

TRANSLATION News

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BILINGUALISM BRINGS BUSINESS TO THE TRANSLATION INDUSTRY

(Second of Two Articles)

Rolland A., a long-time translator and the owner of a medium-size translation service company, had attended a meeting of the kind that he had not attended since the last of his three children had graduated from high school some 10 years previous. It was a meeting of the local school board, and it was a specific topic on the board's agenda that had propelled Mr. A. out of his 10-year absence from participation in local school affairs: the school board was proposing a bilingual (English and Spanish) program for grades K through 6.

Unlike other school board meetings Mr. A. had attended when his children were of school-age, this one was playing to an S.R.O. audience, and upon entering the auditorium, he immediately sensed the emotionalism in the air. Proposals on the program were set forth and hotly debated; there were the usual accusations that the school officials were spending public funds without regard for "quality education"; there were other demands that the board recognize the educational needs of minority children. Remarks by some parents to the effect that "bilingual education would result only in a linguistically- and culturally-divided community" brought shouts of "racism" from others.

Rolland A. was finally recognized from the chair after about an hour of heated debate. He deliberately did not identify his occupation, but began speaking directly to the issue. "I am," he said, "100% in favor of instituting, or enhancing foreign language study as an integral part of the grade-school curriculum. I would like to see children of even ages 5 or 6 or 7, begin study of a foreign language, whether that foreign language is French or Spanish or Chinese. However," he continued, "it is my considered opinion that any program which requires bilingual instruction in such subjects as mathematics or science or history, is nothing short of insanity. What will result will be a student conversant not in two languages but in no languages, and worse, it will be a student totally unprepared to cope with a world in which English is the dominant language of communication." He was interrupted by a woman screaming a racial epithet at him in Spanish. He turned towards his detractor, and lapsing into flawless Spanish, said to her, "Obviously, you did not understand my remarks in English, so permit me to repeat them in a language you might understand." Mr. A., after repeating his

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AMENDED ATA BY-LAWS SEEN AS NOT WITHSTANDING FUTURE LEGAL TESTS

In what appears to be another legal miscue by officials of the American Translators Association, the amended by-laws of the organization, recently approved by referendum, may be unable to withstand future legal challenges. Although several ATA members pointed out various anomalies in the amendments, it appears that ATA officials ignored those purported discrepancies and went ahead with the referendum procedure.

And it is specifically in the area of procedure that the amended by-laws could fail their first legal test. The procedure for amending the by-laws is embodied in Article 12 (Article 14 of the amended by-laws) and mandates that the by-laws may be "amended by a majority vote of the active members of the Association...., provided that the complete text of the change is submitted to each member in writing." The mandate to provide each member (irrespective of classification) with the complete text of the proposed amendments was evidently confirmed by ATA officials when they added the words, "Draft approved by the ATA Board of Directors on October 20, 1990, for submission to the membership", to the referendum package mailed in early December 1990.

However, despite the clear mandate prescribed by the by-laws and the apparent confirmation of that mandate by ATA officials, the complete text of the amended by-laws was sent only to active or voting members; associate, institutional, corporate and other membership classes never received a copy. When ATA Board members Meeri Yule and Laurie Treuhart were informed of this oversight, the latter expressed deep concern. She subsequently requested ATA President Deanna L. Hammond to take some corrective action. Ms. Yule said that, "It is absolutely essential that ATA comply strictly with the provisions of its by-laws," and added that she too would inform President Hammond to take appropriate action. All ATA Board members were later advised by several members that the referendum procedure was flawed, and that this could pose serious legal problems in the future. Nevertheless, the Board, ostensibly following the lead of President Hammond, refused to take any action to correct the situation.

President Hammond and other Board members were also told that another procedural aspect appeared flawed. Robert L. Addis of Menlo

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"BY-LAWS" [cont'd. from Page 1]

Park, California, a charter member, calling the by-laws "a basic crucial document having profound legal implications and potential juridic consequences", took umbrage with ATA officials over the procedure of allowing only a "Yes-No" vote on a broad range of different subjects. Mr. Addis said in a letter to President Hammond that "we active voting members of ATA are in fact being denied an opportunity to cast the normal, judiciously selective vote signifying our acceptance or non-acceptance of each of them individually, each on its own merits - as is the customary, legally rational, democratic procedure."

