

APRIL MEETING

Our April meeting, the liveliest yet, was chiefly occupied by an informal debate as to whether we should apply to become a chapter of the American Translators Association. The principal speakers were Dr. Harry Zohn and Robert Abilock.

Dr. Zohn opened his remarks by contrasting the age (17 years) and large membership (1200) of the ATA in comparison with our own young organization, some forty members strong. He emphasized the importance of pooling our efforts with those of ATA to achieve common goals. It has been several years now since an ATA convention was held in Boston, and the NETA could serve as a nucleus around which another such convention could be held here in a few years.

Dr. Zohn went on to point out that, instead of simply adding our names to the ATA roster and sitting back for instructions from headquarters, the New England Translators Association could operate on the local level to make a significant contribution to the national organization, by writing articles, participating in discussions, preparing coordinated presentations at the national conventions, and furnishing future national leadership. There was also the financial aspect to be considered; evidently the ATA returns \$2.00 per member to the local chapters to help defray expenses involved in its operation. This, in addition to the elimination of the need for paying dues to both ATA and NETA, would reduce the financial pinch on our local group. Finally the ATA has affiliation with foreign translator organizations from which we could benefit.

On May 1 Dr. Zohn will be attending the Directors' meeting of the ATA at Croton-on-Hudson, New York, since he has agreed to serve the balance of the term of an ATA director who resigned. This would be an appropriate time to discuss affiliation of NETA with ATA, and to clear up questions related to submitting a charter of our own design.

Mr. Abilock's argument fell into three parts. (1) What are the main concerns of ATA? (2) What are (or should be) the main concerns of NETA? (3) Is there a sufficiently good match between (1) and (2) above to warrant our joining the ATA as a chapter? I quote:

"ATA's concerns, as reflected by its publications and by its allocation of funds, center on what might be called "translator image-raising" by which I mean proving to each other and to the outside world that translators deserve to be considered professionals and to reap the scholarly respect and economic rewards associated with that status. In practice, these concerns involve defining and implementing acceptable ways of becoming professionals (translator

training), then proving that we have indeed become professionals (accreditation, meetings, medals). It is true that these activities are a valid reaction to the prevailing view of the outside world that translation is a mechanical activity comparable to typing. Some such reaction is justifiable and may have significant results in the long term. These activities do deserve a certain fraction of the efforts of a professional translators' organization. But, in my view, ATA has overreacted. All these efforts devoted to becoming professionals and proving that we are professionals have pushed activities involved in being professionals almost entirely out of the picture. By the latter I mean activities involving translation per se as a scholarly discipline and as an economic endeavor, aspects of translation that have direct and immediate relevance to our actual day-to-day activities as translators."

As an illustration of what a truly "professional" translators' journal might be, Mr. Abilock showed us an issue of Lebende Sprachen (No. 5, 1975). This issue includes a very well written article on the legal liability of the interpreter and translator for faulty translations; a bilingual article with glossary on EDP applications in medicine; a list of neologisms in French with context, definitions, and suggested translations into German; an article in Spanish on taxation with text-related glossary and equivalents in German; a list of terms and definitions in German, English, and French on transportation across international boundaries; a "terminology service" (readers' answers to other readers' problems); and some book reviews. In contrast, a typical issue of the ATA Chronicle (February 1976) contains notice of a workshop in Cleveland ("training"); a list of new ATA members; information on ATA for recruiting purposes; a list of those who passed the accreditation exams last October; an abstract from a Soviet publication; the 1976 budget; notice of another workshop; and notice of more accreditation exams. The feature of the ATA Chronicle for which one would hold out the most hope as being an interchange between one working translator and another, namely the Problem Corner, has published answers which often have been undocumented, contradictory, or simply wrong. Sometimes this feature does not even appear, crowded out by other more "important" items. Fortunately there have been exceptions of some really useful dictionary reviews and bibliographies.

Mr. Abilock then moved on to the second point: what are (or should be) the main concerns of the NETA? Our meetings over the last six months have been devoted to topics useful to the practicing translator:

organization of a dictionary pool, discussion of research resources in the Boston area, examination of translator training, etc. If NETA is to serve a useful function and not merely be a social organization, it should continue and expand its efforts in this direction. Mr. Abilock suggested topics for future meetings: problems related to the translation of foreign texts in specific fields; the minimum technical background of a translator; and the relative difficulties of various languages and fields (and how these should be mirrored in rates).

