

NEW ENGLAND

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TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION

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Summer 2015

A quarterly publication of the New England Translators Association



NETA celebrated its 40th Anniversary at the 2015 Conference.

The New England Translators Association was organized in 1975 and this year's conference attendees were treated to a 40th anniversary cake. In addition, the final session of the conference was a panel discussion by members taking a look back on translation and interpreting in the "good old days". See page 12 for coverage of this.

Starting with the 2014 fall issue, NETA News has been marking the anniversary with a series of articles on what it was like as a professional translator or interpreter in the 1970s. We continue the articles in this issue with reflections by Court Interpreter Frank Geoffrion on page 13.

NETA News encourages your contributions as well, whether or not you were a language professional in 1975. Submissions, comments and letters to the editor are welcome. The deadline for submissions for the Fall issue is September 30. Please send all correspondence to newsletter@netaweb.org.

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Reflections on a Life as a Translator

2015 Conference Keynote Speaker,
Arthur Goldhammer

Reviewed by
Adel Faitaninho

This year's 40th anniversary conference could not have had a more opportune opening than a keynote address by Arthur Goldhammer, a renowned translator and a recipient of numerous awards, whose most recent translation of Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* has sold nearly a million copies. The story

of his long journey to and with translation, initiated only two years after NETA was founded, easily captured the audience's interest, in spite of its great variety in age and experience. His very personal perspective on the world of translation, a sincere account of the fears, doubts, strokes of luck, and unforeseen turns in life that a translator might face, gave every conference participant a chance to find a small piece of their own fears or victories in Goldhammer's story.

His is a story of luck, passion, and hard work. "I should confess I feel out of place here," said the translator of 125 books, with Zola, Proust, and Duras among some of their authors. Goldhammer's experience of becoming an acclaimed translator owes its great part to pure luck and whims of fate –being drafted to the Vietnam War and a fortuitous connection with a French sociologist–making it difficult for him to give advice to novices in the field.



Keynote Speaker
Arthur Goldhammer is
a Fellow at the Center
for European Studies at
Harvard University.

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ConferenceInformation@netaweb.org Co-chairs: Lesley Andrews and Montserrat Zuckerman. *Members to be determined.*

NETA Board Election Results



The May 2015 election was uncontested as there were four candidates for four seats on the NETA Board of Directors. Information on voting was available on our website and was emailed to all members. Members could vote by email or in person at the May Conference. Many thanks go to Ilse Andrews who managed the election again this year. The following candidates were elected to the Board for two year terms:

Lesley Andrews, Elena Langdon, Joan Sax, Alice Wolfe

All members are encouraged to attend board meetings and volunteer for committee work. For more information, talk with any officer or board member or email info@netaweb.org.

NETA News

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NETA News is a quarterly publication of the New England Translators Association. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of NETA. We reserve the right to refuse submissions.

Editor

Terry Gallagher

Layout

Sarah Heller

Submissions

Submissions, comments and letters to the editor are welcome. Articles are subject to editing for grammar, punctuation, and space limitations. Upon request, a proof will be sent to you for review.

Schedule of deadlines:

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Delivery

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To post messages to the Yahoo! Group:
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Look for the NETA Group on LinkedIn at:
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Membership information

NETA accepts individual members only. A one-year membership is \$50. NETA also offers a \$30 membership for students of translation and/or interpreting. If you need a membership application or have other membership questions, contact: membership@netaweb.org. Subscription to this newsletter is included with your membership.

Fortunately, There Were Many Helpers...

We are grateful for the participation of the following volunteers, who gave of their time to enhance the quality of our annual conference. We would be hard-pressed to run the conference without their help.

Patricia Acosta	Sarah Heller	Erika Schulz
Ilse Andrews	Sandra Henry Alvarez	Petra Schweitzer
Lesley Andrews	Andy Klatt	Irina Sears
Teresa Bardawill	Maria Claudia Lanzarini	Rokhaya Smith
Gabriella Bello	Estela McDonough	Hanne Rask Sonderborg
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Geoffrey Blomerth	Anya Raygor	Jairo Suarez
Arthur Calvano	Diana Rhudick	Manyee Tang
Jose Carneiro	Tapani Ronni	Denise Torrey
Howard Clark	Jane Rumrill	Guadalupe Lopez Tovares
Maya Evans	Steve Sanford	Teresa Triana
Adel Faitaninho	Joan Sax	Milena Vitali
Wendy Griswold		

Your 2015 Conference Committee:

Maiyim Baron (chairperson), Lesley Andrews, Marian Comenetz, Sybil Gilchrist, Catherine Howard, Pedro Montesino, Suzanne Owen, Tapani Ronni, Jairo Suarez, Milena Vitali, and Montserrat Zuckerman, along with Diana Rhudick and Hanne Rask Sonderborg

Author's Table at the Conference



Coinciding with our 40th anniversary and with Freek Lankhof's closing of InTrans Books, NETA sponsored a table at the conference where NETA authors displayed their published works. Entitled a "A Retrospective of NETAn's Work and Works by Conference Speakers", it was exciting to see the fine array of publications displayed.



NETA's 2015 conference included a special 40th anniversary buffet lunch.



All photos in this issue of NETA News are by NETA Board member Lesley Andrews.

Getting Started as a Translator

2015 Conference Panel Discussion: Tapani Ronni, Terry Gallagher, Michael O'Laughlin and Tim Moriarty

Reviewed by Gabriela Bello

This Panel Discussion was headed by Michael O'Laughlin, legal interpreter and director of the Boston University interpreter program; Tapani Ronni, moderator of the discussion and ATA certified English > Finnish translator primarily of medical and scientific documents; Tim Moriarty, medical interpreter and manager of the Interpreter & Translation Services Department for Baystate Health; and Terry Gallagher, freelance Japanese > English translator primarily of business, financial, and legal documents. The free-form panel, which consisted of opening remarks from the speakers followed by questions from the audience, was attended by interpreters and translators new to field as well as veterans in the business. Opening remarks were focused on attributes that are necessary to be a successful translator/interpreter.