Mr. Addis' words on what he called "batch voting" were echoed and elaborated on by José Pérez of Decatur, Georgia. Mr. Pérez, citing "Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised", which ATA claims is the parliamentary authority governing implementation of the by-laws, pointed out to President Hammond that "Robert's Rules" clearly provide that "before the text of a constitution as a whole can be voted, all amendments have to be voted on separately, article by article, section by section, paragraph by paragraph." He also reminded President Hammond that "Robert's Rules" mandate that voting members of an organization be explicitly told what language is being struck and what is being put in its place. Both Mr. Addis' and Mr. Pérez' contentions on these points were sharply refuted by ATA Secretary Ann Sherwin, who said in response to Mr. Addis, in particular, that "the presentation of substitute by-laws rather than an item-by-item vote is much more practical in this situation and is perfectly acceptable according to 'Robert's Rules of Order'." However, notwithstanding Ms. Sherwin's statement that "Robert's Rules" permit so-called "batch voting" on by-law amendments, TRANSLATION NEWS was unable to find any language in that parliamentary text that allows for any procedure other than an amendment-by-amendment approval or negation.

Of even greater legal concern than the disputed procedure is the language of several new provisions dealing, in particular, with expulsion from the Association. Language such as "(a member may be expelled for) conduct or public statements injurious to the Association", and "conduct or public statements harmful to the profession, such as misrepresentation in advertising", were deemed by several critics as far too vague, and therefore unenforceable. Another amendment calling for expulsion for "violation of the Association's Code of Professional Conduct" was characterized as "grossly illegal", since the Association does not even have a Code of Professional Conduct, and therefore, the members were being asked to approve a non-existent document. [The ATA currently has a Code of Ethical Practices and Professional Rights, but that document contains two provisions which might be viewed by authorities as an attempt to restrain competition; in addition, that Code also states that "(All translators shall have the right) to charge such professional fees...taking into account such guidelines as may be laid down by their professional society." The ATA aborted its rate guidelines program in March 1990, and the program itself is now under

investigation by the Federal Trade Commission.]

The provision "conviction of [sic] a felony" as grounds for expulsion also came under fire. José Pérez pointed out that in Georgia, sodomy, even between a married couple, is a felony, and that it is a law that has recently been enforced in that State. He further listed adultery as a felony crime in some States, additionally pointing out that in some U.S. jurisdictions one can be convicted of a felony for actions that in other jurisdictions are viewed as misdemeanors.

Charges that the amended by-laws were not reviewed in advance by the ATA attorney were sharply denied by ATA Secretary Sherwin, who said that not only had the ATA attorney (Frank Patton) been consulted, but that he had recommended some of the proposed changes. However, she did admit that she did not know the details of that consultation. Mr. Patton was unavailable for comment.

ATA REGIONAL CONFERENCE TO FEATURE A FIRST FOR TRANSLATORS: COPING WITH STRESS

To the unknowing or unaware, translation would appear to be an occupation that is absent stress. Indeed, to many, the picture conjured up of a translator is a person sitting beside the proverbial Walden Pond, gazing at the trees and flowers for inspiration, and watching the sun set in the distance. In fact, many translators (and interpreters) themselves will say that they enjoy their line of work because it is without stress. However, according to Teodorina Bello de Zimmerman, a freelance interpreter-translator who will lead a session on stress management at the forthcoming ATA Regional Conference in Cape May, NJ (April 26-28), denial of stress in translation work might be ascribable to an inability to recognize the symptoms of stress, and possibly also to a feeling that there might be something shameful in admitting to stress. "There are many translators and interpreters," said Ms. Bello, "who say that stress in translation and/or interpretation is a problem only for those who lack the skills necessary for doing the job."

