



capital translator

Newsletter of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Translators Association
Vol. 21, No. 2 March 1999

Montréal: A Trip to a True Bilingual City

by *Dimitra Hengen*

How do you keep your native language skills current? It's a question frequently asked in interviews, and a very legitimate one. Alienation from the native language can be the kiss of death for a translator, and many of my colleagues take at least two or three trips to Europe per year for that very reason. There is, however, a slightly more economical alternative for native French speakers: We need go no farther than north of the border, and voilà!

I had always wanted to visit Quebec and finally decided Christmas shopping was a good reason.

I first heard about the Renaud-Bray bookstore in Montréal when I worked at the Alliance Française of Honolulu. I had been ordering books from them for some time, and I thought it was finally time to take a trip to visit in person. I drove the 700 miles from DC. in a leisurely two days, stopping for the night in Syracuse, NY. I arrived in Montréal in mid-afternoon, early enough to register in the hotel across the street from the bookstore, which is the biggest francophone bookstore in North America. Located in the heights of Montréal, it is surrounded by several smaller specialized French

language bookstores. Almost equivalent to the French FNAC, it occupies two floors and offers a myriad of goodies for everybody: English and French language books, videos, CD-ROMs, music CDs and tapes, French magazines and newspapers from Quebec and France, and bilingual dictionaries. The bookstore can obtain any book if it is published by French or Canadian publishers, and will mail books, newspapers, and magazines anywhere.

I was pleasantly surprised by their large selection of "Bandes Dessinées", new releases, children's books, gift items, toys, stationary, etc. I particularly liked the bilingual calendars.

Prices are very reasonable, and if you happen to shop on a special day like Boxing Day, you can get 20% off on almost every book in the store. I bought: a guide on technical, administrative and scientific writing: \$15; *Le Visuel*, a French/English technical dictionary: \$27.50; a French/English dictionary of colloquial expressions: \$15; several bilingual books for \$6 each; the CD of the new French musical Notre Dame de Paris: \$19, etc.

Right across the street, I found a second heaven in a bilingual com-

puter store: Camelot. Specializing in computer software, CD-ROMs, magazines and books, Camelot is the largest computer bookstore in Canada, with more than 10,000 titles in the store. It offers software and CD-ROM in full versions, updates, licenses and educational versions for PC and Macintosh. And yes, you can upgrade your programs with French versions. It caters to

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For advertising in the *Capital Translator*,
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President's Corner

by Scott Brennan



I hope all those who attended the 1999 NCATA Job Fair — on either side of the table — came away with a broader and richer network of professional contacts. A short list of popular vendors was invited to take part for the first time this year, and new Vice President **Sangeeta Prasad** and Program Chair **John Vázquez** got their baptism of fire. Thanks to both for their hard work!

I'd also like to welcome **Tahmena Rauf**, who will be sharing membership duties with **Alissa Martin**. Membership is one of the most labor-intensive parts of running NCATA, so her contribution will greatly benefit all of us.

NCATA welcomed 128 new individual members last year, out of a total membership of 386. A lot of that growth can be attributed to NCATA's higher profile in the Washington translation community, with the addition of corporate/institutional membership and the Job Fair. For many of the translators and interpreters who attended and joined at the door, the Job Fair was their first taste of the kinds of benefits a professional association like NCATA has to offer. Many others were new to the profession or in the early stages of building their practice.

With these translators and interpreters in mind, NCATA is hosting a seminar on The Business of Translation this Spring (details on page 3). Given the academic background language professionals typically come out of in this country, many of us (myself included) are "accidental businesspeople" and have to learn a whole new set of skills to survive and thrive as professionals. This all-day program is designed to address just those needs (a detailed roster of speakers will be published in next month's issue of the *Capital Translator*).

Ever wondered how best to market your services, build a relationship with translation companies and direct clients, protect your business interests, and what factors you should consider when setting your rates? Knowledgeable speakers will address these issues and more.