Michael O'Laughlin called these "continuums seen among interpreting candidates" which included professionalism, credentials, presence ("Are you English speaking? Are you American-acting?"), manner ("How nice are you?"), and price-point ("How cheap are you?"). Tim Moriarty focused on aspects of medical interpreting that one must be at ease with in order to be successful in the field such as "blood and guts," death, abortion, cultural attitudes toward the LGBTQ community, and religious beliefs. He emphasized the importance of professionalism, credentials, and word choice; and warned of the pitfalls of being a heritage speaker. Terry Gallagher spoke of the importance of building your image or brand and the need to be transparent in your work ("Show up when you screw up"). While bilingualism is the core skill of any translator/interpreter, a certain level of business acumen is also necessary in order to be a financially successful one. Tapani Ronni focused on the potential benefits of joining agencies and/or working freelance when first starting out, particularly as staff positions are few and far-between for translators/interpreters in general. The importance of credentials was again underlined.

Questions from the audience focused on what tools are the most helpful for those starting in the field, such as LinkedIn for advertising or hunting for clients and Computer-assisted Translation (CAT) software. LinkedIn, online profiles, and websites were given a resounding "Yes!" as being absolutely helpful whereas the audience was told to proceed with caution when purchasing CAT software and to always keep in mind the potential return-on-investment.

While there was a general consensus of the most important attributes of a successful translator/interpreter, there was some disagreement on the specifics. For example, some of the panel and even audience members warned against joining professional



Panelists (left to right): Michael O'Laughlin, Tapani Ronni, Tim Moriarty, Terry Gallagher.

associations while others touted the benefits of starting out in such organizations. This seems to emphasize how personal and individualistic the field can be. Some people clearly have and do benefit from joining these groups, at least in the beginning, while others are better-suited to jumping straight into working for themselves as freelancers.

The final advice from the panel was to treat all information received from clients as confidential no matter the field or subject-matter and to be wary of potential scammers and "cattle-call" emails as there unfortunately isn't much in terms of legal protections for translators/interpreters.



Conference Registration Table.

Reflections on a Life as a Translator

Continued from page 1

His is also a story of passion, first for math, as an MIT student, and then for Paris — the passion that would grow into love for French culture, history, politics. However, it is not a tourist's passion, but an intellectual one. The one that requires a translator not only to work as hard as the author, but also be a scholar him or herself and stay in touch with a community of scholars that can help both quench and foment this intellectual passion and dispel cultural or linguistic doubts. This is what turns a translator into a good translator, or someone on whom nothing is lost, just like nothing is lost, according to Henry James, on a good novelist.

Goldhammer also talked about the economics of translation. Though starting with a humble remark that he was not sure whether in 38 years as a professional translator he learned much about how the money side of it worked, he did highlight the principal difficulties of the publishing market, that include prejudices against professional as opposed to amateur translators; the need of extra research that is not reflected in the pay; growing use of electronic aids that will worsen the pay situation for translators. "Perhaps if we as a society valued the understanding that comes from familiarity and exchange with other societies and cultures as we should," remarked Goldhammer, "translation would be considered a public good, like education, and translators would be employed by public institutions and paid a reasonable salary." Yet the economic challenges that all translators face show that there is still a need to re-evaluate the role other cultures and societies play in understating of our own.

Introduction to Subtitling

2015 Conference Presentation by Jerome Henry Rudes

Reviewed by Erika Schulz

How many times have we complained about subtitles in movies? Or wondered "Why did they do that?" Or how many times have we considered subtitling a dream job? Today, movies are not just on the silver screen, but also in our palms, thanks to smart phones and other technologies. Thus, translation has expanded from regular documents to files in multimedia contexts.



Be it a blockbuster or an educational video, translators need to be aware of the main features in subtitling, and Monsieur Rudes was here to introduce us to his wonderful world.

Based on the fact that "the best subtitles are the ones that you notice the least", how is this accomplished? According to Rudes, the best starting point is a good professional translation. Here are some practical and technical facts to bear in mind.

When choosing a piece of software, select one that can split frames and timing. Time coding is essential to place titles in the right frames and avoid showing them before the actors speak. It is also recommendable to use software that shows text overflow to adjust the number of characters displayed.

It can be challenging to obtain the source text. Sometimes the text needs to be extracted first. Transcribing can be the "nastiest" task, as Rudes describes it. When the script is available, actors may have improvised or moved content around. And what happens if the movie has not been finished yet? Does this ring any bells?

Translators' experience and skills are put to test when transdaptering dialogues into the target language. Professional translators are used to conveying the equivalent meaning, but when timing is key, condensing, compressing, and communicating emotions as simply as possible becomes a new challenge. Rudes' advice here is to "keep it simple", as long as the titles match the film's rhythm and tone. Sometimes not everything can be said. Also because in the end, what counts is the director's message, what he or she wants to communicate.

The good news is that conversation fillers do not need to be translated and character depiction may be obvious from the images and dialects may not be differentiated (unless it is absolutely necessary).

As with any other translation workflow, there will be a final review for meaning, timing, and positioning. Let us not forget that both the source text in title cards in the movie and the screen background color play a key role in deciding on the subtitling font color or the positioning of the subtitles on the screen.