Finally, how do these aims fit in with joining ATA as a local chapter? Mr. Abilock saw four possibilities for NETA relative to ATA:

(1) Continue as an independent group, doing things that ATA is already doing. This would be a duplication of effort, and hence infeasible.

(2) Continue as an independent group, emphasizing the "professional" activities described above.

(3) Join ATA, with the express understanding among NETA members and between ATA and NETA that the sort of activities covered under (2) are what we want to do. We should try to get the rest of the ATA membership to follow our lead. We should publish the results of our symposia, dictionary critiques, lectures, glossaries, etc. in the Chronicle or in separate publications sponsored by ATA.

(4) Join ATA with a view toward engaging in the same activities (mostly related to "image-raising") that ATA is now primarily engaged in. This is what ATA might expect. We would become a concentrated source of manpower subsidized by ATA funds. Pressure might be put on us to use our strength and justify our subsidy by doing such things as improving the accreditation system, organizing workshops, or hosting an ATA convention. These all require much time and effort...who will provide it?

Options (2) and (3) both require work and commitment. If there is not sufficient commitment to any of the options, then we must question the feasibility of continuing for very long as an organization, in or out of NETA.

A vote was then taken, including two proxies. Susan Brownsberger raised a point of order, requesting that any affirmative vote by the membership of NETA should make expressly clear that we would affiliate with the ATA only under the terms set forth in option (3) above. There was vigorous agreement by all those present that NETA does not want to join ATA under the conditions outlined in option (4). With this point made amply clear, the vote was unanimous in favor of joining ATA as a local chapter. Dr. Zohn will accordingly convey our views regarding ATA chapterhood to the ATA Board on May 1.

DICTIONATION WORKSHOP

A subject that has received constant attention in recent years has been the use of dictating and transcribing equipment in the preparation of translations. Usually it has come up in connection with discussion of a larger topic, such as "How do free-lancers work?" or "How can translator efficiency be increased?" We think it is time that this subject was given the attention it deserves, in an in-depth workshop session for those who would like to improve their techniques by seeing how others do it, and to show how it's done for those who would like to try.

The workshop might feature:

- display and demonstration of various types and brands of dictating and transcribing equipment
- demonstration of how an original text might be prepared for dictating
- an actual dictating session, with hints on how to make things easier for the transcriber
- an actual transcription session with the transcriber commenting on problems of the technique
- opportunity to try your hand (and mouth) at dictation, with critical feedback from the transcriber
- a chance to ask unlimited questions, at any time.

At the May meeting we shall be asking for a show of hands to determine the level of interest in this topic, and can then plan on a time and place to hold the workshop. Please have some suggestions ready if you know of a suitable meeting place (a centrally located member's home would be welcome). In addition, the cost of the typist/transcriber will have to be shared by the participants, requiring a small fee.

MAY MEETING: TUESDAY MAY 4, EMERSON HALL,
ROOM 104, HARVARD YARD. TRANSLATION ROUND-
TABLE: 7 PM; MEETING PROPER: 8:15 PM.

(Same place as last time.)

TOPIC

In view of the positive attitude of the NETA toward joining ATA as a local chapter, it seems particularly appropriate that we should concern ourselves with the call by V. Lynn Tyler (ATA Chronicle, March 1976, p. 8) for an exchange of ideas on the topic "What is the profile of a competent translator and of an effective translator training program; what are the resources to enhance them?" The same issue of the Chronicle also contains answers by Henry Fischbach to the questions:

- What standards should professional translators be expected to meet?
- What training is required to be able to

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PERIODICALS OF INTEREST TO TRANSLATORS : Part I

(This is a draft, intended to be the basis of a group compilation. Please fill in the holes! Isabel Leonard.)