Nonetheless, it is well known (if not openly admitted) that translation, especially in the industrial branch of the field, is a service rendered in most instances under specific time conditions. Clearly, translators continually speak and write about deadlines, and evidence of this deadline element shows up clearly in translator advertising as an important component of the service. Thus, the combination of, among others, stringent time conditions and the need to think (and think clearly) in two languages, has to result in some kind of mental and even physical tension.

According to Ms. Bello, there is no magic cure for stress; rather, it is up to the individual to seek out his or her own personal method for alleviating tensions deriving from

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"BILINGUALISM" [cont'd. from Page 1]

comments in Spanish, sat down, amidst mixed applause and cat-calls.

A Moral Dilemma

Mr. A. was pleased to learn some two weeks later than the proposed bilingual education program had been indefinitely tabled, but what happened one week after posed a kind of moral dilemma for him: it was a letter he received from a major publisher of school textbooks, inviting his company to submit a proposal on a project to translate mathematics and social studies textbooks for use in grades 1 through 8. It was a dilemma, Mr. A. surmised, that many of his colleagues in the translation industry might be experiencing.

Nonetheless, he set about the arduous task of calculating all of the inherent costs, reviewing the qualifications of his staff of translators, and putting together all of the essential pieces of a proposal of this magnitude. One month later, he received a telephone call from the publisher inviting him to a high-level meeting at its mid-western corporate headquarters, a meeting that resulted in the signing of a six-figure contract, one of the largest in his company's history.

A Once-Unknown Market

Just over a decade ago, the bilingual textbook was barely known in the United States. But in the early 1980's, and more pronouncedly, in the mid-1980's, this hitherto-unknown market for the translation industry began to grow. And it is a market that had every appearance of still growing - and bringing with it lucrative contracts for translation companies, and subsidiarily, translators - as more and more States, either because of political pressure or legislative enactment, are offering bilingual education programs to children of diverse ethnic backgrounds. While Spanish remains the major language of bilingual education programs, other languages, albeit on a much smaller scale, are being used for these programs. In fact, some critics contend that unless some reins are placed on bilingual education, local school officials will be pressured into establishing programs for any ethnic group demanding them, regardless of the number of speakers. These critics cite such recent programs as English-Mohawk in Upstate New York, English-Lakota in South Dakota, English-Kickapoo in Oklahoma, English-Chòctaw in Mississippi and English-Onéida in Wisconsin. But the fact remains that despite growing and vehement criticism from such groups as "U.S. English", whose stated purpose is to make English the official language of the United States, bilingual education programs appear to be increasing, with State and Federal funds being allocated for establishment and implementation.

And it is those funds, filtered initially to the textbook publishing industry, that have drifted down to a good segment of the translation industry, since the one unchanging feature of bilingual education is that all current textbooks are originally written in English, and therefore must be translated into the specific language selected by local school officials. Unfortunately, the money earned by

both translation companies and translators from textbook contracts, while somewhat big, is not without hardship, for this type of translation is fraught with a myriad of social and linguistic problems, much like other into-foreign translation work that is intended for use solely in the United States. [An article dealing with some of the problems of translation from English into Spanish for domestic use will be forthcoming in a future edition of TRANSLATION NEWS.]

Domestic Spanish Literature Increasing

But textbook translation is far from the only product that has resulted from growing bilingualism in this country (although "multilingualism" might be a more accurate term). Whereas a decade or so ago, translations into foreign languages were, for the most part, intended for overseas use, that picture has changed remarkably. For one, the increasing influx of tourists and business people from overseas has necessitated the need for all sorts and types of foreign language literature, ranging from hotel guest instructions to menus and travel & tourist brochures. If foreign language literature is commonplace at hotels and motels around the country, it is equally commonplace at such establishments as museums, concert halls, transportation terminals, office buildings that by themselves are tourist sites, major retail stores and a host of other establishments catering to the growing number of overseas visitors.