So, remember to keep it simple since we do not want to interfere or distract the viewers. As Rudes stated it, our goal should be to allow the viewer "to be IN the movie".

Managing Complicated File Formats with Wordfast

2015 Conference Presentation by John Di Rico

Reviewed by Joan B. Sax, Ph.D.

Complicated in this case means files that contain some sections that need to be translated but not all of the content. It involves going into the source document and selecting the text to be translated and giving it a specific format (italics, bold or some such identifying format) and then going into WordFast and creating preferences so that WF only searches for text in that particular format in the source text.

I am not as familiar with WF as I intend to become so I cannot give the details of the exact steps outlined. But John first showed how it would have to be done with a former version of WF and how much easier it was made by using the newer version. He also demonstrated how WF makes it easier to translate some content in Excel and PowerPoint files. Several times I have had jobs where the client only wanted a column or columns to translate in an Excel document and have had to go into each cell to do the translation. This version of WF allows you to create preferences that selects only the columns needing translation to be imported into WF for segmentation and translation. The same is the case for PP translations.

Finally, John told me of a site where, for free, you can have a pdf file translated into Word format, the site is wordcount@wordfast.com. You put in the subject line your source language, so the it looks like this: subject: "Italian". Within minutes you get back a source file in .doc format. That eliminates the necessity for a OCR reading application.

I actually took advantage of the 30% discount on the conference day and bought the program. My old WF classic is years old and the license is outdated. It is a 3 year license but you can buy another 3 years and any updates during the license period are free. Each license allows you to put the program on two computers (I have it on a laptop and my desktop).



Every Story Tells a Picture: Reclaiming the Art of Interpreting

2015 Conference Presentation
by Moira Inghilleri



Moira Inghilleri is a professor of translation and interpreting studies and comparative literature at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is the author of *Interpreting Justice: Ethics, Politics and Language* (Routledge 2012) and the forthcoming, *Translation and Migration* (Routledge). Her research has appeared in Translation Studies, The Translator, Target, Language and Communication, Linguistica Antverpiensia, and a number of edited collections.

Moira asked participants to reimagine interpreting as an art. She used the medium of visual art and the work of two artists, Kazimir Malevich and Mark Rothko, to illustrate the ways that privileging formal discourse in interpreted encounters can serve to limit rather than enhance the representation of meaning, particularly emotive meaning.

Moira points out that recognition of the visible negotiation and creative interpretation required in different types of translation and interpreting activity has been a continuing theme in recent decades. There has been an increase in research on the ethical dilemmas translators and interpreters encounter in negotiating the tensions between the demands of their tasks and complex personal and professional, local and global, cultural and institutional allegiances.

Two components, trauma and identity, are particularly relevant to the question of how translators and interpreters cope with the immense task of revoicing or rewriting other people's trauma while maintaining an emotional equilibrium. Figuring out the answers to these questions in a particular encounter compels individual translators and interpreters to confront the boundaries of their own understandings and beliefs and, importantly, their ethical positions. It is often individuals with the least powerful voices who are most dependent upon translators and interpreters to represent them capably.

Red T: Protecting Translators and Interpreters Worldwide

2015 Conference Presentation by Maya Hess

Reviewed by Hanne Sonderborg

Red T is a US-based non-profit organization that advocates worldwide on behalf of translators and interpreters in high-risk settings. It is only in its 6th year of existence, but it has already changed the minds and hearts of governments and institutions all over the world. It is run solely by volunteers. The "Red T" is named after the "Red Cross". Red T was founded by Maya Hess, a forensic linguist and legal expert on terrorism, who has provided language services and expert witness services in American courtrooms. She has sometimes worked for the prosecution and sometimes for the defense.

What prompted Maya Hess to found Red T? On one particular occasion, she worked for the defense in an American courtroom and she felt that an interpreter, Ramzi Yousef, who interpreted for Omar Rahman and wrote a biography about Rahman, was wrongly accused, convicted, and sentenced to serious prison time for aiding the enemy. It offended Maya Hess' sense of justice that he was essentially only doing his job. This interpreter ended up paying for the attorney's mistake (the attorney did not honor a gag order) and he was also cast as a friend of terrorists for such minor offenses as giving a doughnut to a terrorist.

In this NETA session, Maya Hess described the Translator – Traitor Mentality, TTM, a distrust that has existed throughout history, for instance during the Cold War and after 9-11. To do their job, the interpreters risk imprisonment, torture, death. And even after they stop, they can be hunted down. It

happens all over the world, in Africa, the Middle East, China. Taliban death squads have routinely shot, beheaded, burned, beaten, and abducted Iraqi interpreters when the allies pulled out.

In the United States, interpreters have been accused of spying for taking photos of camp facilities as mementos and of espionage, aiding the enemy. One person spent 10 months in solitary confinement.

Maya Hess and Red T are concerned that the very people, who are needed to keep the U.S. safe are scapegoated, thus making the U.S. less safe.

Red T needs volunteers, and you are encouraged to join in whatever capacity you can. You can contact the group at <http://red-t.org/getinvolved.html>



Exhibitors at the 2015 NETA Conference.

The Agency-Freelancer Relationship: Debunking Myths, Tips for Success and a Healthy Dialogue

2015 Conference Presentation by Steve Lank

Reviewed by Sarah Heller

Steve Lank presented to a crowd of over a hundred people — definitely a hot topic. Through a show of hands, only two people in the audience identified themselves as employed by agencies. Steve made them feel welcome and frequently asked for their input. It was definitely his style to be inclusive, as befits his background. Over the course of his career, he has worn many hats, including interpreter, translator and agency partner. Steve is currently Vice President for Translation Services at [Cesco Linguistic Services](#).