And since networking is one of the best ways to enhance your prospects, plan to use the lunch hour to catch up or get to know your colleagues at any of the many restaurants nearby the NRECA facility.

As always, if you have any special areas you would like to see this seminar address, please feel free to contact me with suggestions at sbrennan@csi.com or (703) 393-0365. ✍

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G&W Communications

Michael Wahlster
Fax: ++1.804.984.1306
E-mail: HomePage@gw-language.com
Sample: www.gw-language.com/home

Welcome!

A warm welcome to the following new and returning members:

Francesco Alberti, Chantal Combes, Geotext Translations, Roxana Huhulea, Carmen Kosik, and Chari Voss. ✍

Have You Missed the Renewal Deadline?

January 15 was the deadline for renewal of your 1999 NCATA membership. For those who joined NCATA before September 1, 1998, and haven't renewed yet, the March issue of the Capital Translator will be the last issue they receive. Their entry will also be deleted from the on-line directory. But it isn't too late. If you have not renewed already do so now. If you have no renewal form, you can download one from the membership area of the NCATA Web site (www.ncata.org) or contact any of the chapter officers. ✍

NCATA Seminar

The Business of Translation

When: Saturday, May 1, 1999
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Where: Ellipse Conference Center
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)
4301 Wilson Blvd., Arlington VA (Ballston Metro)

Cost: \$25 per person (\$40 for non-members)

Information: Contact NCATA President Scott Brennan, sbrennan@csi.com or (703) 393-0365

Who should attend?

Budding translators and interpreters who want to learn the ropes. Experienced translators looking for new ideas on how to enhance their practice.

What are the benefits?

This seminar will introduce new translators to the larger world of the translation community and how to navigate it successfully. Representatives of the American Translators Association (ATA) will discuss the benefits and services offered by NCATA's parent organization, including the ATA accreditation program.

Plus: Ever wondered how best to market your services, build a relationship with translation companies and direct clients, protect your business interests, and what factors you should consider when setting your rates? Hear it from the people who know!

Please complete the registration form below and send with payment to:
NCATA Seminar Registration, P.O. Box 65200, Washington DC 20035-5200.

The Business of Translation, May 1, 1999

Make check payable to NCATA, and write "NCATA Seminar" on the memo line.

Name: _____

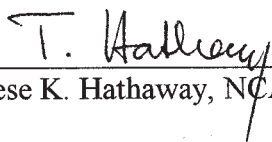
Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

NCATA INCOME AND EXPENDITURES - 1998

Cash in bank as of January 1, 1998	\$ 6,512.99
Income:	
Dues	\$ 9,777.50
ATA Chapter Rebate	\$ 1,682.75
Professional Development Seminar (Intl Dev.)	\$ 1,180.00
Job Fair 1998	\$ 220.00
Social Events (Holiday Party 1998)	\$ 1,075.00
(Holiday Party 1997)	\$ 134.46
<i>Professional Services Directory</i> Sales	\$ 1,600.00
Advertising	
<i>Capital Translator</i>	\$ 85.00
<i>Professional Services Directory</i>	\$ 1,045.00
Interest Income less Fees and Withholding Taxes	\$ 101.40
Total	\$16,901.11
Expenditures:	
<i>Capital Translator</i>	\$ 6,933.94
Printing, Production Manager, Postage/Supplies/Other Costs	
<i>Professional Services Directory</i>	
Printing	\$ 1,461.28
Marketing/Mailing/Supplies/Shipping	\$ 1,436.47
Professional Development Seminar (Intl Dev.)	\$ 1,481.36
Job Fair 1998	\$ 708.79
Social Events (Holiday Party 1998)	\$ 1,355.26
Legal Workshop 1997	\$ 53.93
Research on Future Events (Regional Conference)	\$ 188.15
Membership Expenses (Renewal Notices, Other)	\$ 446.18
Refreshments (Programs, Board Meetings)	\$ 155.58
Telephone	
NCATA Telephone (Monthly Charges)	\$ 780.71
Internet Fees (Web Page)	\$ 240.00
P.O. Box Fee	\$ 66.00
Office Supplies/Postage/Miscellaneous Expenses	\$ 158.60
Total	\$15,466.25
Cash in bank as of December 31, 1998	\$ 7,947.85

