

informATIO

July 2008

Number 2

2008 ATIO Annual General Meeting

By Elisa Paoletti, Director, Foreign Languages
Translation Tammy Dominguez, C. Tran. (Canada)

On April 5, many of the Association's members gathered in Toronto to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and participate in professional development activities.

The day began with an interesting and entertaining presentation by the Honourable Mr. Justice Richard D. Schneider, Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice. The main topic was the activities carried out in the Mental Health Court and the key role played by interpreters called on to work there. Mr. Schneider informed us that the work of the interpreter is recognized in the Canadian Constitution, specifically in Article 14 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In his speech, he underscored that the interpreter must take into account that the court needs to establish whether the accused, who usually suffers from mental health problems, is fit to stand trial and assume criminal responsibility for his actions. To do this, the interpreter must convey the speaker's behaviour as is, including nuances in speech, gibberish, confused thoughts, and level of language. The interpreter must not "clean it up"; if the accused is rude or vulgar, the interpreter must make use of his or her histrionic abilities and communicate the message in the same fashion as it is being presented in the original language. Although it may seem unbelievable, Mr. Schneider has witnessed behaviours a professional interpreter ought not to display. He emphasized that interpreters should not act as though they were on the accused's defence team, nor should they advise or speak to the accused. Mr. Schneider also acknowledged the difficult and important role fulfilled by interpreters and admitted that the remuneration they receive is not commensurate with the impeccable performance demanded of them. The presentation ended with a question-and-answer session and a warm round of applause.

The morning continued with a *vin d'honneur*, followed by the lunch and the AGM itself. ATIO President Nancy McInnis presented a summary of her report and the report by Secretary-Treasurer Ilse Wong. We were then asked to vote on the amendments to the Association's By-laws (appendices). When it came time to vote

Continued on page 3

Asamblea Anual de la ATIO 2008

Por Elisa Paoletti, Directora de Lenguas Extranjeras

El 5 de abril nos dimos reunión en Toronto. Muchos de los miembros de la asociación para asistir a la asamblea anual y las actividades de capacitación profesional.

La jornada comenzó con la interesante y amena presentación de Richard D. Schneider, juez del Tribunal de Justicia de Ontario. El tema principal fue el trabajo que se realiza en el tribunal de salud mental y el papel clave que desempeñan los intérpretes allí convocados. El señor Schneider nos informó que la labor del intérprete está reconocida en la constitución canadiense, más precisamente en el artículo 14 de la Carta Canadiense de Derechos y Libertades. En su discurso, recalcó que el intérprete debe tener en cuenta que el tribunal precisa establecer si el acusado, generalmente con problemas de salud mental, está apto para someterse a juicio y si le cabe la responsabilidad penal de sus actos. Para ello, el intérprete debe transmitir tal cual su comportamiento: matices del discurso, pensamientos incoherentes o confusos, el nivel de lengua. No debe "maquillarlo": si el acusado es irreverente u ordinario, el intérprete tiene que hacer uso de sus capacidades de histrionismo y comunicarlo del mismo modo que está siendo dicho en el idioma original. Aunque parezca inaudito, el señor Schneider ha sido testigo de comportamientos que un intérprete profesional no debería tener, por eso enfatizó

Continued on page 3



Ilse Wong, Vice-President, with the Honourable Mr. Justice Richard D. Schneider

Photo: Nancy McInnis

Index

Your New Board for 2008-2009.....	4
Salute to 25-Year Members.....	4
Presentation of the Second Creighton-Douglas Scholarship.....	5
What It Takes and What It's Like.....	6
Working for the Translation Bureau – a French to English Translator's Perspective.....	7
Freelancers – The Translation Firm's Perspective Tessier Translations Inc.....	8
Freelance Translators and Société Gamma.....	9
Calendar of Events.....	9
You've Been Warned!.....	10
Job Offers: Can We Trust Them?.....	11
On the Lighter Side: Continuing Education.....	11
Congratulations to Newly Certified Members.....	12
Press Release from the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council.....	12

2008 ATIO Annual General Meeting

Continued from page 1

for the members of the board, most positions were filled by acclamation, while the post of Director of Foreign Languages was to be decided between two candidates: Elizabeth Abraham and myself. We both had to give a speech about our career experience and suitability for the position, and then the members proceeded to vote. The results showed that, for the next year, I would be given the responsibility of representing those professionals who work with foreign languages.

