



capital translator

Newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Translators Association
Vol. 19, No. 3

April 1997

More on the New Résumé

Cover Letters for Your Résumé

by *Eve R. Lindemuth*

Due to my preoccupation with how résumés look and how they can be improved, I am beginning to get the reputation in and outside of the office as the Résumé Lady. To make sure I am really earning this title, I am back with more tips for you as you present your résumé in the search of new clients and projects. This month's topic will be the cover letter.

Writing a cover letter is crucial if you wish to make your goals clear to a prospective client. This fact must be emphasized in the age of faxed, e-mailed and web page résumés. Applicants seem to neglect the cover letter, perhaps because they are concentrating so much on the new form that their résumés are taking.

An effective cover letter is error free and can range from a few sentences atop an e-mailed résumé to one page, but should not be longer. A cover letter

should clearly state why you are communicating with the potential client. If you are responding to a specific ad, state where you saw it. Agencies or clients may place many ads and be confused if they don't have this information. If you are making a general inquiry as to whether the client has a need for your translation services, be sure to state your language pairs as well. This makes it easy for the reader to find out exactly what you can offer before even perusing your résumé.

A further word of advice, make sure that you don't commit this ever-more popular faux pas: an e-mailed cover letter introducing a web page résumé that says simply, "Dear Sir or Madam, I am a translator and would be pleased to work for your company. Please view my résumé at <http://www.xxx.com/~translator.html>. Believe it or not, the recipient

of this gem probably doesn't rush to start his/her web browser!

Sending a résumé without a cover letter makes it seem that you are engaging in an impersonal mass mailing, faxing, or

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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 Editors, the Chapter, or its Board.

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Printed on recycled paper.

President's Corner

by Lillian Clementi



Preparations for George Mason University's Spanish Translation Seminar, slated for Saturday, April 26, are continuing at a furious pace, and the event promises to be very rewarding for anyone working into or out of Spanish. According to presenter Rogelio Camacho, the purpose of this practical, hands-on seminar is *to help participants improve language skills and aid them in translating and/or interpreting...accurately and efficiently, in an idiomatic and grammatically correct manner*. A program and reservation form are included in this issue. Space is limited, so send in your payment today.

Thanks to the hard work of Program Chair **Alissa Martin**, the February 24 screening of *The Interpreters: A Historical Perspective* was a resounding success. The film is the brainchild of UN interpreter Evelyn Moggio-Ortiz, who flew down from New York City to present the film to the NCATA gathering and take questions and answers afterwards. By all accounts, Evelyn, her video and the pizza buffet were extremely well received. Alissa has now turned her attention to our joint luncheon with the Society of Federal Linguists on May 10. Our guest will be Ed Salazar, an engaging and personable speaker who will discuss key language policy issues and the ways that professional associations and their members can

influence the language policy debate. Mark your calendar now, and look for details in the May CT. Alissa is also investigating the possibility of a river cruise for NCATA members and their families sometime in mid-July. If you have any suggestions for the outing, feel free to contact her at (202) 337-2301 (phone) or e-mail her at martina2@gusun.acc.georgetown.edu.

In the housekeeping category, the other members of the Board and I have continued to work on updating and revising NCATA's bylaws with an eye towards incorporating the chapter sometime in the next few years. If all goes well, you'll have the text of the revised bylaws sometime in the fall, and we'll ask you to ratify them in December's election. We are working closely with ATA Headquarters, and I'll be discussing the most important issues with you in this column over the next two months. One of the biggest questions is corporate membership. The founding members of NCATA chose deliberately to restrict NCATA's membership to individuals, but I'm wondering whether it's time for us to change that. What do you think? Don't wait until the election to let us hear from you. ✍

NCATA INCOME AND EXPENDITURES 1996

Cash in bank as of January 1, 1996 \$4,014.12

Income:

Dues	6,846.00
ATA Rebate	1,219.50
Professional Development Seminar (10/95)	214.07
Professional Services Directory Sales	1,330.00
Professional Services Directory Listing Fees	104.65
Advertising	
Capital Translator	105.00
Professional Services Directory	100.00
Social Events	1,317.00
Interest Income less Fees, Bank Charges and Withholding Taxes	<u>64.45</u>
	\$11,300.67

Expenditures:

Capital Translator	
Printing	2,478.94
Postage/Supplies/Other Costs	1,378.84
Honoraria	850.00
Production Manager	930.00
Professional Services Directory	
Printing	1,043.68
Marketing	295.24
Mailing, Supplies, Shipping	892.42
Membership Directory	230.00
Other Publications (NCATA pamphlet)	48.07
Membership Expenses (renewal/other)	357.14
Professional Development Seminars and Other Meetings	117.50
Social Events	1,346.50
Refreshments (Programs/Board Meetings)	177.03
Telephone Charges	635.57
Internet Fees/Web Page	150.00
P.O. Box Fee (6 months)	33.00
Office Supplies, Postage, and Other Miscellaneous Expenses	58.64
1995 Ballot Costs	197.04
New Checks (200)	14.95
Misc. Refunds (overpayments to NCATA)	<u>5.00</u>
	\$11,239.56

Cash in bank as of December 31, 1996

\$4,075.23

Submitted by

Barbara M. Oldroyd

Barbara M. Oldroyd, NCATA Treasurer 1996

Exercises to Prevent Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

According to a new study, a series of simple exercises can help prevent carpal tunnel syndrome, a condition caused by repetitive motion that causes pain, tingling, and numbness of the arms, wrists, fingers, and hands. These simple moves (some of which are described here) substantially decrease internal pressure on the median nerve of the wrist, explains Houshang Seradge, M.D., director of the Hand Institute of the Orthopaedic and Reconstructive Center in Oklahoma City. "Internal pressure compresses the nerve, which hampers circulation and causes symptoms," he says. "After study participants did all the exercises for one minute, internal pressure dropped and stayed low for several hours." He recommends these exercises, whether or not you have carpal tunnel syndrome (get your doctor's OK first). "In the long run, doing the exercises daily

—before starting work and during breaks—may prevent carpal tunnel syndrome. And if you already have it, doing them could help you."

1. Start standing, arms at your sides. Lift arms so that your hands are level with your shoulders and stretch wrists and fingers so that your fingertips point to the ceiling. Hold for a count of five.

2. Straighten wrists and relax fingers so they hang loosely. Hold for a count of five.

3. Keeping wrists straight, make tight fists with both hands. Hold for a count of five.

4. Bend both wrists down, keeping hands in fists. Hold for a count of five. Return to step two for a five count. Do entire sequence ten times. ✎

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Letter

...continued from page 1

e-mailing and lack knowledge of the client's specific needs. While this may be true and is sometimes necessary to get your name circulating, you don't want it to be obvious! To further avoid the "mass mailing" impression, try to personalize each letter, fax or e-mail.

When I receive an e-mailed résumé and see that I am one of 10 agencies receiving this information, I don't feel like the translator is really concerned with me in particular. Take the extra time to send out individual e-mails even if it means cutting and pasting the same information over and over. The same goes for mass faxes or letters: use a mail merge function (included in most word-processing programs) to give a personalized look to your correspondence.

Always including a cover letter will increase your chances of getting the jobs or projects that you really want. Sending a well-written and well-thought out cover letter makes it even more likely that you will be in high demand. ✎

© 1997 Eve R. Lindemuth
Eve R. Lindemuth is Recruiter at ILE.

NCATA-SFL Luncheon

Don't miss the joint NCATA-SFL luncheon, slated for Saturday May 10 at the Lighthouse Tavern in Rosslyn. Language policy guru Ed Salazar will speak on strategies that professional associations can use to influence language policy. Mark your calendar now. ✎

Your Last Issue

This is the last issue of the *Capital Translator* you will receive if you have not yet renewed your membership for 1997. Renew now to remain in the *Professional Services Directory* and to continue your subscription to the *CT*. Contact Michael Wahlster at (804) 984-1305 or by e-mail at MWahlster@Comet.Net. ✎

Accreditation Sitting in Alexandria

by Bill Keasbey

The NCATA is sponsoring an accreditation sitting on Saturday, May 3, at 9.30 a.m. in Classroom 1 of the Alexandria Graduate Education Center of The George Washington University, 1775B Duke Street in Alexandria. The Center is the same complex as the ATA Headquarters and the Panevino Restaurant, where our Christmas party was held. It is directly across the street from the King Street Metro Stop on the Blue and Yellow lines. Parking is available in the Colonial Parking garage (entrance on Duke Street) at a weekend rate of \$2.00 for all day. Some street parking is also available in the area.

