

informATIIO

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Number 4

Community Interpretation Update

By Nancy McInnis, President

We had hoped to present you with feedback on the articles on community interpreting that were featured in the last issue of InformATIO, but we are still sorting through the responses. The publication process takes longer than you might think and this copy had to go on to translation and layout while responses were still coming in. So please look for articles by Board members and members in general in the next issue. We will do our best to present all sides of the story and while we don't promise to publish everything, we will see that we represent as many viewpoints as possible.

Thanks for speaking up. We are listening!



BEST WISHES

The Board members and the Secretariat would like to wish all ATIO members a Happy Holiday and prosperous New Year.

Every Little Bit Counts: Spanish Translators and ATIO

By Nedelka Marin Martinez, C. Tran. (Canada)
Translation Lisa Carter, C. Tran. (Canada)

On June 23, 2007, a group of Spanish translators met with Nancy McInnis, President of the Board of Directors, and Catherine Bertholet, Executive Director of ATIO, in order to obtain concrete answers to various matters our group had been discussing and had initially brought up with Catherine Bertholet in an e-mail. In general, the topics discussed included professional development, promoting the role of ATIO, support from ATIO in order to meet professional needs, and active participation by translators in ATIO activities.

Both Nancy and Catherine were very receptive to our proposals. We realized that even though it might seem that our ideas were not being heard, every one of them had been taken into consideration. We were told that all members of the Board of Directors are volunteers; that is, none of them are ATIO employees. They only meet every three months, at which time various matters can be discussed. Furthermore, like any one of us, each of them has their own personal and professional commitments.

We learned that we are the only group of professionals within the Association that is meeting on a regular basis and

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Cada grano de arena cuenta: traductores de español y la ATIO

Por Nedelka Marin Martinez, Traductora Titulada (Canadá)

El 23 de junio de 2007 un grupo de traductores de español nos reunimos con Nancy McInnis, Presidenta de la Junta Directiva y Catherine Bertholet, Directora Ejecutiva de la ATIO para obtener respuestas concretas a una serie de temas que habíamos estado tratando en las reuniones de nuestro grupo y que inicialmente habíamos planteado por correo electrónico a Catherine Bertholet. Los temas discutidos, grosso modo, fueron: desarrollo profesional, promoción del papel de la ATIO, apoyo de la ATIO para cumplir con las necesidades profesionales, participación activa de los traductores en las actividades de la ATIO, entre otros.

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Don't Shoot the Messenger

International Translation Day

This article was submitted by Glendon communications officer Marika Kemeny, in collaboration with Glendon coordinator of print and new media Marie Maher.

Glendon's School of Translation and the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario (ATIO) jointly hosted their annual, highly successful International Translation Day on September 27th in Glendon's Albert Tucker Room.

With Glendon translation professor Candace Séguinot as host of the evening, the first speaker was the ATIO president, Nancy McInnis, who welcomed the huge assembly of current students, alumni and representatives of the professions of translation and interpretation. McInnis provided news about ATIO and encouraged everyone to use its enhanced website (<http://www.atio.on.ca>), which contains a new section titled *News from the World*. "This section provides interesting accounts of the issues and challenges facing translators and interpreters today," said McInnis. She also encouraged students to take advantage of ATIO's free student membership, with the opportunity to sign up on the spot.



Nancy McInnis, ATIO President, with Christiane Simard, recipient of the FondATIO Award of Excellence

The evening featured three invited speakers: certified conference interpreter and translator Hazel Cole-Egan; community interpreter Lida Nosrati; and community interpreter and translator Lyse Hébert. In contrast to the upbeat topics of previous such events, this year's talks included some darker notes about the conflicts, constraints and physical dangers confronting some of the interpreters working today.

"Interpreters are working in the line of fire in today's world, both literally and figuratively," said Cole-Egan. "They are sometimes blamed for miscommunications and may be criticized for what are perceived as inaccuracies." She explained the role and activities of AIIC (*Association internationale des interprètes de conférence* –International Association of Conference Interpreters) which is an umbrella organization for the Canadian Association of Conference Interpreters (CACI). Founded in 1953, AIIC is in fact the only worldwide association for conference interpreters. It brings together 2800 professionals, in more than 250 cities in over 90 countries, with 119 Canadian members, predominantly female.