Because of the growth of the Spanish-speaking population in the United States, translation of literature for domestic use has increased enormously. Telephone directories in major cities (and even in some rural areas) now contain essential instructions in Spanish; power companies regularly include Spanish translations of billing and payment information, as well as advertising material; "what-to-do-in-case-of-emergency" signs written in English and Spanish today appear in restaurants in any city where there is a Hispanic population. And in libraries and bookstores, one can now find Spanish-language reference books (the goodly majority of them being translations from the English). Indeed, a company known as Facts on File, Inc., recently inaugurated a line of reference books geared towards Hispanic communities. Some of its new editions are *America 1492: Portrait of a Continent 500 Years Ago*, and *The Spanish-English Visual Dictionary*, which uses simple line drawings to teach both Spanish and English. Soon to be released are *How to Get a Federal Job* and *The Hispanic Presence in the United States from 1492 to Present*.

Spanish-language advertising (often translated from English) is today part of the scenery in airports, bus and rail terminals and other transportation centers; clearly, some 30% of the advertising placards and billboards in the New York City Subway system is in Spanish. And there are all sorts of local businesses employing Spanish-speaking workers which require Spanish translations of anything and everything dealing with the firm's operations, such as, for example, machinery- and

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COMMENTARY

A Translator in Need is a Pest

THE ULTIMATE OPTIMAL WORK RACK
FOR TRANSLATION

(The Final Solution of the Translator Problem)

(from the desk of Herr Doktor Dankwart
Wortschreck, President & Chairman of
the Board of Zeamenz-IB-Zierechts GmbH,
99991 Schrunkenkopf-am-Wasser,
translated by Alex Gross)

I am writing this document not only for internal circulation among our company's far-flung executive officers, but also for reading by CEO's and leading directors of other companies abroad. This is because I am addressing a problem of grave international dimensions, which must now at last be resolved on a final and international scale.

I am of course referring to the translation problem, perhaps more accurately to the translator problem. Some decades ago, our research colleagues promised us computer systems of such power and authority that we would no longer need to resort to human translators at all. I think we must all now admit, despite their continued promises and some possibly hopeful developments, that they have failed. We are still left with the unbearable burden in both human and economic terms of dealing with these people. I believe it is time to consider other solutions. This is why I am not merely proposing but have already begun to manufacture the Ultimate Optical Work Rack for Translators. I have found this necessary because existing translator work stations simply do not go far enough.

This translation tool consists of several components, all of them already working realities in various branches of the industry. Current translation work stations make it possible for the translator to call up dictionaries and other reference works on supplemental screens or as part of a single screen. But this still means an intolerable waste of time while the translator glances between screens or from one part of a screen to another. I propose the use of direct diode projection of dictionary images onto the retina of the translator, a device already used by NASA and the Air Force (1) in the form of flight simulation programs to train astronauts and pilots and now being introduced into CadCam programs for architects and engineers. Since these healthy, young fliers have long been using such systems, there is no reason to suppose that translators of all ages cannot also profit from them, and any claims of alleged health problems are certainly exaggerated. The metal headbands which support such systems are not at all constricting, and the high resolution projection produced by what our technicians describe as "a linear array of 280 light-emitting diodes (LED) focussing the image through a magnifying lens and a counterbalanced resonant vibrating scan mirror" (2) into the eyes should definitely make an impression on translators. The overall savings in time and

"BILINGUALISM" [cont'd. from Page 3]

equipment operating instructions, safety brochures, pension and benefit plans, conduct and dress codes, etc.

...And the Government Too

And not to be overlooked in the growth of translations for domestic use is the wealth of bilingual (and often multilingual) literature produced by governments, ranging from Federal to local: voting instructions, workers compensation literature, disability benefits brochures, and a host of other printed matter addressed to an audience whose primary language is something other than English.

Today, the list of establishments, public and private, requiring foreign language literature for domestic use is evidently growing on a daily basis, and that growth had doubtless been a boon to the translation industry. In fact, many observers feel that the volume of foreign language materials for local use will surpass the volume of materials for overseas use by the end of the 20th century.