Steve spelled out the main takeaways he wanted us to get from his talk: (1) Freelancer and Agency need each other. In order to be successful, both parties must work together. (2) There is a common goal: A quality product for the end user.

He posited the belief that misunderstandings between freelancer and agency project manager (PM) primarily occur due to the lack of open communication. They often see themselves as enemies and even if they do talk, they don't trust the other person to be honest.

In order to help open up the lines of communication between the two sides, Steve has started what he characterizes as an “unscientific” survey of translators and project managers. Much of the presentation was spent reviewing the results of 71 participants (50 freelancers and 21 project managers). Before revealing the answers of the survey participants, Steve gave those of us in the room a chance to offer our thoughts.

As an example, the first question in the survey was: “What are the challenges you face when working with agencies/freelancers?” Conference attendees said: (1) Unreasonable deadlines, (2) Quoting blind (without seeing the job), and (3) Late payments. The most common responses from the freelancers in the survey was (1) Downward trend in rates, (2) Unreasonable turnaround time, (3) Project Manager Competence, and (4) On time payment. Steve made the observation that the challenges may be things that the freelancer does not have control over. However, each of us can control our response. It is up to the person to be very clear about what he or she is willing to do, and to stick to that.

The project managers’ survey responses revealed that their concerns are somewhat different. The most common challenges for PMs: (1) reliability and accountability, i.e. slipping deadlines, (2) Quality of the work, (3) Communication/[negative] attitude, (4) Rates/Availability, and (5) Technology Usage.

After going through the survey questions, Steve gave us his vision of the ideal agency/freelancer relationship:

For freelancers, the relationship would be based on professional respect and trust. All would feel valued, treated as a partner rather than a resource. Translators would receive fair pay based on experience. Finally, translators would be paid on-time.



For agency project managers, the relationship also would be based on professional respect and trust. The freelancer would understand the client pressures driving the business. They would be seen as partners, not adversaries. There would be seamless communication, and the freelancer would respond quickly to the PM. Lastly, the freelancer would embrace technology.

At the end of the session, there was good give and take between the audience and Steve. Steve believes that agencies and freelancers share a common goal and open communications will make for a harmonious relationship. Members of the audience made the point that there is inherent conflict: The client wants the lowest cost and the translator wants the highest rate. The agency is the broker between these two competing forces. In addition, the agency likely has to compete with other agencies so that within the agency there is conflicting motivation as well. Sales wants to land the job and isn't thinking about what the translator wants. The project manager theoretically can “go to bat” for more money and/or more time to complete the job, but in reality may not have any influence over the terms of the assignment. The freelancer most likely will not be involved until the terms are already established. Add to the mix that the market is far from transparent. No one has access to all the information needed for an open discussion.

The presentation was thought-provoking. And it was refreshing that hot button topics could be discussed in civil discourse. For more debate on this topic as well as other translation matters, Steve recommended a blog/podcast by Corinne McKay and Eve Lindemuth Bodeux, [SpeakingofTranslation.com](#).

If anyone would like to be included in future surveys, contact Steve at slank@cescols.com.

Solutions to Global Pressures through Professional Development

2015 Conference Presentation by Maria Karra

Reviewed by Maya Evans

Vivacious and with a good sense of humor, Maria Karra, a founding member of IIAP, and President of its Ethics Committee, delivered a presentation replete with information about the current status of translators, and trends in the field. Squeezed between “Indian rates” as low as 2 cents per word, machine translations, and for those working in Spanish, excellent Argentinean translators perceiving very low rates, what can a U.S.-based translator do to overcome these challenges?

According to Maria, specialize, network and keep plugging. “Machine translation will only replace those humans who translate like machines” quotes Ms. Karra. Good translators need not fear, rather find a niche. Companies are looking for specialists who can intelligently apply machine translation and other automated tools to the problem of high demand, and “inadequate supply” which, according to agents, is prevalent at this time. Specialize by getting a degree other than in Translation — something in a field of studies that interest you.

Owner of a translation company in Miami, Maria works with clients in Spain, Greece, the U.S. and other parts of the world. Using CAT tools to increase her output, assure quality, benchmark and evaluate her work, Maria is also a member of TAUS, a think tank and resource center for translators worldwide. She recommends the use of technology not only for quality assurance, but also to deal with repetitions, enabling the translator to occasionally offer a discount to choice clients. In other words, be flexible, knowledgeable and creative. Have different rates: some for local clients, some for international clients. Also, have different resumes highlighting different skills. Look into your hobbies, your passions, and maybe these will lead you to jobs you never dreamed of.

On the other hand, the reality is that Machine Translation is getting better for Spanish, albeit not for Greek, Arabic and other languages. The challenge, however, is that people in general expect and accept lesser quality from

machine translations. This could be fine for Facebook pages or informal conversations, but not at all for textbooks, medicine, aircraft specification, press releases, etc. There is also the issue of confidentiality which Google-translate cannot assure. And what about post-editing? How would a machine translator tackle it?

The essence of this discourse is that translation is not a commodity. If we take this as the basis of our argument, we can successfully argue that a good translator, not only is thoroughly knowledgeable in languages, but also is also cognizant of the content of the texts entrusted to him/her. This ability to bring all of it to life, from the source to the target is the art of translation, which cannot be out-placed by technology.

Finally, Maria recommends reading blogs and websites such as nopeanuts.wordpress.com/2015, volunteer and be passionate about your work, check the source of texts entrusted to you, have an elevator speech, become a resource to people.