"In Canada, the largest group of conference interpreters is found in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto," added Cole-Egan, "and while English and French continue to be dominant languages, Spanish and Japanese are steadily increasing in importance."

Next, Lida Nosrati took the floor to talk about her experience as a community interpreter (CI). "Community interpreters are professionals who liaise between individuals who do not share a common language," explained Nosrati, who holds an MA in Translation from Glendon. She stressed that in addition to their proficiency in the actual languages, community interpreters must take into consideration several other factors during their work—primarily their own cultural backgrounds and those of the groups or individuals they are working with, in order to understand the differences which may have an impact on their work. Community interpreters work in varied settings, such as health care, social services and courts of law. Currently, each agency or professional group has its own training and testing process, but sadly some don't have either. "Given that community interpreters can sometimes make or break a communicative event, there is a great need for the standardized testing and training of professionals," added Nosrati. "CIs often face conflicts, constraints and serious consequences during their work. They need more engaged scholarly research and more comprehensive training."

The third invited speaker of the evening was community interpreter and translator Lyse Hébert, who is also a lecturer of French Studies at the Royal Military College of Canada. She is a Glendon graduate, currently working on her PhD under the direction of Glendon translation professor Daniel Simeoni. "I am very happy to be back at Glendon," said Hébert. "I enjoyed my undergraduate studies here with very positive experiences as a student." Hébert, who has recently worked as an interpreter in Cuba, chose the conflict inherent in community interpretation as her theme. "Conflict is at the very heart of community interpretation," said Hébert. "At times, there can be significant differences between the values and ideologies of the groups involved. The role of the interpreter must be to make sure that each group understands clearly what the other group has to say, including any non-verbal communication which may occur." In a more sombre tone, Hébert talked about the risks taken by interpreters in dangerous settings such as war zones. She spoke of the 216 interpreters who have been killed in the Iraq war so far—an enormous loss of civilian lives, and she invited the audience to observe a moment of silence for those victims who have died in the line of duty.

But there was celebration as well, as two Glendon students were awarded prizes by the ATIO Foundation (FondATIO). Christiane

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Don't Shoot the Messenger!

By Michel Parent, President, CTTIC

This somewhat surprising title is the theme selected this year by the International Federation of Translators (IFT), September 30, when the profession as a whole joins in an annual celebration of **International Translation Day (ITD)**.

Each year, language professionals from across Canada gather on this day to hold special events, to recognize and encourage the next generation of professionals, and to take stock of the state of the profession throughout the nation. And once again this year, such will be the focus of activity for ATIO, as well as for CTTIC and its other member organizations.

This is, to be sure, a fascinating time to be a translator, a terminologist or an interpreter in Canada. A time with possibly more opportunities, and more challenges, than ever in the past.

The opportunities are created by technology and globalization, which have lowered traditional national barriers and opened a vast new world of communication. In turn, this increased volume of communication has opened immense new markets, both domestically and internationally. As a result, we can envision in our society a growing need for qualified language professionals who will help people interact orally or in writing, or who will build tomorrow's vocabulary. Let us make the point to the next generation that yes, there can be a bright future in our professions.

This does not come without challenges, however. Any sector which has to expand as much and as quickly as we will need to is necessarily going to face growing pains. Our professions will have to build and structure themselves in order to meet the increased demand. For us, it is a matter of survival: if we fail to create a critical mass to meet the demand, someone else will. However, this should be done in a way that ensures that medium and small-sized enterprises, a backbone of our industry, also have their place in the sun.

Another challenge will be to find and train the next generation of translators, terminologists and interpreters to keep our critical mass in the face of a wave of baby-boomers gradually leaving the practice of the profession.

