

netta news

August 1976 issue. The NETA News is the newsletter of the New England Translators Association.

This issue was prepared by Alice Berglund, Peabody, Mass.

JULY MEETING by W. J. Grimes

The Translation Roundtable was devoted to a discussion of a passage in Canadian French. Fortunately Dr. Stone was present to tide the participants over the more baffling bits.

During the Business Meeting, it was found that a few signatures were still required on our application for ATA chapterhood. Jean Stilson promised to deliver these names from within the Christian Science Publishing Society, and has in fact done so. Our petition for chapterhood will accordingly be presented at the ATA Convention in California during the first week of August.

Technical Films followed, carrying through the ideas outlined in the July NETA News. The first, "The Living Solid", dealt with the structure of bone and the incorporation of radioactive elements in it during growth. The information was presented woodenly and with no imaginative techniques, emphasizing the interview-interviewee format. This dull atmosphere, coupled with a very poor soundtrack, offset the interesting points the film attempted to make.

The second, "The Effect of Arc Variations", was an excellent film, highly technical, and filled with valuable welding jargon. It had great visual appeal, and fascinated even the non-technical people in the audience. Technical translators could see for themselves what a "ropy weld" looked like, what "shielding gas" did, and so forth. Although the next film was from the same source and had a similar catalog listing, "Welding with MIG and TIG" was a poor film to begin with, and its extremely inept direction and acting led us to stop its showing about five minutes into the reel. Designed to help assembly line workers to understand the problems of welding aluminum, it was so insulting to the intelligence of our audience that it deserves no further discussion here.

Finally, "Down on the Farm" presented research on the substitution of deuterium ("heavy water") for normal water in animals and plants. Nearly as plodding as the first ERDA film, it was rescued by its better soundtrack and more dramatic subject matter.

One good film out of four may not be a very good average, but we have learned a good deal from this experience. Mainly, although the catalog gives the title of the film and its coverage, there is no telling what audience it is pitched at in terms of level of intelligence or prior knowledge expected. One should assume that a group of translators who have assembled to learn something are (a) highly intelligent, (b) have a good educational background, but (c) know little or nothing about the specific subject matter of the film. The film should therefore require no specialist knowledge, but should pack a lot of facts and explanations into a short time, with maximum use of color and animation techniques. If the film is going to consist merely of an interview with a famous scientist talking about his work, one could get the same information faster by reading a printed interview.

Measures proposed to increase the value of future film showings are (1) read reviews of films, (2) pre-screen the films if possible to cull out the clinkers (but we still need to get hold of a 16 mm projector—any suggestions?), and (3) ATA chapters could review their film programs so that other chapters could benefit.

AUGUST MEETING

Tuesday, August 10, Harvard Science Center, Room 110 (near Memorial Hall, facing Harvard Yard—same place as June & July meetings).

Translation Roundtable: 7 p.m.

Meeting proper: 8:15 p.m.

Building is air-conditioned.

Topic: ATA Convention of Aug. 1st-8th by those attending.

TRANSLATION ADDRESSES

by Isabel Leonard

The ATA Chronicle list of complimentary addresses, which I received in my capacity as Editor, turns out to be a mine of information on organizations and institutions connected with translation in the U.S. and abroad. Anyone wanting to know the addresses of overseas translator associations, for instance, is welcome to call me for the information (749-1540). Remind me that I put it in the Chronicle Correspondence file.

A TRANSLATOR'S CONTINUING EDUCATION

By Alice Berglund

Since the fall of the year is fast approaching, many of us ponder what course(s) we will be taking in September—whether it be another language, a technical or business course, we all seem to thrive in the academic atmosphere, whether our purpose is business or pleasure.