Following the adjournment of the meeting, it was time to head to our chosen workshops. I attended the workshop offered by Denis Louis Bousquet of Nautilus Translations. His presentation involved the various aspects of freelancing. He began by advising us to ask ourselves whether we were cut out for working on our own. Once we were convinced that freelancing was what we wanted to do, it was time to assess the basic requirements—a place to work, the correct equipment, proper training, willpower and dedication. Mr. Bousquet then went on to stress the importance of protecting oneself and suggested consulting other colleagues, becoming informed about insurance, contracts and disclaimers, and hiring an accountant. He also spoke of expectations, advertising and marketing yourself. His final remarks were devoted to the keys to success. He recommended leaving your ego at home; admitting that the client is always right; staying on top, expecting things to go wrong at the worst possible time, save, save, save, and capitalize on client and colleague recommendations, as there is no better advertising than “word of mouth.”

The day ended with a presentation by Clemencia Macías, from Language Line Services. She gave some advice on how to gain experience without previous experience and presented four primary solutions—networking, credentials, flexibility and marketing. Networking can be achieved through recommendations, reference letters, mentoring, attending conferences and participating in activities related to the language industry. Credentials are obtained through university programs and professional certification. To attain flexibility, you need to be open and consider other possibilities in addition to translation and interpretation, such as terminology, localization and project management. In terms of marketing, she explained that it is essential to offer your services through a well-written, concise presentation letter and curriculum vitae that highlight the primary points in an attractive, professional manner.

Next year the AGM will be held in Ottawa, and my experience tells me that attending it will be worthwhile.

Asamblea Anual de la ATIO 2008

Continued from page 1

que el intérprete no debe actuar como si formara parte de la defensa del acusado, ni debe aconsejarlo ni dialogar con él. El señor Schneider reconoció asimismo el papel difícil y trascendental que cumple el intérprete y admitió que la remuneración que recibe no está acorde con el desempeño impecable que se le exige. La presentación terminó con un período de preguntas y respuestas y un caluroso aplauso.

La mañana continuó con un vino de honor, seguido por el almuerzo y la asamblea anual. La presidenta, Nancy McInnis, presentó resumidamente su informe al igual que el de la secretaria y tesorera, Ilse Wong. Luego, debimos votar por los apéndices enmendados del estatuto. Cuando llegó el momento de votar por los miembros de la junta directiva, la mayoría fue elegida por aclamación, mientras que el cargo de Director de Lenguas Extranjeras debió decidirse entre dos candidatas: Elizabeth Abraham y quien suscribe. Ambas tuvimos que dar un discurso sobre nuestra trayectoria e idoneidad para el cargo y luego se procedió a la votación. Los resultados revelaron que se me otorgaría la responsabilidad de representar a los profesionales que trabajan con lenguas extranjeras durante el próximo año.

Luego de la clausura de la asamblea, fue el momento de dirigimos a los talleres elegidos. Asistí al ofrecido por Denis Louis Bousquet, de Nautilus Translations, que nos presentó diferentes aspectos del trabajo por cuenta propia. Comenzó aconsejando que nos preguntemos si estamos hechos para trabajar de manera independiente. Una vez convencidos de que es eso lo que queremos, es el momento de evaluar los requisitos básicos: lugar de trabajo, elementos necesarios, capacitación, voluntad y dedicación. El señor Bousquet destacó, a continuación, la importancia de protegernos y sugirió consultar a otros colegas, informarnos sobre seguros, contratos y descargo de responsabilidades así como recurrir a un contador. Habló igualmente de expectativas, publicidad y difusión de nuestra actividad. Sus palabras finales estuvieron dedicadas a las claves del éxito: ser humilde, admitir que el cliente siempre tiene la razón, no dejarse amilanar por las circunstancias, ahorrar siempre y aprovechar las recomendaciones de clientes y colegas ya que no hay mejor publicidad que el “de boca en boca”.

La jornada terminó con la presentación de Clemencia Macías, de Language Line Services, que expuso consejos para adquirir experiencia sin tenerla. Presentó cuatro grandes soluciones: redes de contacto, credenciales, flexibilidad y publicidad. La primera puede lograrse mediante recomendaciones, cartas de referencia, programas de tutoría, asistencia a conferencias y actividades relacionadas con la industria de la lengua. La segunda puede obtenerse mediante carreras universitarias y certificaciones profesionales. Para conseguir la tercera, es necesario ser abierto y considerar otras posibilidades además de la traducción y la interpretación tales como la terminología, la localización y la gestión de proyectos. Para ejemplificar la cuarta, expresó que es esencial ofrecer nuestros servicios mediante una carta de presentación y un currículum bien redactados, concisos y que resalten los puntos principales de manera atractiva y profesional.

El año próximo, la cita es en Ottawa y la experiencia me indica que vale la pena participar.

**ATIO takes this opportunity to thank the sponsor
of the 2008 Professional Development Day**



Meloche Monnex

Insurance for professionals and alumni

Your New Board for 2008-2009

By Catherine Bertholet

Translation Lise Cloutier, C. Tran. (Canada)

On April 5, 2008, ATIO held its Annual General Meeting and elected a new Board of Directors.