Also, as language professionals, we must continue to assert ourselves and take our rightful place as communication specialists. Professional certification is an added value for our clientele, as well as a guarantee of protection for the public. Let us not hesitate to say so, loud and clear.

These are huge challenges and opportunities indeed. But while we celebrate September 30 here in Canada, we must not lose sight of

the fact that many of our colleagues elsewhere in the world are forced to work under very difficult conditions.

In some countries, being a translator or an interpreter is becoming increasingly dangerous. How often has it been reported in the media that a civilian has faced threats or intimidation, or has been wounded or killed, as he or she acted as an interpreter with a humanitarian organization or a team of journalists? How many of our colleagues have faced prison or death threats for having translated texts which are banned by the authorities? And how many have had to go into exile with their families for fear of reprisals?

On this day, let us honor all translators who stake their reputation, and indeed their safety and their life, in order to foster reconciliation, communication and understanding between peoples and cultures.

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Simard has just completed her Special Honours BA in Translation (2007) at Glendon, while continuing to work as a teacher. She received the FondATIO Award of Excellence awarded to the student with the highest average in his/her translation courses. Chantal Evans, a new student this fall in the Glendon Translation School, received the FondATIO Scholarship, awarded each year to a deserving student.



Chantal Evans, recipient of the FondATIO Scholarship

The evening was a full-house event, spilling over to the adjoining Fire-side Room, with lots of opportunities for mingling and networking, rediscovering old classmates and reconnecting with professors. As always, a great deal of credit is due to the Translation School's muchloved administrative secretary, Aileen Rakocevic, who is the organizing force behind every step of this and other Translation School events, from sending out invitations to preparing all the wonderful desserts that are such an integral part of these evenings.

International Translation Day in Ottawa

By David Lowe, Vice-President

This year's International Translation Day festivities in the National Capital Region took place at the *Palais des congrès* in Gatineau on September 27. This year's theme, "Don't Shoot the Messenger," was chosen by the International Federation of Translators "to draw attention to the hazards faced by translators and also by those who believe that professional language services are an unnecessary option."¹

Many of the guest speakers reminded the crowd that being a translator or interpreter in many countries was a dangerous profession: the International Federation of Translators' Website states that 261 translators and interpreters died in Iraq in 2006. We should therefore be thankful for our working conditions in Ontario. Our "dead-lines" may be unreasonable, but they are not perilous.



Jean-Luc Malherbe, President of Société Ardenn, and David Lacroix, recipient of the Société-Ardenn Scholarship

A number of scholarships were awarded at the event, including two FondATIO awards to Rabia Mzouji and Jenna Thompson. And long-time ATIO member Jean-Luc Malherbe introduced a new scholarship this year to mark the 30th anniversary of his company, Société Ardenn. The winner of the first Société-Ardenn scholarship was David Lacroix.

I would like to thank Meloche Monnex and *Le groupe ComTra* for sponsoring the event, Dorothy Charbonneau, ATIO's director of conference interpretation, for co-emceeding the evening, and the ATIO secretariat for all its hard work in planning the event in conjunction with OTTIAQ and CTITC.

¹ IFT Web site: www.fit-ift.org



Louise von Flotow (right), Director of the University of Ottawa's School of Translation and Interpretation, with Rabia Mzouji and Jenna Thompson, recipients of FondATIO scholarships

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ana

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*for their International Translation Day
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The Certification Exam for Translators

Working into English: One Marker's Perspective

On the certification exam, successful candidates are expected to produce a translation that is accurate and reads like a piece of written English. In practice, this usually means that they are native English speakers, although some exceptional linguists with near-native fluency in English may also be successful.

Candidates have to bring their own dictionaries to the exam. A recommended bare minimum would include a good bilingual dictionary, a Canadian English dictionary (e.g., Gage) and a thesaurus.

Translation Errors

Be careful not to omit or add anything. Omitting even small words and phrases like “recently”, “one of...” and “almost” changes the intended meaning.