"STRESS" [cont'd. from Page 2]

work. "What is more important than the method," Ms. Bello commented, "is determining what causes the stress; is the cause inherent or external?" Ms. Bello, who believes that both translation and interpretation are inherently-stressful occupations, said that in order to combat stress and tension effectively, one must have a greater self-awareness, and must be able to identify symptoms readily.

The scope of this session at the ATA Regional Conference, provisionally entitled "Stress Management for Translators and Interpreters", will be an open discussion on the causes and symptoms of stress, how to identify those causes and symptoms, and some recommendations on how to alleviate them. "In a session like this," Ms. Bello said, it is really the participants who can offer the best advice and most practical solutions for coping with stress." Joining Ms. Bello as co-leaders will be Susan Schiedel and Linda Pollack-Johnson, freelance translators-interpreters from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, respectively, as well as Marta Valle, an interpreters for the U.S. Department of Immigration & Naturalization.

Further information on the Cape May Conference can be obtained by writing to: ATA Regional Conference, c/o Laurie Treuhaft, Chairman; 215 West 71st Street (#4F), New York, NY 10023.

"WORK RACK" [continued]

and money is sure to be enormous. But this is not the only improvement I propose.

Translator's Notes:

(1) It is not clear whether the writer meant the U.S. or Soviet or Iraqi Air Force.

(2) When I received the German text of the above memo, my first reaction was to suspect

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"WORK RACK" [cont'd. from Page 4]

a hoax, but I soon realized that all of the elements of this work station, including resonant retinal projections, are already in use for various computer applications or are perfectly feasible on the basis of current technology. See the December 1990 issue of COMPUTER SHOPPER (page 454) for more details on these projections. A.G.

We are all familiar with the problems created by translators and the vast amount of wasted time these problems inevitably cause. Unless kept under strict control, translators can wreak terrible damage in many different company departments. Translators creep around our offices continually asking questions about what we actually mean, they are incessantly underfoot demanding further clarification about what we say and do when this is always perfectly clear in the first place. Frequently our subordinate officers are unable to answer these questions, and so they are deflected upward through our organization. I have even had such a translator come into my own office with such questions.

But we all know that all the answers to their questions are already contained in our company manuals, which these translators either refuse to read or dare to characterize as inadequate. Granted, there continued to be a need for translation of company documents into foreign languages, and someone must do the work. But this situation is simply intolerable, and it cannot be allowed to continue. Hence the other features of the Ultimate Optimal Translator Work Rack:

1) Man-Machine Unifying Devices: (Menschenmaschinenvereinigungsvorrichtungen) These semi-electronic, semi-mechanical elements will help to bond translators to their tasks and put an end to their office wanderings. When translators report to work in the morning, they will be permitted to prove their identity and connect themselves to the translation systems. Thereafter, the systems will monitor not only the total number of their keystrokes but will also ensure that their gaze is directed towards resonant laser projections of the correct dictionaries and reference materials for their projects. Thus, all their work for us will be perfectly optimized. Brief excursions to fulfill the needs of nature will be permitted, but alarms will be sounded if time limits are exceeded or if translators diverge from the correct pathways to and from appropriate facilities. Much German research went into this field of human surveillance some years back, and it must now be applied on a higher level in both humanistic and electronic terms for the improvement of the working conditions of our race.

2) Company Identity Fortifying Devices, providing subliminal reinforcement over hidden loudspeakers through the use of rhythm and slogans proclaiming company goals and the need to provide perfect translations reflecting these goals. We must remember that translators are in especial need of such reinforcement, as they are by their nature

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COMING IN THE MARCH ISSUE OF TRANSLATION NEWS:

- § Dr. Jonathan Slater writes about revisiting Babel: "The Global Village and the New One World."
 - § More Tax Tips and Reminders for 1991.
 - § Up-date on the FTC Investigation of the American Translators Association.
 - § Translator-Warriors and Interpreter-Warriors in the Persian Gulf.
- ...and much more.

"If you haven't been reading TRANSLATION NEWS you've been missing the news."

