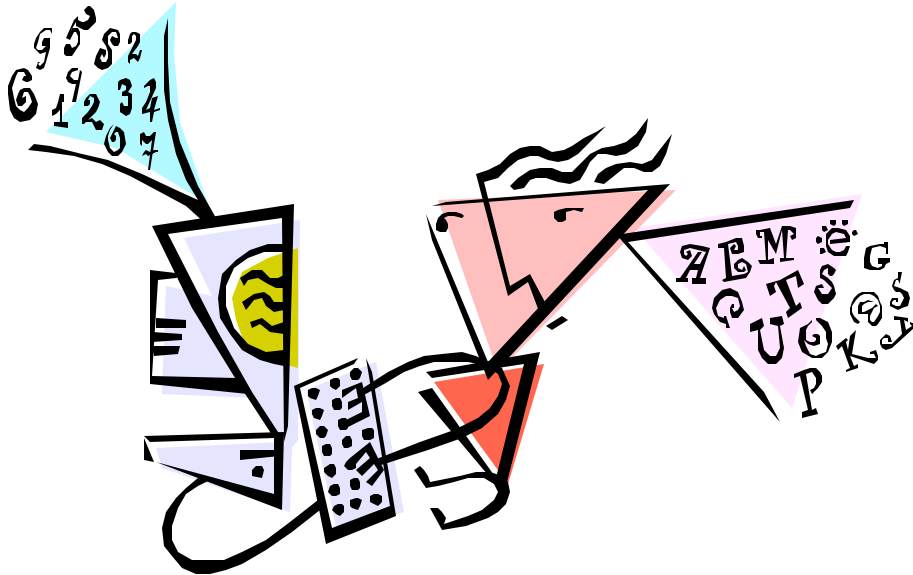


The Letter

of the Austin Area Translators
and Interpreters Association

March 2000



March 11 meeting Will computers take your job?

OKAY, SO PRESIDENT CLINTON says that interpreters are about to be replaced by C3PO and one of KUT's underwriters says that you can get free translations on the web [see letters, page 5].

What are translators and interpreters to do? Are they going the way of the lamplighter and hot-lead typesetter?

Join Allan Adams, Frank Dietz, Fritz Hensey, Michel Meunier, Kim Vitray, and your colleagues in discussing what the real world of translation and interpretation looks like and will look like for the foreseeable future.

Find out about OCR, VR, MT, CAT, TM, and more at the regular AATIA meeting March 11, 2000 at 1 p.m., along with prime-quality refreshments and excellent networking. Bring your business cards for door prize drawings. ★

Market your t/i services via TISD

EVERY TRANSLATOR AND INTERPRETER is a marketing professional by default. We have an opportunity to use those skills to benefit AATIA and, ultimately, ourselves.

Our association's major expense is also a major service to our members and to the community: the *Translator and Interpreter Services Directory*. True, it's a useful reference for contacting our colleagues, but its main purpose is to spread the word about our services and generate jobs. This is why distribution is crucial.

In recent years the board has discovered that many of the agencies who previously received a free copy are willing to purchase our directory at production cost. Thus, we see the opportunity to offset expenses while making important professional contacts for our members. There is one catch: we need people to help market the directory. ★

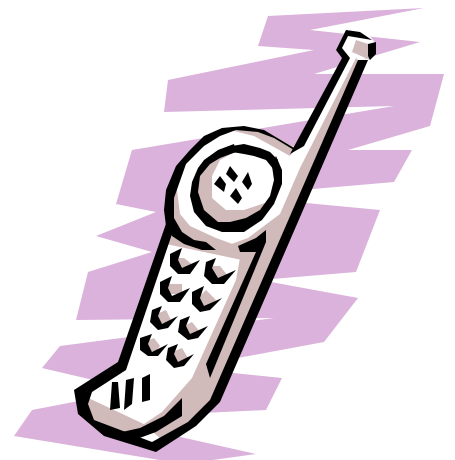
Last year Communications Director Monica Mitre sent close to a hundred faxes to potential buyers. That's a lot of work for one person! Besides, as all of you marketing experts out there know, phone calls made to the right person are much more effective than impersonal faxes.