Make effective use of your dictionaries during the exam. If your bilingual dictionary gives a list of apparent synonyms, use your monolingual dictionary to help select the appropriate one. Your dictionaries can also help you weed out false cognates, words which appear to mean the same in both languages, but in fact do not.

Language Errors

Your translation must read as though an English speaker wrote it. Many languages use the definite article (“the”) more often than English does, so this is something to watch for. Also, the English continuous tense (“is doing”) is sometimes more idiomatic than the simple tense (“does”).

Think about language register, i.e., how formal or informal is the text? In most cases, you will need to avoid more informal words such as “big” or contractions such as “don’t”.

Use your dictionaries to check usage and spelling in English. For example, the correct English is “Gulf of St. Lawrence,” not “St. Lawrence gulf.” Double-check your prepositions as well, e.g., “branded as...” not “branded of...” (if in doubt, consult the BBI Combinatory Dictionary).

Revision

It is absolutely crucial to allow time at the end for a thorough revision. Carefully check content and language, especially spelling and punctuation. Does your English text make sense? If not, look more closely at what the source text says. Check anything you are not 100% sure about.

Every Little Bit Counts

Continued from page 1

presenting concrete ideas to ATIO. We were pleased to learn that the Board members not only value our initiatives, but are thankful for our help and suggestions regarding how to put them into practice. It would be wonderful if, after learning of our activities, other colleagues wanted to follow our lead.

We also found it interesting to know that on several occasions, the Association has organized workshops or social activities that have had to be cancelled because of a lack of participants, particularly in Ottawa. This is a call for us to be more active and take part in the Association so that we can all benefit from our membership.

To conclude, our meeting was productive and informative. We obtained answers to our questions and concerns, and came to realize how the Board of Directors works and that every little bit that members can contribute will benefit us all.

Cada grano de arena cuenta:

Continued from page 1

Las señoras McInnis y Bertholet se mostraron muy receptivas a nuestras propuestas. Nos dimos cuenta que aunque pareciera que nuestras ideas estaban pasando desapercibidas, todas se habían tomado en cuenta. Nos indicaron que todos los miembros de la Junta Directiva son voluntarios, o sea que no son empleados de la ATIO. Ellos se reúnen cada tres meses y es en esa ocasión que pueden tratar los diferentes temas, además, como todos nosotros tienen sus compromisos personales y de trabajo.

Supimos que somos el único grupo de profesionales dentro de la asociación que se está reuniendo en forma constante y presentando ideas concretas a la ATIO. Nos complació saber que los directivos no sólo valoran nuestras iniciativas sino que agradecen que los ayudemos y sugiramos cómo ponerlas en práctica. Excelente sería que otros colegas, al enterarse de nuestras actividades, quieran imitarnos.

También nos pareció interesante saber que en diversas ocasiones la asociación ha organizado talleres o actividades sociales y se ha visto en la necesidad de cancelarlas por falta de participación, principalmente en la ciudad de Ottawa. Esto es un llamado a que seamos más activos y participativos con la asociación para que nos beneficiemos de la membresía.

En conclusión, la reunión fue productiva e informativa puesto que obtuvimos respuestas a nuestras preguntas y dudas, nos dimos cuenta de la forma en que funciona la Junta Directiva y de que cada grano de arena de los miembros redundará en beneficio mutuo.

An Exclusive Self-Interview with an ATIO Preparatory Course Tutor

By Peter Whelan, C. Tran. (Canada)

Question to tutor:
What is the ATIO Preparatory Course?

Answer:
It's a program intended to improve participants' professional skills and, especially, to provide candidates with the necessary assistance to pass the CTTIC examination. Candidates are deemed capable of practising their profession if their translation is faithful and idiomatic, requiring little or no revision.

Question:
What is the tutor's responsibility?

Answer:
The tutor is supposed to apply this standard to the participant's work in a consistently constructive and encouraging manner.

Question:
What have you learned from your experience as a tutor in the program?

Answer:
First of all, it's a nice way to make easy money. But no, all kidding aside, I've really enjoyed having the opportunity to pass on the knowledge that I've acquired over a thirty-plus-years career in translation.