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FEDERAL INVESTIGATION OF ATA RATE GUIDELINES FINDS ROOTS IN NEW FTC AGGRESSIVENESS

The impending investigation by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) into the now-defunct Rate Guidelines Program of the American Translators Association may be ascribable to a virtual 180° turn-around in the FTC's policy regarding price-setting activities of various businesses and industries.

It is well-known that during the Reagan administration, the FTC and the Justice Department both followed a kind of laissez-faire attitude towards business practices that affected the public's pocketbook. The FTC, in particular, which has broad powers of investigation and prosecution of price-fixing and antitrust activities, was relatively silent in that respect during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. But according to Michael Pertschuk, a former FTC commissioner, "there is a new vigor and commitment at the agency," a vigor and commitment which, Mr. Pertschuk added, was watered down during the Reagan years. Both the print and electronic media have reported that the Federal Trade Commission has filed a growing number of consumer-protection lawsuits against a diverse array of industries, both small and large.

The change in the FTC's policy may also be attributable to increased pressure from various States which have their own consumer-protection and antitrust laws, oftentimes duplicating those of the Federal government. According to news reports, the newly-appointed head of the FTC, Janet D. Steiger, has taken marked steps to improve Federal and State consumer-protection actions, something that was absent during the Reagan years.

The FTC advised the American Translators Association (and its Washington and Northern California chapters) in mid-November 1990 that it was undertaking a preliminary "nonpublic" investigation into possible price-fixing activities of the Association, with the investigation ostensibly focusing on ATA's Rate Guidelines Program. This program, initiated in mid-1987, was voluntarily terminated in March 1990.

Through an administrative lapse at ATA headquarters in Ossining, NY, top ATA officials first learned of the FTC action in early December 1990, and requested an extension until January 7, 1991, for submitting all of the documents requested by that Federal agency.

However, unconfirmed reports indicated that the Association was unable to meet the January 7th filing date and requested, and obtained, another extension until the end of January. Barring any further delays, the FTC investigation should get underway by mid-February.

TRANSLATION TIME MACHINE



TWENTY YEARS AGO THIS WINTER...

Boston and San Francisco were selected as the ATA Convention sites for 1971 and 1972.

The Guild of Professional Translators, headquartered in Philadelphia, PA, was established, restricting membership "only to those translators who agree to adhere to minimum ethical freelance rates," and barring from membership, "non-translators, translation agents, supervisors and employers."

Premier Robert Bourbassa of Quebec succeeded in getting General Motors to agree to pay for simultaneous translation at union plant-level bargaining sessions, and to make the French version of the contract legally binding.

The American Translators Association scheduled its first open forum on translator accreditation...

and...

TEN YEARS AGO THIS WINTER...

Dr. A. Leslie Willson, professor of Germanic languages at the University of Texas was awarded the Goethe Medal for distinctive contributions to the study of German language, literature and culture.

The American Translators Association announced the establishment of the Elizabeth Endreny Award, created through a donation made by the Endreny family in memory of their mother, a long-time ATA member.

The ATA also announced the creation of a Translation Students Fund, providing a grant of \$250 to any student or group of students enrolled in a course or program in translation at an accredited college or university.

SOUNDING OFF!

L I N G E S A L E
By Tom Snow

The State of Utah (Shoshone for "Wonderland of Cold Fusion") has just adopted what the January 26th edition of The New York Times calls "the toughest anti-abortion measure in the 50 States." This law "permits abortions only in cases of rape or incest, where the pregnancy threatens 'grave damage to the pregnant woman's medical health,' or to prevent the birth of a child with 'grave defects'." The penalty is \$5000 and up to five years in prison.

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"WORK RACK" (cont'd. from Page 5)

either rootless cosmopolites or persons who have not found sufficient satisfaction in the values of the mother culture and been attracted to extraneous, foreign influences.

3) Specific Work Inducements and Constraints (SWIC): Our Ultimate Optimal Translator Work Rack is also equipped to provide the former in terms of more pleasing music over the loudspeakers (based on a scientific musical taste profile) as a reward for speedier work, less pleasant music for any slowdown in number of keystrokes counted, and even some mild electroshocks for truly extreme cases. Skinnerian behavioristic norms will of course not be violated.