Thanks to Jane Chamberlain, our referrals and database coordinator, we now have a list of companies that have contacted AATIA for referrals over the past two years, complete with contact information for the people in charge of hiring translators. Your help is needed to call those companies to see if they want to purchase the *TISD*. I especially encourage those of you who have benefited from our referral system to come forward—your enthusiasm will be a great selling tool.

You can view it as a great training exercise in marketing as well as an opportunity to make a contribution to AATIA. Don't forget: Our association would not exist without the work of its volunteers.

To sign on to this effort, please contact Monica Mitre 512-328-3641 or anderm@aol.com.

Asele Surina, President ★



Austin Area Translators & Interpreters Association

<http://www.aatia.org>

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Model renewal period reported

AATIA MEMBERS RESPONDED to this year's renewal notices promptly and in slightly greater numbers than last year, according to Database Coordinator Jane Chamberlain's report at the February board meeting.

As of that meeting AATIA had 176 members, 33 of which were new, and the Spanish Special Interest Group had 73 members.

Membership Director Katarzyna Grzegorzczuk set a goal of increasing membership this year by 10% over 1999.

Chamberlain also announced that she would be resigning her database position as well as the editorship of the directory after publication of the 2000 edition. Members interested in participating in the committee to fill these jobs should contact her at 453-1486. ★

Suggestion Box

LAST YEAR I HAD A CLIENT who was [avoiding me due to late payment]. When I realized I was getting nowhere, I finally sent a fax that said something like:

"These invoices are now xx weeks overdue. Am I to understand from this that you are planning to default on this commitment? Please advise your intentions so that I can take the appropriate action."

I received a check via FedEx the following day.

I later heard that this client was juggling all his accounts in that way and that when he thought somebody might be about to take some kind of serious action, he'd fold and send the money.

submitted by Tony Beckwith ★

Fax spam got you down?

BOTHERED BY UNSOLICITED FAXED ADVERTISING, Hank Phillips is requesting members who attend the March 11 AATIA member to bring any such faxes they may have accumulated, so that a strategy can be devised for dealing with this particularly annoying form of spam. ★

TidBITS

Sprechen Sie Deutsch?

TIDBITS IS A FREE EMAIL AND WEB publication covering the Macintosh Internet community at www.tidbits.com, and it needs translators.

It currently appears in Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Japanese, and Russian versions.

The hard-working translation teams, particularly the German team, need some new volunteers to help spread the workload and make translating TidBITS issues easier for everyone.

If you're interested in translating English into the languages mentioned above and helping promote the Macintosh community in those languages, check out the URLs below for information on what's involved. Help keep TidBITS truly international!

Whether or not you're up for becoming a translator, you may benefit by comparing the news in several languages.

If you enjoy reading the TidBITS translations each week, let the translators know. The translation teams appreciate the kind letters many of you have sent over the years, and your encouragement makes the task of translating each issue all the more worthwhile.

German: <http://www.heikekurtz.de/tidbitsde/trans.html>

French: <http://www.tidbits.com/tb-issues/lang/fr/consignes.html>

Japanese: <http://www.axes.co.jp/TidBITS-J/wanted.html>

Editor's note: TidBITS is also apparently translated into Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Portuguese. Find these versions by going to the main page, then click to go to the French page, then on the language you want. ★

