



# NOTIS/SOMI/WITS NEWS

Volume 18 No. 3, SUMMER 2005

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## FAKE CHECK SCAMS AIMED AT INTERPRETERS

*Kenneth Barger*

Interpreters beware! A nefarious brand of Internet criminal is targeting members of our profession.

Known as “fake check scams,” this con game shows up in the form of an e-mail requesting the victim’s services. The scammer makes the victim an offer too good to refuse, including advance payment, then initiates the fake check scam, which works in the following way. When the victim agrees to provide the service, the scammer sends a fake check, which is a forgery good enough to fool the bank, at least temporarily. Then the scammer tells the victim that there was an overpayment and requests that the victim wire the balance back. After the victim does so, the bank discovers that the check is fake—the account does not exist or is now closed—and the victim is out the money.

The danger does not end there, because during the transaction, these criminals may gain access to sensitive personal data belonging to the victim.

In recent months, more and more of these fake check scams have been aimed at interpreters. They differ from other spam, which is sent to thousands or millions of recipients, in that the message is customized to the particular intended victim, including details like the city where the vic-

tim lives, the language he or she interprets, and so forth.

These scam e-mails seem to take mostly two forms. One is from a supposed groom-to-be who claims his wife speaks only Spanish, Mandarin, or some other language, and will need an interpreter for the wedding and reception somewhere in the United States. Another comes from Bishop So-and-So from some African country or another—Ghana has shown up several times. The supposed bishop will be touring your area with his wife (and maybe his daughters), and the wife needs interpretation in your language for several days, several hours a day.

There are some clues that the message you receive may be a scam. These scammers generally have atrocious grammar, spelling, and formatting. They will need your services for a period of multiple days, and they invite you to practically name your price, implying that they will pay in advance whatever you ask. And the situation might just seem generally improbable, such as the Lao-speaking wife of an African bishop going on a tour of Bellingham, or something of the sort.

*Continued on page 10* ○○○

**Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society**

A chapter of the  
**American Translators Association**

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WITS Newsletter is published quarterly by the Washington State Court Interpreters & Translators Society, PO Box 1012, Seattle, WA 98111-1012.

Our voicemail telephone number is (206) 382-5690. WITS has a Web page which can be visited at www.witsnet.org.

WITS accepts advertising to be published in the Newsletter. Advertisements are subject to approval and must be consistent with the goals and purposes of WITS. The acceptance by WITS of a paid advertisement in the Newsletter does not constitute endorsement of the product or services advertised. Acceptable sizes (width by height) are as follows:

7" x 4": \$60.00  
3" x 4": \$30.00  
3" x 2": \$15.00

To submit an ad, send camera-ready advertisement together with payment to the WITS PO Box address noted above.

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info@sominet.org  
www.sominet.org

**NOTIS Notes****New Members**

Don Doud	Spanish > English
Alina Gridley	Russian < > English
Elisabeth Lyman	French > English
Xavier Maipi	Trukese > English
	Chuukese > English
Elena Mihailova	Russian < > English
Ricardo Morales-Davila	Spanish > English
Hua (Barbara) Robinson	Mandarin < > English
Sabine Sullivan	English > German

**Rejoining Members**

Judy Langley	French > English
	Spanish > English
Kirsten Vilholm	Danish < > English

**SOMI Notes****Active members**

Yvette Arcelay (Spanish)  
Mercedes Booth (Spanish)  
Don Doud (Spanish, Portuguese)  
Odmaa Dugersuren, M.D. (Mongolian)  
Juan Zuniga (Spanish)

**Corporate/Institutional Members**

Kelly Gagain, Sign Language Associates, Inc  
Dasha Ortenberg, Accent of Languages

## REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY SUMMER DEVELOPMENTS AMONG NOTIS, SOMI AND WITS

*Kenneth Barger*  
*Executive Secretary, Steering Group*

Dear colleagues in WITS, SOMI and NOTIS:

You may recall last issue's article about activities underway as a result of our Saturday Summit held in March. Our three organizations formed a Steering Group and two Task Forces, Administrative and Governance. I was honored to be named Executive Secretary.