Submitted by:



 Therese K. Hathaway, NCATA Treasurer 1998

Becoming a Translator

by Uwe Schroeter

How does one become a translator? That's a frequently asked question, and surprisingly enough, many translators set out on a completely different career path and eventually find their true calling in translation. The CT is interested in exploring the many and fascinating backgrounds of translators, and asks you to share your story. This article is based on a presentation Uwe Schroeter gave to the New Mexico Translators and Interpreters Association about how he got started as a technical translator and his experiences along the way. Uwe Schroeter works as a German freelance translator in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

After marrying my wife and staying in this country, I was faced with the daunting task of finding a job in the US. I had a three-year degree in information processing from a German technical college, but little work experience and none in this country. I looked at my skills and decided that my fluency in German and English would be my best bet in the job market.

The first decision I made led right to success: the *Yellow Pages* of Minneapolis/St. Paul. At the time, there were well over 50 entries under "Translation & Interpreting", and I called all that sounded appropriate for my language pairing. Based on the notes I took, I narrowed the selection down to ten companies and applied in writing. The day after I received my Social Security Number, I had my first interview. After interviews for a teaching position and a publishing business, I went for an interview at P.H. Brink in Golden Valley, MN (Twin Cities). After a short conversation, very much to my surprise, I was invited to work for the rest of the day and a few more days to prove myself. I was employed 2-1/2 years with this com-

pany. Eventually, I found out that my educational background is something technical translation agencies are looking for: a degree in a technical or computer related field, language and life experience in a foreign country and the ability to write. (By the way, the advertisement of P.H. Brink in the *Yellow Pages* was two lines long, one of the shortest – P.H. Brink is Minnesota's largest translation agency and one of the largest in-house translation agencies in the entire country.)

At P.H. Brink, I worked the first month on a "project basis," but there was always enough work, and, eventually, I was hired full-time. Because the German department was fairly large, with up to eight translators/editors at times, learning "on the job" was incredibly efficient. Any arising questions were answered by co-workers immediately. I very soon became familiar with FrameMaker, Interleaf, XL8 and Translation Manager. The feedback I received from the in-house editors and customers allowed me to gain experience in a very short time. I observed the entire translation process: forward-thinking clients who create English originals that already include metric measurements and allow enough space for languages that need up to 20 percent more; attentive typesetting personnel who would catch errors after the translation/editing process was completed; in-country customer contacts who were supportive by editing our glossaries, etc.

After our move to Albuquerque, I started working as a freelance translator. My years as an in-house translator and editor definitely laid the foundation for my freelance career. I found the transition to be very smooth, and I love my work more than ever. It proved extremely helpful to know the course of a

translation after it is sent back to an agency or customer: the special characters that cannot be created in Translation Manager and the typesetting department needs to be told about; the service hotlines (1-800) that cannot be called from countries outside North America; the addresses that are impractical for European customers; the mistakes in the original text that the client is often thankful to have pointed out. I never send a project back to an agency without attaching a file or note mentioning these points or my thoughts about the positive and negative aspects of a translation when I work as an editor. This often amazes my customers, and I am surprised how few translators take advantage of this easy way to impress an agency or customer with some additional effort.