VI Spring Meeting Portuguese Language Division – ATA

March 24-25th, 2000

Ramada Emily Morgan Hotel, San Antonio, Texas

Preliminary agenda

- *Tradução técnica: a teoria na prática*, Renato Beninatto (seminário de um dia)
- *Translating the Subjunctive: English and Portuguese Equivalents*, Dr. John Jensen
- *Legendagem de filmes*, Kátia Iole
- *Interpretação: estudo e prática*, Tereza Braga e Edna Ditaranto
- *Nas entrelinhas das manchetes: desafios da tradução jornalística*, Clarisse Mello e Lúcia Leão
- *Breast of Judge and Costumed Morals: An Exploration into Sources for Legal Terminology*, Dr. Arlene Kelly
- *Tradução comercial*, Tim Yuan

For reservations, please call the Ramada Emily Morgan Hotel at 800-824-6674 or (210) 225-8486. Mention group "Portuguese Language Division." Rates: US\$91.00 per day (single, double).

An ATA Accreditation Exam sitting will be held in the morning of Sunday, March 26th. Please contact ATA Headquarters to register for the exam.

For more information, please contact Vera Abreu, Portuguese Language Division Administrator at veraa@mindspring.com.



Paperless Papers

by Frank Dietz © 2000

FOR TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS, newspapers are not just something you rustle around while sipping your morning coffee, or a convenient material to wrap fish in.

No, they represent valuable knowledge tools that allow you to stay informed about the latest political, social and cultural developments in the language you are translating/interpreting from or to (remember *that* the next time someone complains about the paper being scattered all over the living room floor).

Unfortunately, foreign-language newspapers are often hard to obtain and can be prohibitively expensive.

As usual these days, the WWW offers some solutions, because nearly every major paper now sports a web-based version. While these web sites

usually offer only a sample of the entire content (except for subscription-based sites), that is often enough to stay informed about current events.

First, let us look at some of the major US publications. I would recommend the *New York Times* site (<http://www.nytimes.com/>), which requires registration, but is free. A large list of regional US papers, ranging from *Alabama Live* to the *Wyoming Tribune-Eagle* is available at <http://www.refdesk.com/paper.html>. The same site also offers a list of international papers, as does <http://www.ipl.org/reading/news/>.

Here is a small sample of what you can read online:

Ha'aretz: <http://www.refdesk.com/paper.html>

Le Monde: <http://www.lemonde.fr/>

Süddeutsche Zeitung: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/>

Aftenposten: <http://www.aftenposten.no/>

Aftonbladet: <http://www.aftonbladet.se/>

Neue Zürcher Zeitung: <http://www.nzz.ch/online/index.htm>

Asahi Shimbun: <http://www.asahi.com/>

Al-Abram: <http://www.ahram.org.eg/>

Jornal do Brasil: <http://www.jb.com.br/>

La Stampa: <http://www.lastampa.it>

If that is not exotic enough for you, you can always try a newspaper from a *really* unusual location at <http://205.174.118.254/nspt/home.htm>

Please note that some of these newspaper sites may require you to install fonts for non-Latin alphabets (consult the documentation that came with your operating system). Also, many online newspapers have English summaries of the most important articles somewhere on the site, so it pays to look around.

Happy reading! ★

New conference interpreter forum

A NEW FORUM for independent conference interpreters, which aims to discuss professional matters and exchange information, ideas, and help, includes not only a message section, but also links to interesting websites, documentation, and a member database. Join immediately by visiting <http://www.egroups.com/group/conf-int/info.html> or contact Pascale Cotton Aplusb1@aol.com for more information. ★

Website watch

<http://www.termwright.com>

<http://www.proz.com>

<http://www.itools.com/research-it/research-it.html> ★

Machine translation: threat to human translators?

EXTRAVAGANT CLAIMS OF “INSTANT TRANSLATION” on the Internet and elsewhere have prompted several practitioners of “human translation” to set the record straight. Since the March AATIA meeting will focus on the myth and reality of machine translating, THE LETTER has decided to reprint two recent letters on this subject.

January 31, 2000

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thanks to the historic economic expansion you have presided over in your years in office, there has never been a better time to be a translator or an interpreter. The market for language services is booming and the number of translators and interpreters is increasing every day. Membership in our professional association, the American Translators Association, has doubled since 1992—to over 7000 members.