However, the cost of a good course is usually high, and perhaps too much of a strain to the translator's budget. I think that if a translator wants a good course for information purposes at a low price, there is only one place to get it—Harvard University Extension. I have taken 1 or sometimes 2 courses a year there for the last 10 years or so as a non-credit student. The highest price I paid per course was \$60.00—for the Elementary Arabic course I took this past year. The class met 2 evenings a week (7:30–9:30), October–June. For an extra \$5.00 I had the use of Harvard's Language Lab, which is probably the best-stocked lab around. (This Arabic course, incidentally, was taught by a Harvard professor and was far superior to one I had taken at the International Institute in Boston.) Courses I have taken include, to name a few: Astronomy, Romance Linguistics, French and Russian literature courses, math and computer science offerings.

Last year's catalog listing reads in part:

Organic Chemistry . . . non-credit	\$35.00
General Botony . . . non-credit	\$40.00
Air Pollution and Environmental Quality . . . non-credit	\$20.00
Elementary Classical Greek . . . non-credit	\$25.00
German Literature: Poetry of the 20th Century . . . non-credit	\$20.00

This year's catalog will probably be ready by the end of August: Classes generally begin the last week in September; some are for either the fall or spring semester, and some continue throughout the year. Write or call: Commission on Extension Courses, 739 Holyoke Center, Harvard University, 1350 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

Any information on other university offerings, special courses, lectures, etc. would be welcomed by your editor, so that we may keep up with what is available around Boston.

WHAT DO TRANSLATORS CALL THEMSELVES?

By Isabel Leonard

Here are some terms gathered from periodicals and pertaining to translators.

The American in-house translator is a "staff translator" in Britain and he* has a "post" or "position" (not a "job", at that level). His French counterpart is a "traducteur d'entreprise", known in Germany as a "festangestellte Übersetzer". The freelancer (who has not in this country made up his mind whether he

spells himself with a hyphen or not) is in Germany a "freiberufliche Übersetzer" or a "freiständige Übersetzer" (I suspect the former term has slightly more of a cachet; in France a "traducteur indépendant" and in Canadian French a "pigiste" or "traducteur pigiste" or even "traducteur à la pige". This latter curious term first meant a newspaper "stringer" (who is paid space rates) as opposed to a "staffer" (who is on salary); according to my Dictionnaire Etymologique (Larousse) "piger" means "prendre, attraper" and seems to be a dialectical form of "piéger", to trap. Hmm.

A few more: "examen d'agrément, in Ontario at any rate, is an accreditation exam, and a "traducteur ambivalent" is a translator who works in both directions (I don't think we have a neat term for him).

A translator could not survive without his "Auftraggeber" or client, for whom in Germany he may be required to do not only "routinemässige Arbeit" but often "Schnellarbeit" and even "Expressübersetzung". I am very interested in the distinction between the latter two which Herr Feidel¹ describes in considerable detail. I suspect that his "Expressübersetzung" would be "rush" for the American translator (freelancer) and his "Schnellarbeit" merely "regular". And "routinemässige Arbeit"? Too slow.

*Although a dedicated women's libber, I really can't be bothered to type he/she, to say nothing of Übersetzer(in) and adjectives going with it.

¹Feidel, Gottfried, "Technische Texte Richtig Übersetzen", Econ Verlag, Düsseldorf and Vienna, 1970.

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SPRACHEN SIE DEUTSCH?

by Robert Silverman

The following sign once adorned the Xerox machine of a local translation company:

ACHTUNG! Das machine is nicht fur Gerfingerpoken und mittangrabben. Is easy schnappen der Springenwerk, blownfusen und poppencorken mit spitsensparken. Ist nicht fur gewerken by das Dummkopfen. Das rubbernecken sichtseeren keepen hands in das pockets. Relaxen und watch das Blinkenlights.

Is there anyone out there who could provide French, Russian, Italian, Spanish, etc. versions?