The task forces did an admirable job of reviewing various aspects of our joint activities. The Administrative Task Force had the job of studying administrative functions of the three societies and how they might be brought closer together. They concluded that it would be difficult to further combine administrative functions unless we were also going to combine organizations. The Governance Task Force was charged with studying and comparing the three societies' bylaws. Their conclusions were that all three of our organizations share common goals, and that there were no irreconcilable differences in our bylaws.

Based on these reports, which members are welcome to read, the Steering Group met and recommended to the three boards that they decide whether they were in favor of reorganizing our three societies into a single organization. If they were in favor, they were asked to recommend such a change to their members for a vote this fall.

In July, all three organizations considered this question in their board meetings. The SOMI and WITS boards voted in favor of reorganization, while the NOTIS board did not. The consequence is that we will not move forward with reorganization at this time, and we will continue to have three separate organizations.

Nonetheless, the results of this effort are tangible and encouraging. We have learned a lot from the process of meeting, discussing these questions, and exploring what we have in common. During this process, countless voices from all three societies have expressed the desire to continue forming closer ties. On a personal note, it was a joy for me to work with such dedicated and knowledgeable colleagues.

We plan to hold a meeting of the three new Global Committees—Programs, Newsletter, and Outreach—in September, to continue collaborating and working together. The joint newsletter you hold in your hands is just one good result of this effort.

Please contact me or your board members if you would like more information about this project. I look forward to seeing you at our fall events.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE NOTIS PRESIDENT

*Larissa Kulinich*

Dear members of NOTIS and colleagues:

The Executive Secretary of the Steering Group has given you a full report on this summer's activities. I would like to add a note about the decision of the NOTIS board. The board considered the possibility of reorganizing with great care and attention. The directors could see some positive possibilities from such a change, but also recognized that to reorganize would take a great investment of time and energy. As you know, all our directors are volunteers and the compensation they receive is intangible—the satisfaction of contributing to our profession and the appreciation of colleagues. Our directors did not foresee

that they could offer extra time to their professional organization beyond what they are committing now. In the end, the board decided not to make the commitment to organizational change, believing that it would benefit our members more to continue on the already-existing path. They agreed unanimously, however, that working closely with our sister organizations remains highly important, and they look forward to continuing to do so this fall and beyond.

## Newsletter Naming Contest: WE NEED YOUR VOTE!

WOW! Thank you to all of you who submitted your GREAT ideas for our combined newsletter. The Naming Committee, consisting of members from all three organizations, had a difficult and enjoyable time arguing for and evaluating the best choices. After much deliberation, the naming committee submitted three titles to the Boards of NOTIS, SOMI and WITS for approval.

It is now up to YOU to vote for your favorite and the winner. The three top choices are (in no particular order of choice):

1. Working Words
2. Language in Action
3. The Northwest Linguist

Here is what you need to do.

Go to [www.notisnet.org](http://www.notisnet.org) and click on the link for the final phase of the naming contest. Vote for your favorite title and for your second favorite and then, finally, your third choice.

The names of the winners will be announced in the upcoming edition of the newsletter (bearing the new title) in November at which time the prizes will also be awarded.

The deadline for casting your vote is October 1, 2005!

### RULES:

- You may only vote once.
- You must be a member in good standing of WITS, SOMI and / or NOTIS to vote.
- You must vote by midnight on October 1, 2005.
- All members, including those on the Boards and Naming Committee, are now eligible to vote!
- You must be a good sport if your title didn't make it to the top three or doesn't win first place.

Thank you again for all your creative ideas and contributions.

The Newsletter Naming Committee  
WITS, SOMI and NOTIS

## Editors' Correction:

We would like to offer special thanks to Elizabeth Rothman, newsletter editor of the Washington State Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, for bringing a serious error in our last edition to our attention. We, the editors of this publication, offer our sincere apologies and are especially grateful for the education we received!

In an article on L&I payments, we incorrectly named Ms. Rothman's organization as the "Washington State

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf *and Hearing Impaired.*" As an education or reminder for all of us, we have included the following article on the subject from the website of the National Association for the Deaf (NAD), which is re-printed here with their permission. For further information on the topic, please visit their website at: [www.nad.org](http://www.nad.org).