The newly elected Board members are:

Nancy McInnis	President
Ilse Wong	Vice-President
Alana Hardy	Secretary-Treasurer
Barbara Collishaw	Director, Salaried Translators
Denis Bousquet	Director, Independent Translators
Dorothy Charbonneau	Director, Conference Interpreters
Marco Fiola	Director, Terminologists
Yuri Geifman	Director, Court Interpreters
Elisa Paoletti	Director, Foreign Languages



Photo: Ken Larose

Congratulations to all!

Denis Bousquet, Marco Fiola, Yuri Geifman
Ilse Wong, Alana Hardy, Nancy McInnis, Elisa Paoletti
Absent: Dorothy Charbonneau, Barbara Collishaw

Salute to 25-Year Members

The following members joined ATIO in 1983 and have seen the Association through the ensuing quarter-century.

Congratulations!

Alain Decroux, *Translator*

Joanne Laplante, *Translator*

Denise J. Laporte-Dawes, *Conference Interpreter*

Sylvie Astrid Lee, *Conference Interpreter and
Translator*

Marie-Nöelle Maillard, *Translator*

Anne Mirgalet-Kennedy *Translator*

Francine Ouellet, *Translator*

Jacqueline Daniel Stevnsborg, *Translator*

Anne de Thy, *Translator*

Rita Waller, *Translator*

Jane Wilson, *Translator*



Anne de Thy, Nancy McInnis and Joanne Laplante

Photo: Ken Larose

Presentation of the Second Creighton Douglas Scholarship

By *Hélène Gélinas-Surprenant, C. Term., C. Tran. (Canada)*
Translation *Christine Famula, C. Tran. (Canada)*



Photo: Monique Sabourin

FondATIO President Pascal Sbourin presents the second Creighton Douglas Scholarship to Lisa Hannaford-Wong, the award recipient for 2008.

At its Annual General Meeting on June 6, 2008, the Foundation of the **Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario (FondATIO)** presented its second **Creighton Douglas Scholarship** to **Lisa Hannaford-Wong**, a fourth-year student in the translation program at the University of Ottawa. The \$1,000 award was presented by **FondATIO** president **Pascal Sabourin** in the presence of the Board of Directors.

Created in honour of a deceased member who was active for many years in both ATIO and the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council (CTTIC), the Creighton Douglas Scholarship honours a third- or fourth-year full-time or part-time undergraduate or graduate student of the University of Ottawa's School of Translation and Interpretation (STI) who has a record of excellence in academic achievement and who provides references from professors, employers or clients in a position to appreciate the quality of the candidate's performance.

The 2008 scholarship winner is representative of a new trend in translation students. Enrolled in the trilingual program, Lisa Hannaford-Wong is studying toward a second career while tending to her family and two children.

For the 2008 scholarship, FondATIO received ten nominations that provide a good picture of the current cohort of students—most of them have experience in the field of human endeavour and have command of at least three languages, which are indeed very useful assets for success in the language professions. Every year, FondATIO also awards two academic scholarships and two achievement awards to a student and a graduate from each of the two universities in Ontario that offer a translation, interpretation and terminology program: University of Ottawa and York University's Glendon College. The funds come from donations made by certified ATIO members or candidates for certification who are interested in encouraging the next generation of translators, interpreters and terminologists.

InformATIO

Published by:

The Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario

1202-1 Nicholas Street

Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B7

Tel: (613) 241-2846 / 1-800-234-5030

Fax: (613) 241-4098

E-mail: InformATIO@atio.on.ca

Website: www.atio.on.ca

Circulation: 1400

Printer: Plantagenet Printing

Graphic Designer: More In Typo

Editorial Team: Catherine Bertholet, Alana Hardy, Nancy McInnis, Michel Trahan, Ilse Wong

Editorial policy:

The Editorial Committee of *InformATIO* reserves the right not to publish, or to edit with the author's consent, any article submitted or commissioned for publication. Any opinions expressed (except in articles signed in an official capacity) are those of the authors and are not endorsed by the Association.

Special thanks to:

Rebecca Bates, Claire Beauchesne-Chabot, Anne-Sophie Belzile, Josée Boily, Lise Cloutier, Alain Côté, Tammy Dominguez, Christine Famula, Claude Forand, Gilles Gamas, Hélène Gélinas-Surprenant, Ken Larose, Suzanne Laveau, Claire Lavoie, Nancy McInnis, Elisa Paoletti, Georges Rochon, Rafael Solís

What It Takes and What It's Like....!