Title	#issues /year	Price /year	Address	Boston Avail. (= library or NETA subscr'r)	Comments
Lebende Sprachen	6	27 DM	Langenscheidt Verlag, 1000 Ber- lin 62 (Schöne- berg) Crellestr. 29-30	Weidener/Bran- deis/Abilock/ Berglund	Journal of the BDÜ (=Ger.Translators Assn.) Almost all contents of <u>direct</u> interest to translators. Articles on lang. & translation, book reviews, bi/trilingual texts & critiques, specialized glossaires. Scholarly, thorough. Every translator shd read regularly.
Babel				Kawecki	Journal of the FIT. Brighter, better under new editorship. Hope it will survive this time.
META		\$5.60	Presses de l'U de Montréal	Stone	Organ of Canadian (Translators Assn?)
Tetrady Perevodchika				Brownsberger?	
Bulletin de Terminologie		Free	Bureau de Ter- minologie 1, avenue de Cortenbergh, 1040 Brussels	Abilock/Grimes	Organ of the European Communities terminology bureaus. Articles in Community languages (Eng/Fre/Ger/Dut/Ital/Dan). Articles of gen. ling. interest, mostly with a bearing on translation. Regular word lists with defini- tions & suggested or definitive translations into other Community languages. Highly recom- mended, but difficult to get.
L'Actualité Terminologique	10	\$2	Information Cana- da, Rm. 2736, Can. Govt. Printing Bureau, Sacred Heart Blvd, Hull, Quebec	Leonard	Bulletin of the Centre de terminologie, Canadian Govt. translating service. Has an essentially <u>practical</u> orientation: often detailed instructions on tackling specific translating problems. Eng-Fre word lists. Intended for Eng-to-Fre Xr, but useful reverse
The Incorpor- ated Linguist	4	£5	Institute of Lin- guists, Lloyds Bank Chambers, 91 Newington Causeway, Lon- don SE1 6BN	Grimes/Kawecki	High-quality writing. Interesting articles on various aspects of language. Scholarly rather than practical value. Organ of the (British) Institute of Linguists.
L'interprète					[Reviewed in Bulletin de Terminologie]
Dimension			U of Texas Press Box 7819 AustTX		Review of contemp Ger lit w/parallel Eng tr'n

(to be continued next issue)

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meet such standards?

- What/who are clientele/markets for translators?
- What fields of translation have special requisites?

A panel chaired by Dr. Samuel Stone and composed of Mr. Bodo Reichenbach, Mr. Robert Silverman, and Mr. David Tornquist has been organized to discuss the topic and to address these aspects of translation. We urge the membership to read Mr. Fischbach's remarks and to be ready to participate in a question and answer session with the panelists.

At the end of the meeting we want to have a discussion of topics for the June meeting (in addition to the election...see below). Many practical topics remain to be covered; among those suggested by Mr. Robert Abilock are:

- sources and evaluations of dictionaries and glossaries
- problems of translating in various fields
- lectures by (outside?) speakers
- the interaction between free-lance translating as a full-time activity and one's personal and family life -- what are the tradeoffs between the advantages of working at home and the long hours, extreme concentration, time pressure, and uncertainty as to where the next job will come from
- why have rates paid to typists doubled over the last few years and those to translators in some cases declined?

In the past we have usually scattered at the end of a meeting with no topic set for next time. Let's try to get more individuals involved in steering the course of the NETA ...we need more ideas for future meetings, from you.

ELECTIONS

Our Bylaws call for nominations of candidates for office (President, VP, Sec/Treas.) at the May meeting for election in June. Since NETA is now heading in a new direction, there is no *a priori* reason why the incumbents should remain in office.

TRANSLATION ROUNDTABLE

April's roundtable dealt with a philosophical passage from German, and drew a small but erudite and articulate group. The Spanish text appended to this issue will be discussed at the May roundtable. It is a general text, so try your hand at it and come to the roundtable at 7 pm to compare notes with the others.

DICTIONARY POOL PROGRESS REPORT

Alice Berglund and Isabel Leonard

Ian Finlay ("Translating", 1971) suggested that the free-lance translator should be spending about £ 50 a year on dictionaries and glossaries. Remembering that the pound sterling was then worth \$2.40 and that dictionary prices have about doubled since 1971, this gives us a figure of about \$240 per annum.

Added to the problem of cost is the irritating circumstance that sometimes one may buy a \$20 dictionary to do a \$100 job, and never use it again.