## What is Wrong with the Use of the Terms "Deaf-mute," "Deaf and dumb," or "Hearing-impaired"?

Deaf and hard of hearing people have the right to choose what they wish to be called, either as a group or on an individual basis. Overwhelmingly, deaf and hard of hearing people prefer to be called "deaf" or "hard of hearing." Nearly all organizations of the deaf use the term "deaf and hard of hearing," and the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) is no exception. The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) voted in 1991 to use "deaf and hard of hearing" as an official designation.

Yet there are many people who persist in using terms other than "deaf" and "hard of hearing." The alternative terms are often seen in print, heard on radio and television, and picked up in casual conversations all over. Let's take a look at the three most-used alternative terms.

**Deaf and Dumb** — A relic from the medieval English era, this is the granddaddy of all negative labels pinned on deaf and hard of hearing people. The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, pronounced us "deaf and dumb," because he felt that deaf people were incapable of being taught, of learning, and of reasoned thinking. To his way of thinking, if a person could not use his/her voice in the same way as hearing people, then there was no way that this person could develop cognitive abilities. (Source: *Deaf Heritage*, by Jack Gannon, 1980)

In later years, "dumb" came to mean "silent." This definition still persists, because that is how people see deaf people. The term is offensive to deaf and hard of hearing people for a number of reasons. One, deaf and hard of hearing people are by no means "silent" at all. They use sign language, lip-reading, vocalizations, and so on to communicate. Communication is not reserved for

hearing people alone, and using one's voice is not the only way to communicate. Two, "dumb" also has a second meaning: stupid. Deaf and hard of hearing people have encountered plenty of people who subscribe to the philosophy that if you cannot use your voice well, you don't have much else "upstairs," and have nothing going for you. Obviously, this is incorrect, ill-informed, and false. Deaf and hard of hearing people have repeatedly proved that they have much to contribute to the society at large.

**Deaf-Mute** — Another offensive term from the 18th-19th century, "mute" also means silent and without voice. This label is technically inaccurate, since deaf and hard of hearing people generally have functioning vocal chords. The problem lies with the fact that to successfully modulate your voice, you need to be able to hear your own voice. Again, because deaf and hard of hearing people use various methods of communication other than using their voices, they are not truly mute. True communication occurs when one's message is understood by others, and they can respond in kind.

**Hearing-impaired** — A term much preferred by hearing people, largely because they view it as politically correct. In the mainstream society, to boldly state one's disability (e.g., deaf, blind, etc.) is somewhat rude and impolite. To their way of thinking, it is far better to soften the harsh reality by using the word "impaired" along with "visual," "hearing," and so on. "hearing-impaired" is a well-meaning word that is much-resented by deaf and hard of hearing people.

Deaf and hard of hearing people feel that the words "deaf" and "hard of hearing" are not negative in any way at

all. Indeed, the deaf and hard of hearing community views “hearing-impaired” as negative, because the label focuses on what they can’t do. With this label, a standard has been set: the “hearing” standard. To be anything other than “hearing” is not acceptable to the mainstream society, and deaf and hard of hearing people have failed to meet the “standard.” To be fair, this is probably what hearing people did not intend to convey to deaf and hard of hearing people every time they use “hearing impaired” as a label. Deaf and hard of hearing people believe that there is nothing wrong with them, and that their culture, language, and community are just as fulfilling as the ones experienced by the mainstream society.

What’s in a name? Plenty! Words and labels can have a profound effect on people. Deaf and hard of hearing people are sensitive as to how they are referred, because they have experienced being put down and disparaged by other people. They have seen their intelligence, their abilities, and their skills questioned simply because they are deaf or hard of hearing. Show your respect for deaf and hard of hearing people by refusing to use those outdated and offensive terms.