4) Computer Evaluation of Accuracy: While computers are not yet accurate enough to take over translation entirely, they can be of use in spotting outright errors in translating specific items of company terminology. Only Official Orthodox Organizational Words (OOO-Woerter) must be used. Here too appropriate constraints can be administered.

5) Generating Translator Efficiency Reports (GeTER): Using standard data base procedures, our Translator Work Rack can of course also generate daily, weekly, monthly or yearly translator efficiency reports on the work of all translators, thus making it possible to bring about further improvements in their output. No office manager should be without these reports.

For all of these reasons, I not merely recommend the use of these Ultimate Optimal Translator Work Racks but can also foresee their introduction in concrete terms in many international companies in the near future. They will play a great role in strengthening not only our new, reunified Germany but all of Europe -- and perhaps tomorrow the world. Inquiries and orders may be directed through the usual channels.

Dankwart Wortschreck,
President & Chairman of the Board
Zeamenz-IB-Zierechts GmbH

Tax News and Developments

GOVERNORS OF THREE NORTHEASTERN STATES PRESENT DIM FISCAL REPORTS

Do Not Mention Sales Tax on Services, But Undercurrent Is Nonetheless Present

The Governors of three Northeastern States hard-hit by the current business recession, have presented less-than-encouraging fiscal reports, all with the undercurrent of thinking that sooner or later, their States will have to tap new sources of tax revenues. And one such source is a sales tax on services.

All three Governors, Mario Cuomo of New York, Jim Florio of New Jersey and Lowell Weicker of Connecticut carefully avoided the issue of sales taxes on services, but political observers said that in between the lines was a message that current tax sources will not be

sufficient for meeting future State budgetary needs.

Advocacy Groups Press for Sales Taxes on Services

It is well known by both legislators and tax experts that one reason for poor growth in revenues from current sales taxes is the exclusion of the fastest-growing part of the economy: services. Extending the sales tax to all sorts of business services could raise several hundred millions of dollars in revenue. But the issue is politically-explosive, as witnessed last year in Massachusetts, another Northeastern State with a service-based economy and declining tax revenues from traditional sources.

Nonetheless, advocacy groups for the poor and underprivileged have begun to turn up the heat, and will probably start pressuring State legislators to consider these taxes in the not-too-distant future.

Russell Sykes, a policy analyst with the New York State Communities Aid Association, which represents social-service groups, said, "We have a service economy, and we're not taxing those services. That is fundamentally wrong."

Tax Reminders

Federal Form 1099-MISC, the most common form used by translation companies for reporting the earnings of their freelance translators, are due by February 28, 1991. (Some States also require submission of earnings reports, using either the Federal 1099-MISC or the appropriate State form.)

Make certain that the recipient's identification number (in most cases, that number will be the social security number) is correct. Also verify that the amount of compensation reported is correct. In addition, remember that all forms 1099-MISC must be submitted to the IRS with a covering form, called Form 1096.

And what is most important of all is to remember that failure to provide a recipient's identification number can result in penalties under section 6721 of the IRS Code, "Failure to File a Correct Information Return".

Compensation of less than \$600 does not have to be reported on Form 1099-MISC. (According to some tax experts, payments of so-called "non-employee compensation" -- Box 7 of Form 1099-MISC -- to corporations do not have to be reported; however, there is some confusing language on this point in the IRS rules, and it is recommended that one consult carefully with a tax advisor on this point. If in doubt, it does no harm to report compensation paid to a corporation on Form 1099-MISC.)

"LINGE SALE" [cont'd. from Page 6]

Since the next national ATA Conference will be held in Salt Lake City, ATA members (or even non-members) who are "pro-choice" or who oppose criminal sanctions as a means of combating behavior they disapprove of, now have a wonderful opportunity to express their dismay at this action. I will do so by contributing what I would have spent at the Conference to the American Civil Liberties Union. I just would not feel comfortable in an atmosphere of enlightenment approximating that of Saudi Arabia. Those who agree with me but are compelled to attend in order to network or because of obligations to the Association may want to wear a button reading "I'd rather be in Philadelphia".

