

It is “copyrightable.”

Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Location
April 6, 2000	7 pm	Lecture: Translating Neruda and Celan	Borders Bookstore, 18th and L Streets, Washington, DC 202-466-2152
April 9, 2000	1:30 pm	Lecture: A Conversation on Paul Celan	U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW, Washington, DC 202-488-2692
April 26, 2000	7 pm– 8:30 pm	Chapter meeting: Military/Naval/Aviation	Office of Language Services, Dept. of State, 2401 E Stret, NW, Washington, DC (see page 3)

NCATA
P. O. Box 65200
Washington, DC 20035-5200