After listening to your State of the Union address on Thursday, our members have asked me respectfully to point out to you that while technology has produced many marvels, machines that “translate as fast as you can speak” are still a long way off. As you know from your work with interpreters in high-level meetings and negotiations, it takes experience, knowledge, native ability and training to interpret foreign languages correctly. Despite the increasing compactness and cleverness of all the computing devices now on the market, human speech remains something that can be interpreted correctly only by human beings.

Machines to translate speech

instantaneously have been predicted for over fifty years, and yet the need for human translators and interpreters is at an all-time high. Nothing can replace the truly accurate, nuanced job that a trained human translator produces, and yet, the American public is largely unaware of this fact. Our work is an essential part of the success of American society. The American public needs to know what a tricky, challenging and high-level task every translator and interpreter engages in when he or she sets to work. Please speak to this reality. Please don't build false hopes by talking of machines that are still, unfortunately, in the realm of fantasyland—where they will remain for the indefinite future.

Sincerely yours,
Ann G. Macfarlane
President,
American Translators Association

From the Feb. 2 issue of the FINANCIAL TIMES:

Sir:

Does translation software indeed offer the “unbounded opportunity” for leaping the language barrier on the Web, as suggested by Bayan Rahman? (“LANGUAGES: Web offers unbounded opportunity—A program promises to translate English-based

web sites for the rest of the world,” Jan 25) Fifty-five years of research on translation by computer—dating to the earliest days of electronic computing—has conclusively demonstrated that human language is too varied, complex and context-dependent to yield to computer analysis. Pulitzer-prize-winning cognitive scientist and computer programmer Douglas Hofstadter recently commented that if all the claims for computer translation were true, it could only mean that all the mysteries of the human mind had been fully cleared up. Has this in fact happened?

The answer is, alas, no. Instant translations on the Web by computer are available right now at no cost, yet a worldwide translation services market valued at \$17 billion co-exists alongside them. How can this be? It turns out that translation software is only useful in the rarest of areas (such as parts lists) and any attempt to use the software for real-world commercial or technical purposes (such as a legal contract or a patent application or even a Web site) meets with immediate disaster. Translation is a process of cross-cultural communication that requires understanding the meaning and intent of the original in order to convey that message accurately and faithfully in the reader's language. Business users of translation services who have reason to be concerned about their business image with current and potential customers in foreign markets should be cautioned on the limitations of translation software on the Web lest their serious commercial messages become unintentional sources of humor.

Kevin Hendzel
Chief Operating Officer
ASET International Services Corp.

Chicken Soup for the Road

by Tony Beckwith © 2000

I WAS TALKING TO MY FRIEND CARLO about our trip to Mexico. “We flew into Monterrey in the smallest plane I’ve ever seen. It was a pencil with wings!”

“We flew into Monterrey once,” Carlo said. “Do you remember?” he asked his wife. She nodded and rolled her eyes. Carlo nodded too. “We took off from San Antonio, tilted back in our seats and pointing straight up at the sky as we climbed to cruising altitude. The plane was shaking and rattling like you wouldn’t believe, and then the overhead storage bins started popping open, one at a time, all the way down the cabin. Nancy’s tray flipped open into her lap and we kinda screamed. Then the door to the cockpit swung open, and two empty beer bottles came rolling and clinking down the aisle.”

I said nothing. Our flight had been nowhere near as dramatic. Carlo went on. “It was the wildest flight we’ve ever taken. Nancy was sure we were going to die. But we got there. Then we found a place in Monterrey that served the best tortilla soup we’ve ever had.”

“It sounds as though Monterrey is a good place for soup,” I said. “We had an excellent chicken consommé at the airport restaurant.”