*Exhibitors at the
2015 Conference*



Workshop: Effective Communication Techniques and Pronunciation for Interpreters

2015 Conference Presentation by Marjorie Feinstein-Whittaker

Reviewed by Jairo Suarez

New Jersey native Marjorie Whittaker-Feinstein had attendees read from a script at the start of her presentation to illustrate the mechanics of stress and rhythm in spoken English. After many laughs from the pronunciation styles of both native and non-native English speakers that participated in her interactive session, she explained how the wide range of languages and accents among interpreters can affect and lead to miscommunication between patients and providers and even have life-threatening consequences. She also presented practical rules and generalizations that can be readily incorporated into the medical setting to effectively relay that information between the health care provider and the patient.

Participants received an introductory explanation on how to emphasize elements of speech to give spoken English its native or neutral character. Ms. Feinstein-Whittaker clarified that accents –whether foreign or American– should not be treated as a disease.

A communication trainer and speech/language pathologist with a business practice in the Boston area, Ms. Feinstein-Whittaker's said that she once received a request from a client for 'accent elimination' which made her program sound like an extermination service.

Ms. Feinstein-Whittaker's approach to improve pronunciation began by explaining general rules for English language that include stress and intonation patterns of English, assimilating and linking rules, and properly using English articles and pronouns.

She illustrated how medical vocabulary is filled with compound nouns like e-mail, laptop, parking lot and telephone number and presented the rule for pronouncing them properly; it consists on stressing the first word with a higher pitch, louder volume, and a longer vowel. The use of incorrect stress patterns may result in an ineffective or confusing message.

Ms. Feinstein-Whittaker's added that the rule for pronouncing proper nouns is to stress the last word (except with the word street). The rule for using the multitude of initializations used in the medical field is to stress the last letter of the abbreviation or initialization, while acronyms are to be said as a whole word.



Ms. Feinstein-Whittaker stated numbers can be confusing if we don't abide by the correct stress pattern. Using take-out menus and bus schedules, Ms. Feinstein-Whittaker's directed group sessions to demonstrate how to stress the first syllable in "teen" numbers such as thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen. When counting, she explained stress should be placed on the first part of "ten" numbers such as thirty, forty. However, when discussing quantity, time, currency, and dates, Ms. Feinstein-Whittaker's explained stress should be placed on the second part of the "teen" numbers, such as fifteen milligrams vs. fifty milligrams. In this context, primary stress shifts to the noun. The rule for numbers is to stress the appropriate syllable when counting and/or describing time, currency, dates, and measurements.

To end the dynamic session, Ms. Feinstein-Whittaker's suggested exercises and resources to learn how to divide a word into syllables to be able to properly learn to stress the syllable preceding suffixes, explaining that the key to improving pronunciation is motivation and practice.



Exhibitors at the 2015 Conference



Current Issues in Judicial Interpreting

2015 Conference Panel Discussion: Michael O'Laughlin, Norma Rosen-Mann and Moussa Abboud

Reviewed by Sarah Heller

The session began with an announcement that some people chose not to attend in order that there could be an open discussion. For someone who walked into the session cold, this was an intriguing beginning. And the story that unfolded was compelling. Three panelists presented in turn. Michael began with a history of official court interpreting in the US. He has been there since the beginning. Forty years ago, he began as the first staff interpreter in Santa Cruz CA. Today, he is the director of the interpreter training program at Boston University, and is an expert witness in court cases with language or culture issues.

Michael cited a landmark court case, *Negrón v. New York* (1970). The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the murder conviction of Rogelio Negrón, a Puerto Rican farm laborer in Suffolk County, NY on the grounds that he was not "meaningfully present" as no effort was made to interpret the trial into Spanish, Negrón's only language. The decision inspired the U.S. Congress to pass the Court Interpreters Act of 1978. The idea for official court interpreting started with Federal court and moved to the states.

The last twenty years have been the "glory days" for interpreters. All stake holders were interested in raising standards. However, this unanimity of purpose is being eroded. There is a dramatic increase in the need for interpreting, while at the same time, there are real or perceived fiscal restraints that force reductions in services.

Today, in Massachusetts, 10% of the population has limited proficiency in English but at the same time, measures are underway that will limit the availability of court interpreters. Beginning in January, 2014 the Trial Court of Massachusetts has been making concerted moves to reduce the level of interpreter services provided in the court system, and to also reduce the amount paid for these services. They began by removing the manager of the Office of Court Interpreter Services and cutting the amount paid to interpreters by about half. Both these changes came without announcement or notice, and it took some time for interpreters to understand the full extent of the situation.

It slowly became clear that this was, in essence, a "hostile takeover" by a group that does not value interpreting services. In response, a group of veteran per-diem interpreters have come together to call attention to and resist these changes. They formed the Massachusetts Association of Court Interpreters (MACI) to try to preserve the state's professional court interpreter service.

Next to speak was Norma Mann, the president of MACI. She began by thanking NETA and Maiyim Baron, Conference Chair and Court Interpreter herself, for providing this forum. Norma stated that the situation is bleak. The Office of Court Interpreter Services (OCIS) is downgrading services in an effort to save money. They are considering other methods of delivery, such as using phone or remote video services. Judges are complaining but it doesn't seem to make any difference. The interpreters are told that they are per-diem freelancers, and have no rights. In July 2014, a group of court interpreters started to organize and look for options. They looked into unionizing but determined that it is not an option at present. It may be something to pursue long-term.

The organization MACI was incorporated for the purpose of seeking respect for the profession as well as maintaining the quality of service high for the limited English population (LEP) of the state. As of May 2015, there are about 170 active court interpreters in Massachusetts, scattered around the state. Norma said that MACI is attempting to get everyone in agreement to support their efforts.