* * *

A RUSSIAN PROBLEM

I came across the following place name not long ago in one of my Russian metallurgical translations:

Нора Каролина

Much later, I found the correct translation. Look for the answer in next month's NETA NEWS. —AB

ON BEING A TRANSLATOR—THE POSITIVE VIEWPOINT

by Alice Berglund

Several months ago at one of our NETA meetings, a young lady asked me with an air of disbelief, "You mean some of you actually make a living—translating?? " At the time I looked around the room and counted about 10 of us who fit into that category. A few were in-house translators, but 7 were "full-time freelancers."

STET This remark and Mr. Krohn's bleak outlook as to the spiritual and financial rewards of being a translator led me to write down some of my own thoughts in this regard. I now offer this positive viewpoint to both my colleagues and the aspiring translator.

First, I am a full-time, freelance, and surprisingly well-paid professional translator. Of course, remuneration is a relative matter—to clarify, I make more money than the average high-school teacher with an M.A. and experience (although I don't have summers off), but less than say, a company executive or well-heeled salesman (although I am sure I do not have the headaches that these latter endure!)

I find my work intellectually rewarding; I do it in my own home office at my own speed, and can schedule around it accordingly. (Of course, I have some rush work, but I often have several slow days.) I also take advantage of the liberal tax laws that the self-employed person enjoys.

90% of my work is technical, all into English. German accounts for about 50%; Russian, French, Czech, and a few other languages make up the other half. I also act in some instances as an agency and farm out to other translators.

I started translating in 1963 and struggled for several years before turning it into a full-time job in 1970. After the usual "apprenticeship" at JPRS and low-paying translation agencies, I went on to the higher-paying agencies and subsequently to private companies, attorneys, etc.

(It should be noted that since I am female and started my career before Equal Opportunity, I am rather accustomed to economic injustice, as it were, no matter what the job or what my abilities. I feel that I have met no unusual injustices in the translating field, except perhaps with the under-capitalized agency that schemes how not to pay its translators or goes bankrupt—but again, such devious practices are certainly not limited to translation agencies!)

In reply to *charges that* Mr. Krohn's statements on ATA *does* not supporting the working translator's economic exigencies, I say that any professional society has to satisfy its members-at-large (the agent ATA member does have his own problems!) The ATA has suggested a minimum \$14.00/1000 word rate that

(while pointing out that some translators charge three and four times this fee)

seems to me a reasonable minimum. Many agencies are still paying less than this! I feel a translator should not work for any concern that he feels is taking advantage of him or is a purchaser of "slave labor". A competent translator has his choice of both work and rates and should not, for reasons of false monetary security ("But I can give you all the work you can handle"—often overheard at the low-paying agency) remain affiliated with an agency or company that exploits him. And that can be said about any job!

I expect that translating will continue to be my vocation as I can think of no other that gives me such freedom of time and space ^{and} such intellectual stimulation, as well as a "living" wage.

OTHER LOCAL TRANSLATOR GROUPS

The NETA News is being sent gratis to other translator groups in the U.S. under a reciprocity agreement.

We have received a very complimentary letter from Sarah Mischelevich, the Editor of the newsletter for the Association of Professional Translators of Pittsburgh and also a complementary copy of their news. They report that they now have a membership of 63 in good standing.

The Austin Texas group is now starting its own dictionary pool.

IMPROVING DELIVERY by Robert Silverman

Dictation often requires the enunciation of individual letters of the alphabet, particularly in the case of first initials of proper names and in spelling out unfamiliar words. Low aural rapport between translator and transcriber, whether due to poor translator delivery (one transcriber with high moral standards once complained that the translator she was transcribing was drunk) or due to typist rebelliousness (typing "a" instead of "b", "b" instead of "c", etc.) can lead to untoward consequences.

Airplane pilots have long used a system to avoid communication problems. This system, which my typist (an amateur airplane pilot) thrust on me, involves the replacement of the 26 letters of the English alphabet by 26 familiar and unambiguous words. Nevertheless, I have yet to utilize the system, preferring instead to spit the letters out.