By Rafael Solís, C. Tran. (Canada)

Head, Multilingual Translation and Localization Division
Translation Bureau

Quite often we get questions like “What does it take to work for the Translation Bureau as a freelance translator?” or “What is it like to rely on freelancers on a day-to-day basis?” We welcome the opportunity to answer these questions since it gives us the chance to talk about the good work we do and to encourage professional translators to explore working with us.

What does it take to work for the Translation Bureau as a freelance translator?

To work for the **Translation Bureau** as a freelance translator you need:

- superior language skills;
- attention to detail;
- strong ability to concentrate;
- proven writing skills;
- extensive intellectual curiosity;
- high standards of professional performance.

On the administrative side (equally important), you also need:

- A Procurement Business Number (PBN). This is *mandatory to register in our directory*. You can register with the Business Access Canada Supplier Registration Information (SRI) service to obtain a PBN.

For work in official languages, individuals wishing to be listed in our inventory of suppliers must be certified members in good standing of a provincial or territorial professional association affiliated with CTTIC. Firms wishing to be listed in the inventory **must** retain the services of at least one certified member in good standing of a provincial or territorial professional association affiliated with CTTIC.

For individuals who wish to work in major languages as defined under the United Nations Charter (i.e., English, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, French and Russian), **the target language must be their mother tongue**, and they must provide:

- proof of a university degree or equivalent in the target language;

- representative samples of work in the source and target languages;
- relevant references; and
- a curriculum vitae.

For other foreign languages, a case-by-case study of the suppliers' files will be conducted by the Multilingual Translation and Localization Division of the Translation Bureau. For each of the major languages requested, firms wishing to be listed in the inventory need to retain the services of at least one person who meets the criteria outlined immediately above. For each of the major languages requested, a case-by-case study of the suppliers' files will be conducted by the Multilingual Translation and Localization Division.

We have come to appreciate this partnership in the fulfillment of our commitment to our clients, especially as “Vite et bien” (quick and good) seems to be more and more the order of the day when it comes to translation services.

What is it like to rely on freelancers on a day-to-day basis?

There is a consensus at the Translation Bureau that an institution like ours, which has a mandate to provide government-wide translation services, needs to rely on professional freelance translators to deliver the volume of work while keeping standards high. The whole process of contracting work requires that the Bureau be supported by a good team of suppliers to ensure the quality of work. We have come to appreciate this partnership in the fulfillment of our commitment to our clients, especially as “Vite et bien” (quick and good) seems to be more and more the order of the day when it comes to translation services.

We are doing our best to raise awareness and recognition of our profession, and teaming up with suppliers, a fundamental pillar of the Canadian language industry, is an essential part of the process.

Working for the Translation Bureau: A French to English Translator's Perspective

By Ken Larose, C. Tran. (Canada)

History

My first translation work was for academic journals, and my first paid job was a book about photography. The rate was two cents a word and that translation earned me the grand sum of \$1,200, enough for a down payment on our \$25,000 townhouse in 1973. That rate is probably comparable to 14 or 15 cents today. My history of work for the Translation Bureau goes back to the late 1970s, after discovering that there was such a thing in Ottawa as the Translation Bureau and that they might need people to translate into English. I contacted them, and they handed me a one-page test to translate within a week. They began to give me work, which I did for a few years on evenings and weekends; as a government employee I had to get permission from my deputy minister to do freelance work. The important criterion was that the work in question should not conflict with your regular job and that you had to do it on your own time, not the government's time.

In January 1981, on a wing and a prayer and a verbal promise from the Bureau that they would keep me busy, I resigned from my job and started translating full time from French into English as a freelancer for the Translation Bureau and other clients. I have been told that I was the very first full-time freelancer working from French into English. With the dizzying inflation of the late 1970s, the Translation Bureau rate was a fixed six cents a word, and eight cents a word if you happened to be an incorporated company—which is why I incorporated my company, *Metaphrase Inc.* Ever since, the Bureau has usually been my largest client. There has really only been one year when I did not do much work for the Bureau, and I was able to survive that year relatively well with my other clients.

Whereas people translating from English into French have a wide range of clients to choose from, and hence the opportunity to concentrate on certain fields, this is certainly not the case for multilingual and French to English translators. I was able over the years to build up credentials within the Translation Bureau's system of specialties, of which there are over a hundred. The statistics within the Bureau itself may be interesting, and recent figures show that about 85 percent of all translation done by the Bureau is from French into English; the figure is 8 percent French into English and 7 percent for all other languages.

Ups and downs?