The final speaker of the session was Moussa Abboud. Moussa is a trial court interpreter and the treasurer of MACI. He said that MACI currently has 55 members and hopes to double membership by 2016. The organization's mission is to represent all per-diem interpreters. They wish to open the lines of communication between interpreters and the Office of Court Interpreter Services. He stated that at the moment, communication between the two groups is almost non-existent and they have a huge task ahead of them. Moussa ended with a incisive quote: "Even if you are on the right track, if you remain idle, you will get run over."

For more information about MACI, visit macigroup.org.

*Panelists
(left to right):
Moussa Abboud,
Norma Rosen-
Mann, Michael
O'Laughlin*



Perspectives on our Profession: NETA Past, Present & Future

2015 Conference Endnote

Panel Discussion: Ken Kronenberg, Alice Berglund, Rudy Heller, Joan Sax and Frank Geoffrion

Reviewed by Sandra Henry-Álvarez. Updated 12-14-15. A correction has been made to the first paragraph regarding the founding members. Our thanks to Isabel Leonard for calling our attention to this. The four founding members of NETA are Bill Grimes (RIP), Isabel Leonard, Alice Berglund and Alicia Kawecki. -Ed.

The closing presentation for NETA's 40th Anniversary Conference was fittingly a reflection on the Association's past, present, and future. The panel consisted of one founding member (Alice Berglund) and three members who joined not long after the founding date (Rudy Heller, Joan Sax and Frank Geoffrion). The moderator, Ken Kronenberg, is a past president of NETA.

The New England Translators Association was founded 40 years ago by a small group of translators who wanted to come together and organize in order to share work, resources, experience, and get a chance to socialize and talk shop. One of the driving initiatives was the desire to create a pool of dictionaries and reference works that translators could share amongst themselves. In the seventies, dictionaries were extremely expensive and difficult to get a hold of. It made sense to put together a bibliography of everyone's reference sources. So from a group of professional translators that were willing to pool together their resources for the benefit of everyone, NETA was born.

Over the years, NETA has evolved to meet the changing needs of its members. Interpreters were added to the group of professionals and NETA now has annual conferences, monthly meetings, social events, and a web page.

When NETA began, translators were faced with several challenges that we still face as a profession, and other challenges that were specific to the times. The lack of technology was a constant frustration for translators. As clients needed more translations delivered at faster speeds, the technology that existed (or better said, didn't exist) created a bottle-neck. Members of the panel shared many anecdotes about their struggles getting translations to their clients quickly; from delivering a translation to a client while they were at the airport on a layover from South America to Europe, to using a slow and clunky fax machine that made an enormous racket and emitted a burning smell. At that time, a translator needed to get a loan from the bank to purchase an IBM Selectric typewriter! When words could not be found in dictionaries, and given the absence of the Internet, specialists had to be contacted via expensive long-distance phone calls, often with a poor connection.

However, increasing globalization was good for translators in the 1970's. The demand for translations went up as did the rates for translating even as the per capita income was decreasing overall. It was truly a golden age for translators.

Now, the advances in technology at our disposal have solved many of our problems (e.g. communications are

better and cheaper than ever), but they have also brought new problems of their own. For example, Machine Translation has become an acceptable substitute. Increased globalization has made outsourcing to countries with lower costs of living a viable alternative. The increase of globalization has also created larger corporations and an asymmetry in the relationship between translators/interpreters and agencies. The playing field for large corporations and freelancers is far from level.

Some of the problems we face now are the same ones we had 40 years ago. Even though we have made a great deal of progress in the areas of training and certification, we still have a serious image problem. (Dee Dee Myers, former White House Press Secretary under Clinton, said at an ATA Conference that as translators we don't have a bad image because we have no image at all!). Most of us are freelancers, and we still struggle with the marketing and business aspect of our profession.

Our work has always had a need for solidarity, which is why it is so important to have a strong professional association that offers support and fellowship. We can do much more together as a united front than we can do as individuals. NETA formed because of a need for support amongst translating professionals, and we still need that strength in numbers to take on all the challenges facing us. Working together, we will have more leverage to tackle present and future issues. As Ken Kronenberg urged, our future watch word for the next 40 years should be: Solidarity.



Panelists (left to right): Ken Kronenberg, Joan Sax, Alice Berglund, Rudy Heller, Frank Geoffrion

Summoned to Court for Forty Years

In honor of NETA's 40th anniversary this year, we offer the fourth in a series of articles about life as a language professional.

by Frank Geoffrion

It was 1975 and I had just returned from eleven years of total immersion in the Spanish and Quechua languages in South America. I had done some interpreting and translating there, had enjoyed it and decided that was what I wanted to do here. So I approached the Middlesex County Court Complex in Cambridge and offered my services. They immediately offered me work without questioning my credentials as an interpreter. I soon discovered that I had all the credentials necessary. I was bilingual. And if you are bilingual, you can interpret, age and education notwithstanding. This was brought home to me in a conversation I had with a prosecutor whom I was working with on a trial. One day, during a conversation, he commented that he wished he had a job like mine where you really didn't have to know anything. I thought, "Yeah, right, I just have to understand all the legal terms you and the judge and the other attorney are using and their equivalent legal terms in Spanish, one hundred different variations of spoken Spanish and their equivalents in spoken English, all the parts of all kinds of firearms in both languages, drug slang in English

and Spanish, as well as the names of the parts of motor vehicles and the terms used to describe roadways in both languages with their variations from one Spanish speaking country to another and do it instantaneously and simultaneously."