A group of free-lance translators in the NETA has combined its resources with the goal of finding at least a partial solution to this problem. When the system is fully set up, every translator in the pool will know which dictionaries are owned by every other participant, and will be able to inquire of fellow-members by telephone, by mail, by borrowing the dictionary where convenient, or even by buying it. Membership in the pool is restricted to translators who can offer at least 10 dictionary or encyclopedic sources (not counting bilingual dictionaries of common languages).

The mechanics of the system are as follows: each participant makes out 3 x 5 cards as follows: (1) a personal card, showing name, address, telephone number, hours of day available for inquiries, and language and subject specialties; (2) a bibliographic card on each reference book owned. These are prepared to a standard format showing the field, title, author, publisher, date, number of pages, and indication of whether the book can be borrowed or purchased. To standardize the field nomenclature a numbered list of possible fields was provided to the participants, and the code number from this list is entered in the appropriate place on the card.

The cards are next sorted by field and interfiled. A typist (paid by the group) is currently compiling the Main Listing from them, on 8-1/2 x 11 pages. Space is being left between subjects to leave room for updating and adding new items without retyping.

To date nine participants have joined the project, and the average card contribution per participant is in the area of 75 references. The completed Main Listing, including cross-references, is likely to amount to over 100 pages. When complete it will be xeroxed and distributed to the participants.

For updating purposes, the members of the scheme will make out a card on each new acquisition to their libraries, and send the cards to the coordinator at intervals. Update pages will be made up from these cards and distributed every six months, approximately.

Though this may be optimistic, we still hope to keep the cost per participant to about \$5.00 for the Main Listing (plus small update charges). Our largest expense is the typist, but considering the enormity of the task no typing services were volunteered!

One spinoff to this system, mentioned to illustrate how group projects of this kind can reach into one's life beyond original expectations, has been that two members have catalogued their filing-cabinet material (brochures, xeroxed articles, and the like) as well as glossary lists (kept in a three-ring binder) by the same system.

Index cards have been made out for these items, and they will be interfiled with their dictionary cards to give a single cross-referenced catalog of all materials held.

NEW MEMBERS

AWQATTY, Borjana 489-3432 15 Crescent Rd Belmont MA 02178
FOSTER, Ana Maria 835-R Broadway, Chelsea MA 02150. Sp/Port-Eng, Eng-Sp. U of Madrid
GOESMANN Ilse 899-1027 27-8 Middlesex Circle, Waltham, MA 02154 Eng-Ger
HARTY, Mary Ann 868-5518 423 Franklin St Cambridge MA 02139 Ger/Eng
LINCOLN Gisela 44 Chandler St Somerville MA 02144 Eng-Ger
SILVERMAN Robert H. 876-4821 22 Trowbridge St Cambridge MA 02138 Russ/Ukr/Fre/OldChurSlav-Eng, Math, Sci, Soc, Phil'y
SLANER Stephen E. 491-2996 10 Carver St Cambridge MA 02138 Pol Sci, Columbia U. Fre-Eng. Trans'n pub'd in *Antipode*
SZULKIN Robert 10 Livoli Rd Framingham MA 01701, Russ-Eng, fiction, sci. material
ZOLINA Rima 69-F Stadium Way, Allston MA 02134, Trans/Interp Russ ↔ Eng, Astron Geophy Math Phys

WORK

Mary Ann Harty (see new members above) received an inquiry about translating a book into German. Call her for details.

A member in W.Mass needs help with legal Fre-Eng as part of a book. Contact Isabel Leonard for details.

LETTERS FROM MEMBERS

A number of members who because of distance have been unable to attend meetings have written to the Secretary or President. Since their views were (presumably) intended for the group as a whole it seems appropriate to reproduce some of their comments here. I have kept them anonymous as I have not sought the writers' permission to publish. ¶I am curious to see what other translators look like. ¶I have long felt the need for ATA members to cooperate closer on regional levels, not only for streamlining professional efficiency but also because of the encouragement it would bring to an otherwise rather "go-it-alone" enterprise which most free lance translators experience - when they receive work. ¶Presently we are working hard in this area to make possible painless integration of ESL students coming to this area, without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. This takes a lot of planning...Perhaps some ATA members have more experience than I in the field. If there are ATA guidelines that I'm not aware of, please let me know. ¶I'd like to stress that I am really interested in a regional group - much more than the

impersonal set-up of the remote and aloof ATA. ¶I am interested to know what measures might be proposed with a view to "raising professional standards." At the time when I was a member of the ATA, I found that this usually meant devising some system of testing and accreditation which, as I understood it, would at best serve only to reassure prospective employers of technical translators and to limit membership in the "guild." Still, I would like to know the present thinking of local colleagues on this and other subjects, and the minutes will no doubt reflect their views. I hope you will bear with me for a while as a kind of observer, reluctantly *in absentia*, and continue to keep me posted on the next few meetings of the group.