Definitely. As organizations grow in size, systems change and become more impersonal. In the early 1980s I knew everybody

personally because we did not have the Internet. A typical day involved visits to libraries, to the client, to the typist, and to the stationers to pick up yet another bottle of Liquid Paper. Nowadays, I know most of my clients only by e mail and telephone. Some of the ups are also downs. For example, the fact that the standards are high means that your work will be revised. If someone is unhappy with it, you will hear about it and suffer the consequences. The same is the case if you should happen to be late in delivering your work. There is not much flexibility on this score. But never forget that high standards are good for you. If no one cares about the quality of the work, you might as well look for another line of work. In the early days, all contracts were "general" contracts (in French it is called "ponctuel," and the translators tend to call it the spot market). Today there are other ways of obtaining contracts, ranging from large standing offers through Merx, mini-contracts of 100,000 words, and longer-term contracts of approximately 300,000 to a million words per year, sometimes with an option year or two.

How to begin

If you are a certified member of any of the provincial associations, you do not need to undergo any form of test at the Translation Bureau. You state what areas of expertise you have and provide some evidence of these, and the Bureau will put your name into the system and at some point offer you work. Like the European Union's translation service, the Translation Bureau is an extremely large and competent organization. They have qualified revisers, a large number of in-house translators, and a great deal of experience in contracting out work to individuals and companies. Needless to say, if they don't like your work, you won't get much.

Words of advice

Don't go it alone. You may get sick, you may want to take a holiday some weekend. Find someone who is at least as good as you are and come to some agreement about covering for one another. The major downside of most contracts with the Bureau is that you are not, strictly speaking, allowed to turn down any work but are guaranteed only 20% of the number of words set out in the contract. I would not recommend, even if you are certified, attempting to work directly for the Bureau after only a short while out of a university program. It might be wise to gain a little more experience first. If you enjoy being your own boss, are computer savvy and don't mind having no social life worth talking about, I can certainly recommend it.

Freelancers: The Translation Firm's Perspective

Tessier Translations Inc.

By Claire Lavoie, Tessier Translations Inc.

Freelancer, independent translator, sub-contractor or all of these at once? To me, the term “freelancer” suggests a relationship of distance, even reserve, between the translation firm and the independent translators that it works with. I prefer to talk about our contributors, who add to the in-house employees with varying frequency to better meet client needs, especially during busy periods. It may essentially be a question of work philosophy.

That philosophy is first based on a specific view of translation. We firmly believe—and this is what explains Tessier Translations' success—that a translation must have the same impact in the target language as the original has in the source language. We aim to reproduce the client's documents by using terminology, style and means of expression that are consistent from one translation to the next. Whether elegant, technical, casual or dense, the style of the translation must faithfully mirror the original. If the independent translator's view of the craft does not align with the translation firm's view, their partnership will not be successful. There is no room for big egos, and it is important to keep both feet on the ground.

What ensures a translation firm's success? While focusing on optimum profitability, if the firm satisfies the requirements and preferences of a wide range of clients, if it ensures consistent terminology from one translation to the next, and if it can guarantee that it meets deadlines (even short ones) while providing customized service to its clients, the translation firm will retain them for a long time.

This is why the relationship between the translation firm and its contributors is, in our opinion, part of a long-term view. It is really about building a partnership based on the dictates of profitability, yet overlaid with respect and trust. This trust is established when the independent translators know that their talents are valued and put to good use, that their needs, limitations and freedom are respected, that they have leading edge tools and that they are heard and understood. They most often seek a relatively steady flow of texts to be able to plan their time, but value the leeway that goes along with their freelance status.

Whether elegant, technical, casual or dense, the style of the translation must faithfully mirror the original.

At the same time, the translation firm wants to depend on regular contributors who, over the months and years, become familiar with the firm's clients and their requirements and preferences. These are translators to whom the firm will not hesitate to systematically assign particular clients and who, over time, are even able skilfully to guide those clients' language choices. Tessier Translations' most valuable contributors have been with the company for years. And there is still room for other independent translators who have the required training and experience. But let us be clear: Tessier Translations' contributors choose their schedule, their working methods, their jobs and so forth. They are truly independent.

The foregoing does not mean that occasional contributors are not useful to the translation firm. They add to its strike force at critical times. They can enjoy greater freedom since they can make other professional commitments (such as teaching), devote time to their personal responsibilities and temporarily step back from their craft to return to it anew when circumstances change. Therefore, they accept the risk and the consequences because their work supply is not steady and the texts are more varied. From the translation firm's perspective, the fact remains that we do not know them as well because their work is more sporadic. Thus it is harder to develop the desired trust relationship and match the work to their knowledge and affinities.

In short, independent translators are valuable contributors with whom the translation firm must build a strong relationship because they directly impact the firm's reputation and credibility among its clients. They share along with us the hard times as well as the successes, the criticisms as well as the commendations. We could not, and would not want to, do without them.