If you read the very informative articles on accreditation in the last issue of the CT and are interested in taking the examination, you probably have already requested a practice test from Headquarters, completed it, and sent it back for grading. This is an essential first step, unless you have taken an examination previously or have participated in an orientation workshop. Do pay close attention to the comments made by the grader on your practice test. They can help you make improvements that will enable you to pass the examination or perhaps persuade you that you are not yet ready for it.

The next step is to request the registration form for the examination from Headquarters and send it in with a check

for \$100 before April 18. After that date, you are subject to the late registration fee of \$175.

A few nuts and bolts reminders to supplement Jonathan Hine's article on preparing for the exam: Bring either medium pencils, a sharpener, and an eraser, or pens with ink that

will reproduce well, since the exams are copied for distribution to the graders. Take as many dictionaries as you can carry and manage comfortably. Read the instructions carefully and listen to what the proctor tells you. Make sure you identify each page properly. ✍

Job Hunting on the Web

by Jon Russell

I thought it would be helpful to pass on the Wall Street Journal's top web sites for job searching.

The job search Web site list wouldn't be complete without including the entry of the Society for Technical Communication (STC) job databanks, which appear at the end of this list. Good luck on your job search endeavors!

America's Job Bank: <http://www.ajb.dni.us>
Career Path: <http://www.careerpath.com>
Career Mosaic: <http://www.careermosaic.com>
Internet Career Connection: <http://www.iccweb.com>
The Monster Board Career Safari: <http://www.monster.com>
E-Span: <http://www.espan.com>
Career Magazine: <http://www.careermag.com>
Career City: <http://www.careercity.com>
NationJob Network: <http://www.nationjob.com>
STC Employment Resources:
http://www.stcva.org/Employment/emp_menu.html
STC Washington, D.C., Chapter Job Postings:
<http://stc.org/region2/wdc/www/jobpost.html> ✍

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Inglis At Will

The Patient English Tourist

by Neil Inglis

I like the Swiss; they're serious about money and so am I. I far prefer the Swiss to the English, whom I find to be supercilious and untrustworthy!"

Supercilious? Well, OK, but untrustworthy? After hearing this cruel slur from a fellow passenger from Washington, I stole out of Cointrin Airport, and hopped in a taxi bound for downtown Geneva.

If you are reading these words, chances are that you travel to Europe from time to time, or are considering a visit there in future. What do first-time visitors to Europe have to look forward to? Are prices as sky-high as ever? What's the policy on tipping? Where are the best places to eat out, the tourist traps to avoid? To answer these and other questions, I recently embarked on a grand tour, taking in Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Germany, and of course, supercilious and untrustworthy Britain.

First, some language humor. In a display cabinet in the medical section at the Geneva Museum of the History of Science, I came across a saber-toothed saw used for amputations in the good old days, before anesthetic. "Les outils de la chirurgie ont toujours été tranchants!" read the label beneath the gruesomely sharp blade, which I translated as "Surgical instruments have

always been on the cutting edge."

There is much chatter about the *European Union* these days. What impact is the Single Market having where it really

**...booking rooms
and flights through
a major credit card
company is not the
smartest way to
economize...**

counts, i.e., in the stomach and in the kitchen? Whereas *British cuisine* used to be a national joke, a contradiction in terms, restaurant lovers in London today have a top-flight assortment of culinary excellence to choose from, with Indian restaurants at the fore; i.e., no more egg and chips, baked beans on toast, or steak-and-kidney pudding.

Elsewhere in Europe there is a great deal of average cooking on the loose. On my grand tour through Europe, I enjoyed succulent roast duck in Luxembourg, and other hotel restau-

rants looked after me just as well; local restaurants, on the other hand, proved to be somewhat less than temples of gourmet delight. But an opportunity to sample *choucroute garnie* in Strasbourg, itself a delectable city, is not to be missed under any circumstances.

"Le service est compris mais pas le pourboire," my Strasbourg waiter explained to me; restaurant tipping is alive and well. All the same, hotel staff seemed astonished to receive a *pourboire*; this could be where foreign visitors are attempting to economize.