Today, I work mostly on larger technical projects that also allow me to accept a few local jobs from the Albuquerque area. Naturally, German jobs are not too numerous in New Mexico, but they provide me with enough exposure to alleviate the solitary work of a freelance translator. I added business by joining the New Mexico Translators and Interpreters Association, by contacting government agencies which provided me with information about import/export companies and by joining a German group that meets informally in Albuquerque. However, most of my business still comes from contacts established in Minneapolis/St. Paul during my first five years in the US. If I haven't heard from a customer in a few months, I usually write them a few lines and let them know of past projects, so they see that I am still in business and don't forget me. This

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Password, Password, Who Has the Password?

by *Eve Lindemuth Bodeux*



Passwords are a growing part of our lives. Here is a probable day for a typical professional. Let's count the passwords involved! Rise and shine. Before getting to work, our designated heroine wants to check on the status of her bank account. Many banks now offer services over the phone such as on-demand transfers and verification of balance. The price for these services is memorizing a 4-digit code. No problem – beep, beep, beep, beep – she enters on the touch tone phone pad. For the next encounter, since she can't get cash out of the phone, she heads to the automated teller in her neighborhood. After asking, "English? Español? Français? Deutsch?" It pleads, "Please enter your Personal Identification Number" and in return spits out \$100.

Getting ready to start the day's professional activities, she arrives at the office (be it across town or next to the living room) and sits in front of her computer – the master password facilitator! Logging on to the company network (or her home-protected hard drive), she plunks out the open sesame phrase on her keyboard. But that is just the beginning!

Internet access most likely requires a password – tap, tap, tap. Once on the web, the real fun starts. Needing a hard copy reference for an upcoming translation, she turns to Amazon.com. She surfs around a bit and, having found the perfect tome wants to "check out." Password please. Ummmm, what is it again? Oh yes – tap, tap, tap. She's done well so far remembering various numeric, mnemonic, and alphanumeric combinations.

She goes on to check out some of the innumerable "free" web sites that ask users to register and make up a password so the sites can in turn attract advertisers by showing how many regular users they have.

(Do they count the three times she registered over the last 6 months because she couldn't recall the correct password?) But, uh oh, when the New York Times site prompts for that little word, she gets confused. What was that PIN? Her mother's maiden name? Part of her social security number? Her favorite vacation spot, or that old standard, her dog's name?

After a few tries, she gives up and decides to go to a web-based discussion group about translation. "Registered users: please sign in." She doesn't know this password anymore either, but when first signing up had the presence of mind to "save this password to password list," so all goes smoothly, until some future time when she tries to access it from a different computer.

It's almost lunch and some business voice mail messages are waiting. Call the access number, punch in the code. At the end of the work day, she does this again with her home voice mail and that on her cellular phone. One time, she forgot the "lock out" code on her cell phone and couldn't make any calls for a week. Oops. At night, before getting in her front door, she enters the code to get into her secured apartment complex. How many codes so far today? Eleven and counting!

There is no denying passwords play an important role in our lives: protecting information that is sensitive and shielding us from snoops, electronic or otherwise. However, secret code-overload practically necessitates a class in "password management." Keeping a typed list of passwords is tempting but goes against expert warnings ("Do not keep your PIN in your wallet along with your ATM card.") and common sense. Choosing the same combination of letters and/or numbers for numerous passwords would help the

memory as well, but also a "threat to security." Kick starting the memory by using familiar information (birthdays, spouse's name) is frowned upon. On the web, many sites allow users to request that their (forgotten) password be sent to their registered e-mail address. Waiting to access the desired information is frustrating though in this "on demand" society.

What is the answer? I don't know, but I look with anticipation to the future when we can have our eyeballs scanned or digitize our finger prints rather than stuff our brain with forgettable codes. Back to our story, our heroine sets the alarm clock and turns out the light. No password needed – yet. ✍

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Translator ...continued from page 5

also applies to new business. For instance, I would never approach a medical translation company for work without giving them examples of my past experience with medical projects. I also try to see my customers at least once a year. In my case, this means a trip to the Twin Cities. Other translators use the ATA conference for this opportunity.