Freelance Translators and Société Gamma

By Gilles Gamas, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Translation Georges Rochon, C. Tran. (Canada)

Société Gamma contracts with freelancers for the translation of several million words per year. The stability that typifies the firm's staff translators is also found among its freelancers. Indeed, Gamma prefers ongoing relationships to the occasional collaboration. Why is this so? Because a long-standing relationship benefits both parties:

- Once freelancers are familiar with the subject matter, they devote much less time to research than they would if they were continually required to deal with new clients and new subject areas.
- Thanks to associates who are well versed in the requirements of the firm's clients and its work methods, the firm's risk is low in terms of unmet quality standards and deadlines.

An ongoing relationship is also beneficial inasmuch as it provides freelancers with a substantial and regular workload.

It should be emphasized that all of Gamma's translators, whether salaried or freelance, enjoy access to translation assistance software, especially LogiTerm[®], and any other resources that are required or of use, including terminology databases, bitextual bases and client directives.

This sometimes calls for a change of habit by freelancers, who are no longer able to work as they please, but are instead obliged to comply with a set of predetermined instructions and work methods that reflect our clients' requirements and expectations. Given that clients consider lack of consistency in the finished product to be the major weakness of translation firms, it is all the more important that all translators, whether salaried or freelance, have access to the same terminological, documentary and other resources and apply identical work procedures.

This may seem trivial, but Gamma pays its freelance translators on the first of the month for work delivered the previous month, whether or not the client has settled its accounts. Finally, when freelancers are planning leave or holidays, Gamma merely requests they provide advance notice to prevent any disruption in service delivery.

That essentially sums up Société Gamma's philosophy: whether work is performed by freelancers or its own staff, the firm cannot survive and prosper unless its clients are satisfied, hence there are requirements all translators must abide by, whatever their status.

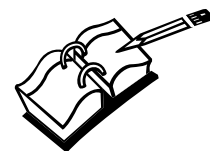
Calendar of Events

✓ AUGUST 2008

August 1-7, 2008: XVIII FIT World Congress

Shanghai, China

Information: www.fit2008.org



✓ OCTOBER 2008

October 1-10, 2008: Terminology Week in Canada

Gatineau, Quebec

Information: http://www.atio.on.ca/info/TerminWk_EN.pdf

✓ October 29-31, 2008: Languages and the Media – 7th International Conference and Exhibition on Language Transfer in Audiovisual Media

Berlin, Germany

Information: <http://www.languages-media.com/>

✓ NOVEMBER 2008

November 5-8, 2008: 49th Annual Conference of the American Translators Association

Orlando, Florida

Information: <http://www.atanet.org/conf/2008/>

✓ DECEMBER 2008

December 8-13, 2008: World Congress on Specialized Translation “Languages and Intercultural Dialogue in a Globalization World”

Havana, Cuba

Information: http://www.fit-ift.org/download/en/pr-acti_cttic-20081208.pdf

✓ APRIL 2009

April 25, 2009 : ATIO Annual General Meeting
Chateau Laurier, Ottawa

ATIO Secretariat Summer Hours

From June 30 to September 2, 2008, the office will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

You've Been Warned!

By *Josée Boily, C. Tran. (Canada)*

Translation *Rebecca Bates, C. Tran. (Canada)*

During a recent stay in El Salvador, I heard the complaints of a lawyer who had had to pay a translator US\$8 an hour for the translation of a document. In one way, his disbelief was understandable, if we consider that the lowest paid Salvadoran workers often earn the same amount—a day!

Nevertheless, aren't lawyers among the highest-paid professionals in the world? Furthermore, their salaries continue to climb in a society in which we now sue at the drop of a hat.

So why does the translation profession suffer a race to the bottom? Why are we so scared to hike our rates a meagre 10 percent after years of delivering quality work and loyal service? As far as I know, the recession has not yet hit us full on, at least not within our industry.

This is a thorny issue, which we have discussed on two occasions at meetings of the *Entraide Traduction Santé* group to which I belong. This has occasionally led to impassioned discussions and moved me to speak my mind on this trend that I find increasingly prevalent and totally unjustified. I have made a list of four main causes that might explain this: lack of supervision of young translators, weak regulation of the profession, the practices of large work providers and pressures of the global translation market.

Let's start with our young translators who, when they first enter the profession, are now often left to their own devices. Many multinationals have decentralized their linguistic services and do business with freelancers or translation companies, so much so that recent graduates find themselves self-employed, sometimes against their will. Without supervision, revision or regular work to meet their basic needs, they can be tempted to charge lower rates than their more experienced colleagues. However, while these practices help them earn a living at the start of their career, they do a disservice to the profession as a whole, by driving down rates.