A alpha	N November
B bravo	O Oscar
C Charlie	P Papa
D delta	Q Quebec
E echo	R Romeo
F foxtrot	S Sierra
G golf	T tango (cont.)

H hotel	U uniform
I India	V Victor
J Juliet	W whiskey
K kilo	X x-ray
L Lima	Y yankee
M Mike	Z Zulu

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ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTION I

(source: Boston Yellow Pages)

LOCAL TRANSLATION AGENCY

Competent — Fast — Economical
Call . . .

ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTION II

(source: Above local translation agency calling translator)

This telephone conversation actually took place today, but the names of the parties have been kept anonymous.

Ring . . ring . . .

"Hello."

"This is the . . . translation agency. Can you do a three-page patent from Russian?"

"What is the subject matter?"

"It's a patent."

"So you said, but what is the patent about?"

"I don't know. I can't read Russian."

"Did you know translators were supposed only to translate subjects with which they were familiar?"

"No."

"When is the translation due?"

"It has no deadline on it."

"OK, send it over. We'll have a look at it."

"I will. 'Bye."

Click.

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UNIVERSITY PRESS BOOKS

Contributed by K. Morehouse

Frequences d'Usage des Mots au Quebec by Vaira Vikio Freibergs, Montreal 1974 \$10.80 p.

Language Structure and Translation Essays by Eugene A. Rida, Stanford, 1975 \$10.00

700 French Idioms, ed. by J. Dale Miller & K.B. Essig, Brigham Young, Mar. '76 \$6.95 p.

MEMBERSHIP LIST (Isabel Leonard)

New membership lists will be typed up and distributed at the September meeting. Please inform the secretary if you wish any changes to be made to your entry.

New members: This list, which we call an "informative membership list" provides basic translator information on members of the group. Most existing members have stated which language they translate and in which direction, and their fields of interest. There are two purposes for this: (1) Intellectual/social (you will find out who has interests that match yours—perhaps meet the one other person in New England who translates medieval Bohemian poetry); (2) A business directory. A number of members have had translation jobs come their way through other members by this means. This information is of course entirely voluntary. Please also pare your information down to minimum length—to thin down whole vitae is an unnecessary burden for the list compiler, as is reading handwriting.

(An insert is provided in this issue for new members who have not already done so to send us their vital statistics.)

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

As of July 26, 1976, we have 38 paid-up members and NETA News subscribers (subscription costs the same as membership). Of these, 30 are in or within striking distance of Boston, four are elsewhere in Mass., one in RI, one in NH, and two outside New England. In addition, complimentary copies of the NETA news are being mailed to other translator groups in this country as the first step in an exchange of information between groups. These are the Association of Professional Translators in Pittsburgh, the Translators Guild in Philadelphia, and the ATA chapters-in-being in Dallas and Austin.

LETTERS Keep them coming!

Your editor has not had the opportunity to follow through with all the ideas received. In future, I hope to start an exchange of interesting articles via the NETA News, print a few standard business letters in English and a few European languages, initiate a "Literary Translators" column and set up a "Problem word" corner. Any other suggestions and all contributions to this struggling newsletter are more than welcome. —AB

PERIODICALS UPDATE (Isabel Leonard)

Supplementary information to fill in "holes" in "Periodicals of Interest to Translators", published in the May and June issues of this newsletter.

Alicja Kawecki takes "La Banque des Mots",

(cont.)

"L'Actualité Terminologique", and "Bulletin de la Traduction", and as such becomes a source for them. She adds the information that "La Banque des Mots" comes out twice yearly, costs 70 francs/year, and is obtainable from the Presses Universitaires de France. It contains studies and recommendations relating to the formation of new French words, including specialized vocabularies.

"Der Sprachmittler", which styles itself the "Informationshefte des Sprachendienstes der Bundeswehr" and is published by BMVg, 53 Bonn, has articles in German on various aspects of technical translation and multi-lingual vocabularies. It is heavily military and, although unattractively produced, would doubtless be of interest to those working for agencies working for FTD and the like. There are four issues/year.