It was a cold, gray, rainy day when the flying pencil landed, and we had a two-hour layover ahead of us. Lillian and I sat in a booth by the window in the airport restaurant. The window was huge, two floors high and just as wide. We had a panoramic view of the runway. As we waited for our meal, we watched a mechanic

drive a forklift back and forth between two parked airplanes. He wore a heavy coat and gloves, his bare head sunk down on his shoulders. His equipment left tread marks on the shiny, wet tarmac. It looked a lot later than noon out there.

The consommé came in a white bowl, clear chicken broth with



shredded chicken and a bed of rice. The waitress brought some limes and little dishes of chopped onion, radish, cilantro, and avocado, and set them all on the table in front of me. I scattered a couple of spoonfuls of each into the bowl, followed by a generous squeeze of lime. It was a magnificent soup. The broth had a rich, mellow taste, and the garnishes added a pleasing texture and pretty colors as well as their own harmonious flavors. I finished that bowl and

ordered another. When the waitress delivered it she nodded in the direction of the kitchen and said, “The chef says, ‘Thank you.’”

As I raised a spoonful of soup to my mouth, I gazed out of the window. The mechanic was standing quite still on the tarmac, looking at me, and we stared at each other for a second. Then he cocked his head to one side and made an open-palm gesture, as if ushering me into a room. He smiled and I could read his lips as he spoke the words “¡Buen provecho!” I nodded and tipped the spoon into my mouth. “What did he say?” asked Lillian.

When my mouth was empty again I said, “Buen provecho. We don’t really have an English word for that, so we use bon appétit.” Lillian waved at the mechanic. He waved back with his big, gloved hand, then turned away and went back to work. It wasn’t long before our flight was called and we were on our way again. We brought the recipe with us:

- 1 whole chicken, boiled and picked
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 4 servings of rice, boiled
- 3 cans chicken broth (or equivalent from boiling chicken)
- 8 radishes, finely diced
- 1 avocado, firm, finely cubed
- ½ white onion, finely diced
- 2 tablespoons cilantro, minced
- 1-2 limes, cut in eighths

Bring broth to a boil, add garlic and chicken, and simmer.

Put hot rice in the bowl, cover with broth and chicken.

Add radishes, avocado, onion, and cilantro.

Add lime juice to taste. Serves four.

Buen provecho. ★

Award-winning writer Rubina to lecture at UT

THE OUTSTANDING RUSSIAN WRITER Dina Rubina will visit UT Austin and give a lecture on short story writing March 7, 2000 at noon in the Santa Rita Room (3.502), Texas Union.

The lecture will include a performance of a short story by the author herself. (The English translation of the story will be provided.) AATIA member Marian Schwartz has translated and published several of Rubina's works, including the story she will be reading from.

Rubina is a recipient of the Hebrew Writers' Association and Arye Dulzin literary awards. Her book "Dvoinaia familia", published in France was named the best book of the 1996 literary season by an independent jury of the elite booksellers of France.

She published her first works at the age of 16. Later her short stories and novels were published in a number of Russian and western literary journals. She became famous with her novel "When Will it Snow?" The novel was made into a movie, a TV play and a radio theater play.

Rubina has published around 10 books in Russian and the same number of books in French, Czech, English, Hebrew, Estonian, Bulgarian, and Hindi translation. In total her works have been translated into 12 languages. In 1990 she emigrated to Israel and has been living in Jerusalem. Her works are regularly published in Russian literary magazines ("Znamia", "Druzhba narodov", etc.).

Rubina's literary style is described as stemming from the Chekhovian tradition of Russian psychological prose. She combines "love with mockery, irony with bitterness and

compassion, precise depiction of life with a taste for its absurdities." She is also famous for creating unique, colorful and precise images. (I. Pitliar, "Do smeshnogo zhal". Novyi mir, 5(841): 238-41). The writer is concerned both with eternal topics (intellectuals in pursuit of art or love) and ethnic problems (Russian Jewish intellectuals in search of national identity).