I will not rehash the poor translations that abound in our daily life (assembly instructions, household appliance user guides, etc.), because we are more than familiar with and aware of these. Moreover, in addition to the increasingly frequent use of computer-assisted translation software, relaxed standards for entering the profession are probably partly responsible for this situation. Practically anyone can claim to be a translator—all you need is a company name, a handful of clients and you're in business! Far be it from me to suggest that these people

perform poor work—if supervised by a qualified translator or a reputable agency, they can become excellent language professionals. The catch is that some of them translate under the pretext that they are “perfectly bilingual” and charge lower rates without necessarily ensuring the quality of their work, thereby casting unfavourable light on legitimate members of the profession. Although we have some supervisory organizations, like ATIO, OTTIAQ and CTTIC, we need stricter rules that will help us stabilize our rates, standardize translation quality and preserve the reputation of our profession. It should be noted that OTTIAQ has undertaken steps to apply the ISO standard to translation in Quebec, and the Translation Bureau is also working toward setting standards. This will likely have considerable influence on the importance placed on quality. The professional associations have also made great strides in achieving recognition of titles, as a growing number of employers now require the title of certified translator.

When it comes to organizations and companies that use the services of translators most often, contract terms are no longer what they used to be. Many contracts are now awarded based on a points system in which points are awarded based on the importance placed on a series of criteria, especially the number of words that can be translated a day, price, quality, membership in a professional association and, recently, knowledge of computer-assisted translation software (e.g. Logiterm) and translation memory tools (e.g. Trados). Judging by current contract fee scales, it appears that the good old days when translation quality was more important than the bottom line are gone. For example, in 2003, the Ontario government's call for tenders awarded up to 50 points—out of a total of 100—for price and up to 35 points for translation quality. These points were cumulative, in other words, a higher price could be offset by better quality service. In 2006, the price still corresponded to a maximum of 50 points, but service quality no longer counted in the total score. Faced with this change, some translators felt forced to lower their rates out of fear of losing their main source of income, cutting the ground from under the feet of companies and independent workers with long-standing relationships with this client. In short, neither quality nor experience seems to count for anything anymore.

I imagine that as members of ATIO, many of you have received “offers of collaboration” from companies that are members of the new translation industry, which are spreading their tentacles worldwide. Attracted by the potential profits that our sector can yield in this era of globalization, businessmen and -women are tackling the market once reserved for experienced and local professionals. Taking advantage of new technologies such as translation memory tools and the availability of less expensive resources (I'm thinking of translation services such as those from Asia or South America), they provide substantial savings to their clients—often major players—and cause rates to plummet. Thus, it appears that the only thing that counts

Continued on page 12

Job Offers: Can We Trust Them?

By Elisa Paoletti, Director, Foreign Languages

I open my inbox and there it is: a message with the subject “Job Offer”. Is it spam? I open it and it seems legitimate. It is from an organization looking for certified translators and in my language combination. Good! But wait... I start reading, and disappointment sinks in. The message is mostly written in my mother tongue but very carelessly: no accents, many typos, syllables missing, wrong tenses. To add to my dismay, I realize that the text in English has not been proofread either. It looks like they are in real need of a language professional.

The offer says that they are looking for a certified translator for their translation and legalization services. I start digging deeper and check their Website. I click on “About us” but the page is not found. Then I see a warning in red stating that other companies offer “documents legalizations, which in fact are not legal at all.” How can clients verify that theirs are if the company information is not available? The only certain thing we know so far is that they need us—certified translators—to provide those legalized translations.

Since this e-mail raised a few red flags, I decided to share my concerns and offer some suggestions.

How can we check the company’s credentials? The first, easier thing to do would be to google them. Secondly, we can always call the embassy of the country that is requesting these specific documents and ask if they happen to know the company in question. We can also check with the Better Business Bureau (<http://www.cbbb.ca/>).

Do our colleagues know about them? Many of these companies e-mail several translators at a time and their names and addresses can be read in the message we receive. We can always consult them and ask for their opinion. They may even have worked for this company before. ATIO events are also a good place to meet with colleagues and discuss matters like these.

Do we really want to work for this client? This is the ultimate question. After we have done our homework, it is up to us to decide if we want to apply for the job. ATIO and our colleagues can only provide the best advice they have, but the final say is ours.

If you have any comments, please feel free to share them with us.

On the Lighter Side: Continuing Education

By Nancy McInnis, President

The responses to the survey on continuing education (CE) were read with considerable interest. The response rate was 13.5% and the overwhelming majority, 88%, supported the idea of a CE program.

However we should also tell you that we did hear some concerns over this survey. Members complained about the way it was written as they found that the questions were not sufficiently neutral. Some found it difficult to vote as they didn’t agree with the somewhat flip viewpoints that accompanied the “yes” and “no” votes.

One e-mail even worried that the Board would take the survey One e-mail even worried that the Board would take the survey results seriously, despite the flaws in the questions. That’s a fair point. We do use the surveys as a way to get a quick reading on what you think about a given issue. But this little column is not the only tool we use. We far prefer to talk to you directly, or to read your e-mail. So please keep answering these little surveys—and please keep letting us know when you want to explain your vote, or inability to vote, in greater detail.