[*These and other "outlying members" (if they will excuse my Bostonocentrism) are cordially invited to write "real" letters to the Editor expressing reactions to this newsletter or on other translational topics.*]

CANADIAN FRENCH INTO ENGLISH (Isabel Leonard)

A short while ago, working on my first-ever translation from Canadian French, I had to make a long-distance call to Ottawa to find the meaning of some expressions not in the usual "French" dictionaries.

Since then I have learned of some cheaper remedies. First of all, Belisle's "Canadian-French" dictionary ("Petit dictionnaire de la langue française," Montreal, 1969, 644 pp) is listed in the catalog of the Boston Public Library. Secondly, free mono- and bilingual glossaries are to be had from the Bureau du Gouvernement du Québec, Suite 409, Park Square Building, 31 St. James Avenue, Boston (tel: 426-2660). They are also very helpful when one telephones with inquiries. As a last resort, one may write or telephone the Banque de Terminologie of the University of Montreal. My understanding is that they will send the fiche on any term in the computer and specially research and provide the translation (F-E, E-F) of any term not in the computer, all within 48 hours. A charge is made. I have not tried this system, and as my information is dependent on my memory and the situation may have changed since I heard M. Paré's talk, I would be glad to hear from any member who has more up-to-date information.

From "Canadianismes de bon aloi", one of the aforementioned Quebec Government publications, I single out one term that practically begs for mistranslation. It is *pinte*, defined as "*mesure de capacité pour les liquides, employée au Québec; elle contient un quart de gallon. La pinte contient un quart anglais, soit 2 pints.*" A *chopine* is half a *pinte*, namely a pint. To add to the confusion we are, of course, talking about the imperial pint, nearly 25% larger than the American pint.

NETA News is the newsletter of the New England Translators Association. This edition was prepared by I. Leonard and W. Grimes, P.O.Box 55, Hingham, Massachusetts 02043.

La traducción científica y los neologismos

He realizado muchas traducciones en mi vida, sobre medicina, ciencia, historia y literatura, pero solamente unas pocas puramente "por amor". Fue una de ellas la del librito *Zurbarán*, del que hablaré más adelante, de mi grande y admirado amigo el novelista W. Somerset Maugham, y otra la de un excelente libro de texto y de uso clínico sobre medicina antibiótica, en ambos casos a requerimiento especial de los autores, que sabían que en una vida agitada como la mía no existía ya tiempo para la traducción.

Realicé la traducción del libro sobre antibióticos en la vorágine de Manhattan, capital del acero, el polvo y el concreto, entre constantes interrupciones telefónicas, apremios de las revistas médicas que dirigía, artículos y colaboraciones propias, conferencias y congresos, tareas literarias y labores de investigación psiquiátrica, robando, en mi vida de galeote de la pluma, minutos al quehacer, al descanso y al placer. De haber esperado a disponer de la paz mental y de las horas libres requeridas para esta tarea, nunca la habría terminado. Tuve que hacer la traducción, y lo digo no como subjetiva disculpa sino como objetiva información, en breves y apresurados momentos, con la colaboración —pese al disgusto que ello me producía— del dictáfono, y repasar los borradores en trenes, en aviones, en estaciones, siempre con el temor de lo que va a sobrevenir y con la angustia de lo que no se ha logrado terminar aún, tratando de compensar con claridad de expresión lo que faltara de brillantez literaria.

Con frecuencia tuve que recurrir al empleo de neologismos científicos. En una ciencia como la medicina antibiótica, en donde todo está por crear, el neologismo científico era tan indispensable como lo ha sido en mi propia especialidad, la psiquiatría. Pero esta vez el neologismo no fue indicio de empobrecimiento sino de enriquecimiento de la lengua, como los antibióticos lo han sido del rico arsenal terapéutico de la medicina moderna.