To find out more about Rubina and to sample some of her works visit www.il4u.org.il:8101/anto/. ★



Globalization: Getting Your Product Information Ready for a World Market

Site: ACC Northridge Campus Auditorium, Building 4000, Room 4136, 11928 Stonehollow Drive, Austin, Texas

Date: Saturday, April 8, 2000

Time: 9:00 a.m. - noon

Topics:

- Globalization, Internationalization, and Localization: What Are They? Tim Altanero, Ph.D. Technical Communications, ACC
- Tools: Software for Translation, Development, and Terminology Alan Adams, Adams Translation Services
- Structuring Your Language for Painless Translation Jonathan Roe, National Instruments
- Globalization—Are You Ready? One Company's Story Brenda Hall, BMC Software
- Panel: International Project Management: Coordinating Information Across Time Zones, Dale Durham, Pervasive Software, Michael Skibo, Tivoli, Marie-Anne de Warren, PSDI, Deb Webb, Dell Computer Corp.

Who should attend?

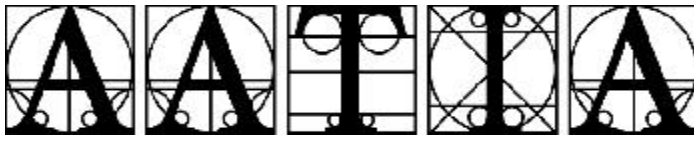
Technical communicators involved in globalization.

Managers undertaking globalization initiatives.

Students interested in careers in globalization, localization, or technical translation.

Fees: \$40.00 for general admission
\$30.00 for STC member admission
\$25.00 for student admission

Call 512-223-4831 for preregistration information.



Austin Area Translators & Interpreters Association

PO Box 13331 ★ Austin, TX 78711-3331 ★ 512-707-3900

<http://www.aatia.org>



AATIA welcomes visitors to the Austin History Center (AHC) at 9th & Guadalupe on the 2nd Saturday of odd-numbered months for general meetings and even-numbered months for board meetings.

EVENTS IN AUSTIN

- Mar 7** 7 p.m. LitSIG, 1207 Bickler Road. Info Marian Schwartz 442-5100 or mbs@texas.net
- Mar 11** 10 a.m. SpanSIG meeting, AHC. Info Harvie Jordan 444-8537
1-4 p.m. AATIA regular meeting, AHC. Info 707-3900
5 p.m. Rowdy Translators SIG meeting. Dog & Duck Pub, 17th & Guadalupe.
- Apr 2** 1-3 p.m. RussianSIG. Info Jane Chamberlain 453-1486 or candide@io.com
- Apr 8** 2-5 p.m. AATIA board meeting, AHC
- May 13** AATIA regular meeting & SIG meetings

BEYOND AUSTIN

- May 21-24** Orlando, Florida. Society for Technical Communication. 47th Annual Conference
Info www.stc-va.org or 703-522-4114
- September 20-23** Orlando, Florida. American Translators Association annual conference.
Info 703-683-6100 or www.atanet.org
- October 18-22** San Francisco, California. American Literary Translators Association annual conference. Info: www.utdallas.edu/research/cts/alta.htm

London meeting on science, technology, medicine

THE INSTITUTE OF TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING (ITI) will hold its 14th International conference in London on April 8-9, 2000.

Entitled "Do We Speak Science?", the conference will cover pharmaceutical and medical translation and interpreting; research and terminology; patents; translation technology; and the localization industry. For information send email to MariaCordero@iti.org.uk or visit www.iti.org.uk ★

Mitre family addition: It's a boy!

AATIA DIRECTOR of Communications Monica Mitre and husband Ramón recently announced the arrival of a new son, Ian Mikel, on Tuesday, January 25. He weighed in at 9

lbs. 6 oz. and was 22 inches long. Congratulations to all! ★

THANKS TO EFRAT SCHWARTZ for volunteering to handle the mailing for The Letter. ★

CONGRATULATIONS TO M. CRISTINA SANCHEZ on passing the certification exam to interpret Spanish in U.S. Courts. ★