"Le Linguiste/De Taalkundige", as you may guess from its title languages, is the organ of the Chambre Belge des Traducteurs, Interpretes et Philologues. It costs 250 BF/yr. (remember, a BF is only 4 cents or so) and is obtainable from the Chambre etc. at König Leopold II Laan, B 9000, Ghent, Paiements par virement au CCP no. 000-0073269-34 de la Chambre, etc. The issue I saw was advertising a "special", No. 2-3/1975, on technical dictionaries; price 100 BF.

"L'Interprète", which is the "Bulletin de l'Association d'Interpretes et de Traducteurs" is obtainable for the price of 10 SF/year for 4-5 issues from the School of Interpreters, Case 388, Genève.

SEPTEMBER MEETING TOPIC

Charles Parsons, Guild of Professional Translators will be our guest speaker and talk to us on "The Guild of Professional Translators: Origins, Accomplishments, and Goals".

NEW EQUIPMENT DIGEST—Information Explosion

Bill Grimes recently loaned me a copy of his periodical "New Equipment Digest", published by Penton Publishing Div. of Penton, Inc., Penton Plaza, 1111 Chester Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44114; \$15.00/year. As its name implies it publishes information on new products—electronics, tools, plastics, metals, etc., etc. A very interesting addition to the magazine itself is a "Reader Reply Card" supplied to order further information from the New Product manufacturers.

My filling out of last month's card has produced a veritable deluge of information. Two items of particular interest are:

"Capsule Thermistor Course", available from Fenwal Electronics, 63 Fountain Street, Framingham, Mass., and

"Specialty Steels", available from Ackerland Steel Company, Inc., 45-15 Barnett Ave., Long Island City, N.Y. 11104

Bill has since loaned me two other issues which I will bring to the August NETA meeting so that others may use them also.

(Note: There are 2 reader reply cards in every issue, so those interested should team up.)

DICTIONARY POOL

We are happy to say that the Dictionary Pool is now under full swing. I average 1-2 calls per week in both directions (i.e., I make 1-2 and receive 1-2) and have found it extremely valuable.

We were surprised to find so little overlap amongst the participants. We are also set up to handle any up-date material or to accommodate any new participants. The only requirement is that a prospective participant send in (c.o. Alice Berglund, 35 Catherine Drive, Peabody, Ma. 01960) index cards for at least 10 specialized dictionaries. (I will supply any further information for those interested.) There is also a fee, which is divided by those participating. We have not reached a final figure, but estimate it at \$5.00-\$8.00 each.

It was reported in META that the Banc de Terminologie in Montreal (the computer bank) began with a dictionary pool of the Ontario translators association. We can aim high.

One disadvantage of our system, however, is that the material covers approximately 80 pages; it would have been better and easier to use if the type were reduced and the pages were printed back to back; also no adequate provision was made for a 3-hole punch! But, in spite of all this, it's working.

FREE CLASSIFIED—BULLETIN BOARD

Dues-paid NETA members are invited to advertise free of charge in these pages. Ads must be resubmitted for every time they are to run, must be of reasonable length, and must be of interest to the readership (i.e., "dictionary for sale" goes; "home wanted for kittens" doesn't). Submissions must be typed, and must be of the "Classified (not "Display") variety. No box number service is available or planned.

For Sale: Two Grundig Stenorette dictating machines with microphones and transcriber foot controls and earphones. In good operating condition. (These are reel-to-reel rim-drive machines which use their own special tapes. The tapes can only be transcribed with another Stenorette machine.) Call 749-0772. \$100. each or \$175. for both.

Arthur Berglund
35 Catherine Dr.
W. Peabody, Mass. 01960



Isabel LEONARD
P O Box 55
Hingham, MA 02043