## WITS Advocacy Committee

*Claudia Zar*

*Chair, Advocacy Committee*

This year, WITS established an Advocacy Committee whose mission is the following: “To represent the interests of judiciary interpreters in their professional relationships with other bodies in a manner that is non-confrontational, positive, and directed towards establishing and maintaining the best conditions for providing high-quality interpreting to those in need.”

To fulfill this mission, our first objective is to gather data that will allow us to pinpoint the areas where we might best represent you. We therefore ask judiciary interpreters working in courtrooms and other similar venues to send us specific information concerning topics that we can address. Without being limited to these examples, topics may include cases where a court is using non-certified interpreters; where there is a misrepresentation by an interpreter of professional qualifications; occasions where you have been asked or expected to perform duties that go against the Code of Ethics; etc.

Please e-mail your comments to [witsadvocacy@aol.com](mailto:witsadvocacy@aol.com). They will be kept confidential, and although you will get an acknowledgment that your message has been received, we will not take action on individual comments. Instead, we will take all comments under advisement as we plan our future activities. We are particularly focused on educational outreach to individuals and organizations on the proper role of the judiciary interpreter.

If you wish to volunteer to help the Advocacy Committee in its efforts, please send us an e-mail to this same address.



## The Translation & Interpretation Institute Fall Workshops

### COMPUTER TOOLS & METHODS FOR GREAT TRANSLATION PERFORMANCE

Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. **NEW!**

Fee: \$79\*

Instructor: Jamie Lucero

#### Description:

Designed to boost your translation quality and productivity, this workshop covers programs for file management, conversion, and comparison; advanced word counting, translation memory, machine translation, and terminology management; improved Internet research, essential keyboard shortcuts, advanced Microsoft Word search/replace functions; and computer maintenance for optimum computer performance. Students should have a solid understanding of basic Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Windows, and Internet functions.

Instructor Jamie Lucero is a graduate of the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California where he earned a Master's degree in French-English translation. Now the owner of Morning Star Translations in Portland, Oregon, he has worked as a translation tools consultant and both as a freelance and an in-house translator in the United States and in Quebec City, Canada.

**Location:** BCC North Campus, room 107, 10700 Northup Way, Bellevue

**Registration Item Number:** F9370

\*Register by September 12, 2005 and save the \$8 registration fee.

### BUSINESS SKILLS FOR TRANSLATORS

Saturday, October 15, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Fee: \$49\*

Instructor: Roger Chriss

#### Description:

This is a four-hour workshop on the translation industry, in particular, who is hiring and what skills are in demand, and how to develop and market oneself. Topics include creating résumés and cover letters; finding potential clients or employers; impressing translation managers and project managers; and (for freelancers) negotiating jobs and getting paid. Emerging technologies and industry trends will be discussed, and the importance of adaptation to the evolving international and Internet-based market on the part of translators. This workshop is ideal for newcomers to the profession, as well as for experienced translators looking to expand a freelance business or find a new in-house position.

Instructor **Roger Chriss** is a freelance translator/writer and a graduate of and former Adjunct Professor at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

**Location:** BCC North Campus, Room 266, 10700 Northup Way, Bellevue

Fee: \$49

**Registration Item Number:** F9369

\*Register by September 12, 2005 and save the \$8 registration fee.

For more information or to register online:

[www.gotobcc.com](http://www.gotobcc.com)

or call 425-564-2263 to register

# NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JUDICIARY INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS

*Ann G. Macfarlane, Executive Director  
National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators  
Seattle, Washington*

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE U.S. COURTS

NAJIT is pleased to announce that the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts has invited a NAJIT representative to attend two important meetings scheduled for the end of July, a meeting of the Court Interpreters Advisory Group and a "focus group" on the federal contract for 2006. This will be a significant opportunity for our professional association to contribute the views of working members at the federal level.

## HOUSTON 2006

Planning is already under way for NAJIT's 27th annual conference. WITS, SOMI and NOTIS members working in legal translation or court interpreting are invited to meet in Houston, Texas from May 19-21, 2006. Our colleagues in Texas have just founded the Texas Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators. TAJIT and HITTA, the Houston Interpreters and Translators Association, are collaborating with NAJIT to prepare great sessions and social events. This conference will include a special focus on medical interpreting and translating.