I had booked my rooms and flights through a major American credit card company (not the smartest way to economize, incidentally). Hotels chosen in this fashion are much as you'd expect—clean, centrally located, with restaurant and bar on the premises. The bad news is that they are packed with patrons much like oneself, i.e., Americans and Brits. A K Street lawyer padded through the Strasbourg hotel bar in his snow-white jogging socks as he hectored his barman on the optimum way to prepare Bloody Marys; remember the optimum way to make a Bloody Mary the next time you prepare one at home. Because the hotel restaurant at my subsequent stop in Luxembourg was jammed with customers, the waiters there sent

packing two burly British truck drivers from Humberside, who proceeded to inquire of the maître d' whether reservations were needed ("Do we have to beeeewwwqqqueue?", rhyming with "puke"). "Do you have to puke... Why?" asked the maitre d'.

You can always spot a Brit-dominated hotel or restaurant; the in-house staff understand English, so listen carefully and check whether the waiters or check-in staff use the more conventional "Thank You!" or the London variant "Cheers!" If the latter, you'll know that plenty of supercilious, shifty characters are about. As you brace yourself for the inevitable encounter, discard all notions of class, civility, or noblesse oblige, and banish all thoughts of Laurence Olivier, Hugh Grant, or John Gielgud from your mind. Get ready to be swatted aside by boorish, uncouth youngsters bearing skis as they head for the slopes or the nearest tourist attraction. The Brits of today will say "Cheers!" to you as they do this. Furthermore, they pronounce the word *literally* as *lit-Shirley*; in their mouths, *actually* comes out sounding rather like *at-Shirley*; while instead of *sexually*, they say *sex-Shirley*" (at-Shirley, lit-Shirley, sex-Shirley—clearly this is a woman deserving of our sympathies).

If Brits are not always untrustworthy, train timetables in the UK almost always are. That is not the case elsewhere; Swiss railroads ticket sales personnel will print out customized itineraries for travelers. Pay attention to these documents, for

they contain the tightest of connections; have your bags by your side at the ready, and be prepared to bolt out of your train as soon as you pull into the station where you have to make your correspondance. Times do change in other respects: 30 years ago my mother had her copy of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* snatched in customs at Dublin airport as pornographic filth, whereas today, the customs checks (crossing from Switzerland into France) were perfunctory and totally absent elsewhere.

As a first trip to Germany it was perhaps a mistake to pick Frankfurt, a cosmopolitan city for all the wrong reasons (*Champions—The American Sports Bar Restaurant* offered a feast of local cuisine at my hotel; *Good Food/Good Sports/Good Times.*).

Creeping Americanization is a danger anywhere; but I fell in love with what I found next door to my hotel, namely, the Frankfurt Natural History Museum, a magical shrine to human learning and a must for science buffs. My Lufthansa

business flight from Frankfurt to City Airport of London (i.e., downtown London, not Heathrow Airport) was a marvel of careless luxury and uninhibited champagne. Opulent service likewise made life much easier on the Air France return trip to Washington; their caterer's strike meant we were served fruitcake for lunch, but with free-flowing bubbly, who cared?

In truth, there is much that can go wrong on a visit to Europe, and it pays to stay alert and to plan your moves well in advance. At the same time, however, you should also try to stand aloof from minor hassles and focus on the larger picture. If your spoken French lets you down and you end up conversing with bureau-de-change staff in a mishmash of French and English, it doesn't really matter so long as your transaction gets carried out; and at dinnertime, if your food is delicious but your waiter gets shirty, well, no *pourboire* for him. Above all, try not to be too supercilious or untrustworthy; when in Europe, do as the English don't. ☞

NCATA Online Directory Updated

The first major Directory update for 1997 is now online. Our Web Directory (www.ncata.org) has grown considerably and now offers 200+ entries. Minor design changes should help improve navigation and legibility. Please note that it takes two steps to reach the full entry for an individual. Click on *How to Use the Directory* to find out more. Take a moment to check your entry and report any errors, omissions, or desired changes to membership chair Michael Wahlster (MWahlster@Comet.Net). ☞

Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Location
April 18 - 29		SW Regional Conference	Austin, Texas
April 19 April 26		Accreditation exams	New York City, NY Call ATA HQ 703-683-6100
April 26	9 a.m. - 4 p.m.	Spanish Translation Workshop	George Mason U., Fairfax, VA (see insert)
May 3	9:30 a.m.	Accreditation exams	GMU Center, Alexandria, VA Call ATA HQ 703-683-6100
May 10	12 noon	NCATA/SFL luncheon	Lighthouse Tavern, Rosslyn, VA
May 17 - 18		CATI Conference	U of NC at Greensboro, NC

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