The expectation was, and still is, that if you knew two languages you could listen to something said in one of your languages and then repeat it in your other language. You did not have to understand what was being said since you were simply substituting words, one by one, from one language to another. It was assumed that sentence construction,

word order, grammar and idiomatic expressions were identical from one language to another. Even a child could do it, and, indeed, children were often asked to work as linguistic intermediaries. It was not unusual for a clerk to address a packed courtroom and ask if there was someone in the courtroom who spoke Haitian "and English!!" And the person who responded became the interpreter of record.



At this time, since bilingualism was the only criteria for competency, it was not unusual for the arresting officer to be called on to interpret. Often it was a probation officer trying to have the probationer found in violation of his probation. One particularly egregious example: in a Worcester court, a non-English speaking woman asked for protection from her allegedly abusive husband. The judge, unable to understand the woman's broken English and frustrated by the lack of a court interpreter, asked the husband to interpret! The husband was given a tremendous amount of power, victimizing the woman again.

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As the number of limited English speakers grew around the country, the number of injustices as a result of poor interpreting services also grew. There was an increase in the number of newspaper accounts detailing the lack of justice. The San Jose Mercury News published a series of exposés of incompetent interpreters in 1989. To read the articles go to the archives at Mercurynews.com. Enter "interpreters" under search terms and "1989" under the date.

On October 29, 1978, the Court Interpreters Act was passed by the United States Congress and signed into law by President Carter. It mandated the use of qualified interpreters in any criminal or civil action in the federal court. Individual states began to follow.

In the early eighties there was a large increase in the number of requests for interpreters. Courts across Massachusetts began turning to Blanca Batteau's Judicial Language Center at the Suffolk Superior Court for their interpreters.

In 1987, a coalition of court interpreters, attorneys and judges worked for the passage of Chapter 221C of the Massachusetts General Laws establishing the Office of Court Interpreter Services. On October 1, 1987 a pilot program began in Essex County to supply interpreters to the courts. The interpreter candidates took a test comparable to that administered for Federal court. In the first testing, about thirty of an estimated one hundred people passed the exam.

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Summoned to Court for Forty Years

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ALTIMA, the Association of Legal Interpreters and Translators of Massachusetts, was founded in 1989. Its membership ranged between 45 and 60 persons which included court interpreters from Massachusetts and neighboring states as well.

In 1993, its Judicial Reform Committee met with the Commission on Racial and Ethnic bias in the Courts. At this time there were still cases where no interpreter would be present or someone handy would be pressed into service as an interpreter. The Office of Court Interpreter Services, created to provide trained and certified interpreters, remained in its pilot phase in Essex County, more than five years after its inception.

The Judicial Language Center, a holdover from pre-court-interpreter legislation days, continued to provide uncertified interpreters with, in some cases, unknown credentials. Those who obtained certification were dropped from the Judicial Language Center.

There remained courts not serviced by either the OCIS or the JLC. Someone able to act as an interpreter would be called at the last minute, usually from a local social service agency. If that person was unavailable, a judge would often appoint a court officer or an attorney, or friends or relatives of the defendant, even codefendants or the arresting officer to act as ad hoc interpreter. Sometimes the person used as the interpreter was fluent in both languages, but more often these spontaneous interpreters did not have a sufficient command of the vocabulary required in a courtroom setting, or might have such fluency in only one of the languages needed. Furthermore, this type of interpreter rarely had an idea of their proper role in the proceedings. These non-professional interpreters often summarized the testimony of the witness instead of using the consecutive or simultaneous modes of interpreting. Their attempts at "translation" could be both comical and erratic. They were not aware that they had an obligation to interrupt the proceedings if they were unable to hear properly. Many non-English-speaking persons suffered serious consequences because the interpreter only related what he or she deemed important or misinterpreted what was being said.

In 1998 a unit of the Translation and Interpreters Guild for court interpreters in Massachusetts was formed, the first TTIG unit for court interpreters in the United States. A request to meet with the Chief Justice was made to talk about pay, which had not been increased in eleven years, minimum pay, late payments, improvement of training, working conditions, certification for additional languages, etc.

Today, in 2015, friction continues between interpreters and the administration of the courts. The state legislature continues to underfund the court system, and so the court administration searches for places where it can save money and the interpreters land in the crosshairs, weakening attempts to provide adequate interpreting services to individuals whose civil and legal rights may be impaired because of such inadequacies.

Although some progress has been made, there is still a long way to go. I recently served as an interpreter at a deposition. At one point the attorney posed a question which I did not understand and

so could not interpret it. I switched to the third person so that what I had to say would not be confused with the deponent's testimony and said, "The interpreter does not understand your question, Counsel." To which the attorney responded, "I don't care if the interpreter understands my question or not. Just tell him what I said."

NETA Presence at MassAHEC Conference



NETAns at the MassAHEC conference (left to right): Sandra Henry, Carolina Olavarria, and Erika Schulz

This past June 19, Sandra Henry, Erika Schulz, and Carolina Olavarria staffed a NETA table at the 2015 MassAHEC conference. Massachusetts Area Health Education Center (MassAHEC) Network is a unit within UMass Medical School's Commonwealth Medicine division.

About 250 medical interpreters from throughout New England attended the 10th annual MassAHEC "Paving the Way to Health Care Access" conference, held at the Marlborough Courtyard Marriott Conference Center. The conference is co-sponsored by MassHealth and UMass Medical School.

This was the second year that NETA had an exhibit at the conference. Last year, Montserrat Zuckerman and Suzanne Owen got things started, creating a procedure, materials, and a "kit" for presenting, as well as staffing the table. This year, Montserrat and Suzanne supported the efforts of the new, three-person team. All indications are that NETA's participation was a great success—good spirits prevailed and more people, especially medical interpreters, have become aware of what NETA offers.