## PORTLAND 2007

NAJIT will meet in Portland, Oregon on May 18-20, 2007 for the 28th Annual Conference, with a special focus on ASL interpreting.

## WEBSITE JOB LISTINGS NOW AVAILABLE

NAJIT invites corporate members of our sister associations to list job openings on the NAJIT website. Anyone may post such listings for the fee of \$50.

## SPECIAL BENEFIT FOR ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS

Organizational (nonprofit) members of NAJIT may apply for sponsorship for regional conferences they organize. If approved by the Board of Directors, NAJIT will provide funding for a speaker's travel and honorarium. In return, NAJIT requests that it be listed as a cosponsor of the event, and have an opportunity to inform attendees about our activities and invite them to join.

## BONUS PERIOD FOR MEMBERSHIP

NAJIT invites members of NOTIS, SOMI and WITS to join NAJIT and take advantage of the "bonus period" of membership. New membership applications submitted now will be valid until December 31, 2006. Visit our website at [www.najit.org](http://www.najit.org) to learn more.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF CIVIL AND CRIMINAL LAW AND ETHICS

*A survey of law for interpreters.*

What distinguishes civil law from criminal law? What relationship holds between "common law" and civil law? City Attorney Patrick Hayden presents an overview of law that will increase understanding of the structures that govern judiciary proceedings and principles.

The instructor will identify terms of art in civil and criminal proceedings, which have a specific meaning such as "intent," "reasonable," and "negligence."

Different levels of these terms will be discussed.

Also included: Principles of criminal liability, location of statutes and their applicability. Important legal issues in contracts, divorce, parenting plans, custodial

jurisdiction, dependency. Case background behind these issues, putting documents and rulings into context.

**September 17, 2005, Saturday**  
11:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Guest appearance by Skagit County Superior Court Judge on Ethics and Interpreters as Officers of the Court

**P.O. Box 750**  
**Burlington, WA 98233**  
**Classroom: 716 E. Fairhaven**

**Phone: 360.755.9910**  
**Fax: 360.755.9919**  
**email: [resources@langex.com](mailto:resources@langex.com)**



## Looking for a worthwhile and fun experience?

Take part in representing NOTIS at our table during the ATA Conference at the Westin in Seattle to be held November 9-12, 2005. You'll have the opportunity to talk with professionals from all over the world as you share information and answer questions. Help attendees truly enjoy their Seattle experience and promote our organization. To volunteer, contact Kathy Guttromson at: [spanish@northcascades.net](mailto:spanish@northcascades.net).

[http://www.notisnet.org/ata\\_2005.html](http://www.notisnet.org/ata_2005.html)

Mark your calendars!

ATA 46th Annual Conference  
Seattle, Washington  
November 9-12, 2005

[http://www.notisnet.org/ata\\_2005.html](http://www.notisnet.org/ata_2005.html)

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### WHAT DO I DO?

The maddening thing about these scams is that despite how far-fetched they may sound, they also sound like a pretty attractive gig. Exercise caution and try to verify the authenticity of a gig before agreeing to it. You can do this by looking up the company or the person offering work on one of the internet's ever-more-efficient search engines, where you may discover that others have already seen and uncovered the scam. If you are not sure, you might call the potential client and ask a couple of good questions to see if they sound authentic.

If you receive fake check scam e-mail, you can report it to your Internet service provider (ISP). Many ISPs

## MESSAGE FROM THE WITS PRESIDENT

*Kenneth Barger*

Dear WITS Member:

I was flattered and honored to be named president of the Washington State Court Interpreters and Translators Society at our last board meeting on August 24, 2005. This faith in me shown by our colleagues on the Board means a lot to me. I will do my best to fulfill their expectations and help WITS to continue finding ways to better serve its members.

My predecessor, Sam Mattix, is a tough act to follow. As I have told him in private conversations, I am grateful for his knowledge, wisdom, ability, and above all, for his unequalled kindness and affability.

Now is an interesting time for all of our societies. As announced in my article this issue on the Steering Group's activities, our three societies will not join into one, but they will continue to work closely together. I have always believed in strength in numbers, so I intend to promote this collaboration whenever the opportunity exists to do so.