Question:
How does the program work?

Answer:
Each participant translates and submits four short texts. The tutor reviews each translation, pointing out any language or translation errors and offering advice on how the translator can improve.

Question:
So, it's a lot like exam correction?

Answer:
Yes, except that the tutor is supposed to help the participant improve by providing clarifications and explanations about problems.

Question:
How has this worked out in practice?

Answer:
Well, I find that about half of the participants are not translating into their mother tongue. This causes problems, because their proficiency in the target language can leave a lot to be desired. Basically, they lack the skills to write idiomatic English. Sometimes I suggest that they might do better to translate into their mother tongue, at least until their proficiency in English has improved.

Question:
What about participants with native-speaker proficiency in English?

Answer:
Some participants are new to translation, and may have a tendency to try to "improve" on the original text. I encourage them to keep it simple and to just translate what's there on the page, without adding or subtracting anything. I tell them that's the best way to pass the CTTIC exam.

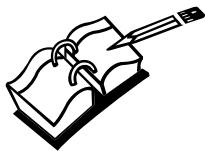
Question:
Would you encourage other certified translators to get involved as tutors in the ATIO preparatory course?

Answer:
Absolutely!

Calendar of Events

✓ APRIL 2008

April 5, 2008: ATIO Annual
General Meeting
Toronto (Delta Chelsea Hotel)



✓ AUGUST 2008 American

August 1-7, 2008: XVIII FIT World Congress
Shanghai, China
Information: www.fit2008.org

CERTIFIED THROUGH CTIC TRANSLATION EXAMINATION

Norwegian-English
Thomas Ellett

English-Turkish
Ekrem Kolcuoglu

Turkish-English
Nuray Çokgezen Pekel

NOTICE!

Please note that the ATIO office will be closed for the holidays, from 5:00 pm on December 20, 2007, and will return to full operations as of 8:30 am on January 4, 2008.

On the Lighter Side Community Interpreting

By Nancy McInnis, President

Well, Community Interpreting is certainly a topic of interest to our members. We had the same kind of response to this survey as we did to the one regarding customer disputes. 13% of members responded to that survey, 11% to this one. To put that into perspective, quorum for the AGM is only 10%. These little surveys are not official, but they are a way for you to make sure we hear what you have to say!



We asked you what you thought of community interpreters. 22% thought that they were ordinary people from the community doing a job for which they have no training. 21% thought that they were trained interpreters working in a community setting. And the overwhelming majority, 57%, said that they were people with some training doing the best they could in a difficult setting. While this is just an opinion poll, those responsible for community interpretation services should sit up and take note. Only 1 person in 5 sees community interpreters as trained professionals.

We also asked if you or someone you know had ever used the services of a community interpreter. 8% said that they had, and it had been a disaster. The remaining responses were interesting. 48% said that they had preferred not to, which is hardly surprising since we were polling a group of language specialists... But 44% said that community interpreters had been a lifeline. That definitely seems to indicate that community interpreters play a vital role in today's society.

And it definitely seems to conflict with the fact that only 21% saw the community interpreter as a trained professional. If the service is seen as essential, then it needs to be provided by an interpreter with the necessary training and skills.

Which brings me to our final question. We asked how ATIO should proceed on the issue. 8% said that community interpreters had been a disaster and 8% again said that we should ignore them because they weren't professionals and didn't belong in a professional association. 17% said that we should just sit back and monitor the situation until community interpreters had implemented professional training, standards of practice and a code of ethics. But a whopping 75% said that we should help them design a training program, standards of practice and a code of ethics. They said that it was in everyone's best interest for ATIO to guide them along.

If you agree or disagree, please make sure we know how you feel. Our next issue will have letters to the editor and articles by Dorothy Charbonneau, our Director of Conference Interpreting, and Marco Fiola, our Director of Terminologists who has extensive experience with Critical Link, an organization for the advancement of community interpretation. If you feel strongly about this issue, it's not too late. **The deadline for the next issue of InformATIO is January 18.** Please let us know what you think and why!