Now, what does this have to do with translation? Well, conventional wisdom has it that the legislation went through so smoothly because of the Mormons who constitute 70% of Utah's population. And did you know that Mormonism is the only religion started by a translator? Founder Joseph Smith, in fact, translated their basic scripture, The Book of Mormon, from an unidentified language inscribed on golden plates revealed to him by an angel. Since the plates unfortunately disappeared, however, it is impossible to verify the accuracy of Smith's efforts. This is not true, on the other hand, of another one of his translations, "The Pearl of Great Price", the original Egyptian manuscripts of which are safe in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Smith's translation of this material by the way is, shall we say, "much to free", in the opinion of Egyptologists.

Still, it is important to remember that Joseph Smith got along very well without benefit of training in the source languages and without ATA accreditation.

But the struggle for "professionalism", meaning certification and restraint of competition, goes on. Two adjunct professors from Miami address the subject in the January 1991 issue of the ATA Chronicle. Lucy Hilford-Greiner wants each of us to be a "certified translator/interpreter" with his (or her) rump stamped in violet ink by a "Federal/State/local agency." This is the only way we can be "professional". With all due respect, Hilford-Greiner's article does have a high Snow count of 10/550 (the rate of at which slashes and "professional" occur in a continuous text). Leonel Antonio de la Cuesta, writing in the same issue, wants us to emulate Argentina, with its long and benevolent tradition of democracy and respect for civil rights by establishing courses leading to a *colegio* of official translators with a monopoly on official assignments.

All this examining and stamping lets me out of course. I can't take tests. I failed the ATA German-English test. I did participate in a recent ATA-accreditation "Kaplaning" session at New York University. We all did practice tests and brought them in for discussion. The whole discussion centered, not on whether a particular translation was correct and accurate, but on what an ATA examiner would

think about it. I also took a practice test by mail last summer. The text was rather difficult, I thought, for a measure of basic competence. Among other comments, the examiner felt that my "end up in an explosion" was too colloquial, and that I should have said "end in an explosion". Well, it will be a long time before I again submit my work for evaluation by an anonymous star chamber, whose own level of skill I have no way of judging.

Now these "adj. profs." and those of their persuasion should worry about how a lack of professionalism in translation and interpretation might lose us the war in the [Persian] Gulf. Faced with a shortage of interpreters, the Armed Forces threw together a battalion of Kuwaiti men pursuing graduate studies in the United States, gave them a week of basic military (not linguistic) training, and shipped them off to the front. Will these interpreters be participating in the "interrogation" of Iraqi prisoners of war like the United States Army interpreters who assisted in the "stressful" interrogation of an American soldier falsely accused of selling his rifle and turned over to the Honduran military, although accused of no crime against that country ("60 Minutes", ca. 5/6/90)? But this subject is more for an ethics panel than an accreditation committee.

Dr. Peter Krawutschke communicates his joy in the same issue of the ATA Chronicle at the survival of the National Translations Center. The NTC is a depository where, fellow professionals, you can file your translations anonymously and then they can be made available for free to any wealthy corporation, provided that its needs happen to match what is available.

I had a favorite cousin who had a great influence on me when I was young. He wanted to become a commercial photographer, but he had no education and no training in photography. This was during the Great Depression, and he couldn't afford a camera, so he made one himself, and went on to become the leading portrait and industrial photographer in Cleveland, Ohio, and president of his national association, by taking good pictures, treating his customers well, and charging a decent fee. That's what I call professional. It's also, incidentally, the American way. When I first told my Austrian wife about my cousin she was amazed. She remarked, "You cannot become a photographer in Austria without going to photography school and then serving an apprenticeship."

Of course, if you do constitute a profession, you can limit access to it, control the market, and make lots of money. Look at school teachers.