While working as a freelance translator is different from the work as an employee, it offers many opportunities that I don't want to miss anymore. ✍

Montréal ...continued from page 1

individuals and businesses and can mail you whatever is in their catalog, or find any item you need and mail it to you. I bought Antidote French spellchecker, which works with nearly all word processing programs: \$90.



Montréal hides many more treasures: French restaurants, crêperies, Canadian arts and crafts shops etc., and the old city is a pleasant reminder of Europe. Bet on it that I will be back for more. Vive le Québec! ✍

Information Exchange

This month's contribution to the Information Exchange comes from Michael Wahlster. I checked out two web sites, and they have a ton of useful information.

<http://www.ivillage.com> is a website specifically for woman, and you'd be hard-pressed not find a particular topic there.

<http://www.betterhealth.com> is a website devoted to health issues, and whether you are trying to kick the pack-a-day habit or would like information on migraine headaches, it's only a mouseclick away.

Please share your favorite website with your colleagues. E-mail them to the Editor for future publication.

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Fax: 514 342 0340
<http://www.renaud-bray.com>
e-mail: vente@renaud-bray.com

Camelot
Computer bookstore-software
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Fax: 514 342 8622
www.camelot.ca
e-mail: infocdn@lan.camelot.ca

Hotel in Montréal:
Hotel Terrace Royale
5225 Côtés-des-Neiges
Montréal QC H3T IYI, Canada
Tel: 1-514 739 691
Fax: 1-514 342 -2512
4/5 people apartments with kitchen
for \$69.50 a night

Translators on the Net

Courtesy of Kathi I. Hennesey

I don't know if you get LangLine (I've given the subscribing information in the body of the message, at the end), but in case you don't, here's an interesting piece of information:

LangLine subscribers may well be interested in a new webpage, "The Translator's Guide to the Internet," produced by a team (led by Geer Hoppenbrouwers) at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting at Hogeschool Maastricht. This 148 Kb document provides links to a large number of useful sites and is at a stroke one of the largest resources for translators on the Internet. I quote from the introduction:

"This Translator's Guide to the Internet – as the name implies – is meant to guide the professional translator(-to-be) through the vast resources of the Internet. ... [The Guide] was originally meant as an introduction to the Internet for students at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting at Hogeschool Maastricht. For this reason we will restrict our attention to sites relevant for the languages taught at Maastricht: Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, English, German, French, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. In the first version of the guide we have tried to attain some level of completeness. Less attention has been paid to organizing the information. Evaluative comments have been made in an ad hoc manner. In later versions we hope to improve the way the information is organized and to evaluate the sites listed by ranking them in a sort of *Michelin Guide*."

The guide can be found at: <http://home.wxs.nl/~hopfam/TGI.html>
LANGline provides the opportunity for an online discussion of matters of interest to people working with languages.

Requests to subscribe or unsubscribe should be sent to ElectricEds@big-foot.com

Use 'LANGline - Subscribe' or 'LANGline - Unsubscribe' as the subject line. ✍

Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Location
March 20, 1999	2 pm	Accreditation Seminar	Cleveland Park Branch of the DC Public Library at the corner of Connecticut Avenue and Macomb Street, Washington, DC Contact Bill Keasbey at 301-530-5031
April 24, 1999	1:30 pm	Accreditation Exam	Graduate Education Center of The George Washington University, 1775B Duke Street, Alexandria, VA, near the King Street Metro Station Contact ATA at 703-683-6100
May 1, 1999		NCATA Seminar: The Business of Translation	Ellipse Conference Center National Rural Electric Cooperative Assn., 4301 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA Contact Scott Brennan at sbrennan@csi.com
August 6–10, 1999		International Federation of Translators World Congress	Mons, Belgium Contact RT 1999 Congress, Ecole d'Inter- prètes Internationaux, 17, avenue du Champs de Mars, Mons, Belgium fit99@writeme.com; http://www.fit.ml.org

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