Back to the survey results... 88% supported the idea of a Continuing Education program—as long as it was optional. Only 18% of respondents thought a CE program should be mandatory.

As for what kind of work should be recognized, 79% liked the idea of recognizing university and college courses, and 68% liked ATIO seminars and AGMs, and those of other provincial associations. Percentages dropped quickly after that: 50% agreed with work for clients, 43% supported professional articles written by members, 36% liked professional journals and work done for ATIO, 32% agreed with local school board courses and 22% approved of community service as a component of a CE program.

Individual comments also suggested developing a mentorship program and internships, or modeling a CE program after those of other professional associations with a certain number of units to be completed each year. Still others objected that the amount of research required to do a good job on texts meant that work constituted its own continuing education program and therefore nothing further was required.

Some comments also pointed out the obvious problem with implementing a mandatory CE program: how could courses be made available to everyone regardless of geographical location. Would courses have to be limited to those that could be accessed on-line?

It’s an interesting topic to consider, as there are no easy answers to the best way to proceed, if at all. CTTIC will undoubtedly continue to mull over the question, and so will ATIO. Thank you for your feedback. As always, your opinion matters to us.

Continued from page 10

now is rates, regardless of the quality of translation and its “adaptability” to the target audience.

I hope you have grasped the importance of taking action now to preserve our quality of life, without mortgaging the future of subsequent generations of translators. In most cases, we have completed a three- or four-year academic program to earn

the right to practise our profession. Let’s not fall into the trap of working at any price, because there is enough work for everyone. In fact, there is reportedly a shortage of translators. It is high time for language professionals to show solidarity, to maintain our rates and our quality of life. Our country has decades of experience in the field—it’s up to us to make the most of them!

CERTIFIED ON DOSSIER IN TRANSLATION

English-French

Lydie Brawer

English-Italian

Cristina Enrietti-Zoppo

English-Russian

Elena Al-Masani-Mozhaeva

English-Serbian

Ana Gvozdic

CERTIFIED THROUGH CTTIC TRANSLATION EXAMINATION

French-English

Barbara Duffus
Antoine Mathieu Marcil
Norah Mulvihill
Claudine Quinn
Luciana Vaduva
Srinivasan Varadarajan

English-French

Jean Lamoureux

German-French

Jean-François Delannoy

German-English

Helmut Fischer
James O’Meara
Robert Schlarb

Spanish-English

Lawrence Koch

English-Chinese

Xianjun (Edward) Liu
Fang Sheng

English-German

Robert Schlarb

English-Russian

Dmitri Slivniak

English-Spanish

María del Rocio Martínez
Verónica Rubio Perales
Yolanda Sutts

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE CANADIAN TRANSLATORS, TERMINOLOGISTS AND INTERPRETERS COUNCIL

Results of Certification Examinations

CTTIC has received the results for the 2008 standardized certification examinations in translation.

Here are the results for the official language combinations, followed by other language combinations.

In the English to French combination, all but one of the 70 candidates failed.

In the French to English combination, 6 of the 20 candidates were successful, which is a pass rate of 30%.

The final compilation of examination results is nearly complete for various combinations involving English to foreign languages (Arabic, Bulgarian, Chinese, Farsi, German, Greek, Hindi, Inuktitut, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Macedonian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Spanish and Tamil). So far, 16 of the 79 candidates have been successful, a pass rate of 20%.

In various foreign language (Arabic, Bulgarian, Chinese, Dutch, Farsi, German, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Macedonian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Slovene, Spanish, Tamil and Turkish) to English combinations, 9 of the 80 candidates were successful, a pass rate of 11%.

The foreign language (Arabic, Bulgarian and German) to French examination saw 6 candidates, one of whom was successful, a pass rate of 16%.

In the French to foreign languages (Arabic, Romanian and Spanish) combination, all candidates failed.

These results raise a number of questions. The CTTIC Council has proposed to its members that a thorough study of the entire certification process in translation, terminology and interpretation be undertaken. This task would be coordinated by the Board of Certification. Therefore, each provincial organization is asked to propose the name of a person who can sit on the Board or act as liaison with the Board. The Board will meet at the end of June to establish the plan and schedule of work and to distribute the tasks among its members.

The Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council brings together the organizations responsible for certifying professional translators, terminologists and interpreters in the provinces and territories. It coordinates the actions of its member organizations and promotes cooperation among them, ensures uniformity in professional standards, and maintains relations with national and international bodies representing language specialists. Through its member organizations, CTTIC seeks to promote professional certification as a guarantee of quality and competence, thereby contributing to the advancement of the profession and the protection of the public.