WITS can do much to promote professionalism within the industry, understanding and respect for the interpreter, and good relationships among members of the profession. Washington State is a hotbed of interpreting talent with a great future. As president, I will do all I can so that WITS may lead the charge.

If you have any comments or questions about WITS and its activities, feel free to contact me or any of the members of the Board.

have a dedicated e-mail address for reporting spam. Check with your ISP to find out if they have one. You can also report e-mail scams to the FBI at [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov). Click on "Submit a Tip" on the left side of the page.

To be realistic, your ISP probably receives thousands of tips about spam, and the FBI is more interested in chasing racketeers and terrorists than going after fake check scammers. It may be that the best we can do is avoid falling for their tricks, thereby demonstrating to these creeps that the interpreters of the Pacific Northwest are not easily taken advantage of, and forcing them to look elsewhere for prey.

Further information can be found on the NOTIS website at [www.notisnet.org](http://www.notisnet.org).

## Calendar

Date	Event	Details	Location
September 3-5, 2005	WA State & OR State Continuing Ed Courses.	<a href="http://www.chang-castilloseminars.com">www.chang-castilloseminars.com</a>	Portland, OR & Seattle, WA
September 24, 2005	ATA Seminar: The Business of Translating & Interpreting	<a href="http://www.atanet.org">www.atanet.org</a>	Salt Lake City, Utah
September 27, 2005	ALO Meeting: Translator's Day	7:00 p.m., <a href="http://groups.yahoo.com/group/alo-oregon/">http://groups.yahoo.com/group/alo-oregon/</a>	Balestra Hall, St. Michael's Church, SW 4 <sup>th</sup> & Mill, Portland, Oregon
October 1, 2005	WITS Deadline to submit Board Member Nominations		
October 15 & 16, 2005	National Center for State Courts presents a 1-2 day seminar	<a href="http://www.witsnet.org">www.witsnet.org</a>	Seattle, WA
October 15 & 16, 2005	WA State Oral Examination Preparation course. Chang-Castillo	<a href="http://www.witsnet.org">www.witsnet.org</a>	
October 22 & 23, 2005	Washington State Interpreter Program offering ORAL exam for court certification	<a href="http://www.witsnet.org">www.witsnet.org</a>	Bellevue, WA
October 25-27, 2005	Localization World Conference	<a href="http://www.localizationworld.com">www.localizationworld.com</a>	Bell Harbor International Conference Center, Seattle, WA
October 26, 2005	ALO Roundtable: Customer Horror Stories	7:00 p.m., <a href="http://groups.yahoo.com/group/alo-oregon/">http://groups.yahoo.com/group/alo-oregon/</a>	Balestra Hall, St. Michael's Church, SW 4 <sup>th</sup> & Mill, Portland, Oregon
November 2005	Election of WITS Board Members conducted by Mail		
November 9-12, 2005	ATA 46 <sup>th</sup> Annual Conference	<a href="http://www.atanet.org">www.atanet.org</a>	Westin Hotel, Seattle, WA
December 3, 2005	WITS/ SOMI/NOTIS Annual Holiday Party		University of Washington Waterfront Activities Center

For more international, national, and local events, please see:

[www.notisnet.org](http://www.notisnet.org), [www.witsnet.org](http://www.witsnet.org), [www.sominet.org](http://www.sominet.org), [www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org)



## SOMI / NOTIS / WITS Board Meetings:

Organization	Date & Time	Location	Contact
NOTIS	September 15, 2005 6:30 p.m.	TBD	Info@notisnet.org
NOTIS	October 18, 2005 6:30 p.m.	TBD	Info@notisnet.org
NOTIS	November 19, 2005 Annual Meeting	TBD	Info@notisnet.org
NOTIS	December 13, 2005 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	TBD	Info@notisnet.org

NOTIS  
P.O. Box 25301  
Seattle, WA 98165-2001  
Voice Mail: (206) 382-5642  
E-mail: info@notisnet.org  
Website: www.notisnet.org