NETA Board Meeting Minutes, June 27, 2015

Present: Diana, Lesley, Joan, Alice, Antje, Ken, Suzanne, Elena, Maiyim, Petra, Shamso Ahmed

Treasurer's report:

Roma gave us a great report. We broke even with the conference, and our ordinary expenses created a slight loss despite our spending more than \$3500 on website and hosting. The resulting increased ease of use for membership and conference functions made the website expenses worth it in time and money saved. There were a few questions about some checks which were resolved.

Treasurer Search:

Lesley had sent the résumé of Xiao Ying (Crystal) Zhong to board members last week. One of Crystal's references was glowing and Lesley will check on the other one. The Board decided to offer Crystal the position. We decided that from now on we should pay the treasurer because the job has gotten much more time consuming than several years ago, although as a small nonprofit we cannot offer the going rate. Lesley edited Joan's conversion of the contract for membership coordinator to create a treasurer contract. Based on Roma's estimate of the hours she spent on the treasurer's duties, we have put an upper limit of 100 hours per year, and if the treasurer finds that more time is being spent, she should notify the board as soon as possible.

NETA functions:

Membership: Antje will continue

President: Diana will continue

Vice President: Lesley will continue

Secretary: Joan will continue

Chair Board Meetings: Lesley agreed to take this on

NETA News – Petra will ask Terry if he will continue. She will be the board liaison

Website: Marian, Lesley and Diana will continue

Programming Committee – Marian

Workshops Committee: Several people expressed interest in trying to schedule some sort of workshop, perhaps a webinar. Elena and Petra will look into this

Job Ops posting: Alice will continue to do this. We decided to reinsert the NETA disclaimer

Conference Committee Board Liaison – Elena

Bylaws Committee – Alice, Joan, Lesley, Elena

Listserv Moderator: Ken and Joan

Membership:

Antje is caught up with 6 members pending, that is they didn't complete their membership application. Antje emailed them all, and received 1 response from someone who couldn't figure out how to do it and has decided to mail Antje a check. Someone suggested sending out a screen shot to those unable to complete it with an indication of the steps to take online. We agreed that Antje did not need to scan the physical membership forms once all the information on them was stored electronically. Antje will provide a detailed description of the new process using WA for our archives. As of now we have 254 members.

Petra wondered if there could be an option for people not renewing to ask them "if you choose not to renew, could you tell us why."

Elena asked if the website would allow an auto-renew feature, or a multiyear renewal. We will look into that. Also, perhaps a reduced membership fee for those 75 or over. Another suggestion is to set aside a small fund to subsidize a membership for hardship cases which would be reviewed on a case by case basis. There is one case known to Alice who would like to continue membership but cannot.

We discussed the possibility of providing agencies an opportunity to be NETA supporters, on the lines of the supporters on PBS. Supporters would not have voting rights or serve on committees.

Survey:

The WA survey feature did not work for Lesley this time. We will have to get some help in figuring out how to use that feature. The problem seems to be embedding a link to a Google Form in an email to be sent through WA (thanks to Lesley for clarifying this).

Website:

WA is increasing its monthly fee on August 31st from \$50/month to \$70/month. We can lock in the current rate by paying in advance for 2 years. The board voted to do that. Diana will contact Roma about doing this.

NETA Board Meeting Minutes, June 27, 2015

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We are paying for two private domain registrations, a “private” domain and a “regular” one. Diana will ask Scott if that is necessary. We need to find out what exactly the various fees are for in order to figure out if they are legitimate.

Conference:

Lesley and Montserrat have agreed to be Conference Co-Chairs.

Venue: Antje found the Hampton to be crowded with the exhibitors and coffee area, and the food seemed to be overpriced. Maiyim pointed out that we could eliminate the center chairs in the reception area and reduce the number of exhibitors. Maiyim also pointed out that you want the venue to seem crowded rather than having the conference seem sparsely attended. She also noted that searching for a new venue is very time-consuming. Ken explained that he and Diego are looking into an arrangement with U Mass Boston, that has built some new buildings and is trying to increase the visibility of its translation program. The idea would be to hold a joint conference that would include student and possibly professor presentations. If that happened we would presumably get a reduced price for the venue. It might not be feasible to get such a combined conference organized for next year, but we still might look into what we would have to pay for the venue if we had not yet formed an alliance with U Mass. Ellen Elias Bursac is also interested in organizing such a joint conference.

Social Media:

Petra would like to make more use of Facebook for advertising NETA and our events, and direct people to visit our website. She pointed out that there needs to be more visual content on the website as Facebook relies a lot on visuals. Elena will help with making better use of FB.

Sponsorships of other organizations:

We have decided to sponsor I.A.P.T.A. Lesley will notify Catherine.

Antje will circulate a letter to GBANE, a business association for the greater Boston area. Our letter is to educate them on the importance of hiring qualified translators and offering our assistance in this area.

Monthly Meetings:

Saturday, September 19, 2015

Saturday, October 24, 2015

Saturday, November 21, 2015

Saturday, December 5, 2015

Saturday, January 23, 2016

Saturday, February 20, 2016

Saturday, March 19, 2016

Meeting Procedures:

We decided on a procedure and timetable for conducting our meetings, following Terry's suggestion a few years ago. The person chairing the meeting (Lesley) will send out an agenda three weeks before the board meeting, asking board members for further items to bring up. Those responsible for certain functions, membership or website for instance, will be asked to email reports of their activity, as well as any issues or votes that will need to be dealt with, at least a week before the meeting so that everyone can read the reports and be ready to ask questions and then vote on any items requiring board action.

Next Board Meetings:

Saturday, September 19, 2015

Saturday, January 23, 2016

Saturday, March 19, 2016

Saturday, June 18, 2016

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Sax,

Secretary