



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A MUTUAL-BENEFIT ASSOCIATION?

ANN MACFARLANE, NOTIS PRESIDENT

Last month Jean Leblon, NOTIS Director, Susana Stettri-Sawrey, President of the Washington State Court Interpreters Society, and I had a very stimulating lunch with Putnam Barber. Put is President of the Evergreen State Society and keeper of the "Frequently-Asked Questions on Non-Profit Associations" web page on the Internet. He has long had a commitment to the development and improvement of that sector of our society which goes by the name "non-profit." "Non-profit" is not a terribly satisfactory term, in that it describes by a negative, denoting those institutions in our society which are neither governmental nor commercial.

In the course of our discussion Put made a distinction which was new to me, though on reflection I felt that I should have seen it before. NOTIS and WITS are both associations which are technically named as "mutual benefit associations." They exist for the mutual benefit and advantage of their members. My previous experience in the non-profit world had been largely with school reform, where I was active in a "public benefit association." This latter type, obviously enough, serves the public good at large, which we do not.

One could argue, of course, that in "promoting the recognition and advancement of the professions of translation and interpretation," as our objectives call us to do, we are serving the public good. Since translation and interpretation are necessary to society's functioning, helping society to understand their nature and their importance helps society function better. Our most fundamental purposes,

however, have to do with benefiting our members.

This distinction of terms freed me of a certain restraint which I have long felt when asking you, our members, for volunteer assistance in running NOTIS. On the purely emotional level, it feels like an imposition to ask someone to volunteer. On the purely pragmatic level, however, it's impossible to run our society using only the talents and energies of those members who step forward without being asked. The reality of our pressured nineties life is that most of us are doing too much, and all of us have to juggle various and significant demands on our time and resources. Therefore, it becomes necessary, as various "volunteer opportunities" arise, to put out the call to those who might be able to lend a hand.

In responding to the changing needs of our profession, and our members, NOTIS continues to try to be flexible and proactive. Your board has just authorized establishing an "electronic brain trust" to think through the most effective and efficient way to be present on the World Wide Web and the Internet, and I'm happy to report that five volunteers have responded to our call to assist. We have also had volunteers respond to "NOTIS Needs" in our last issue. In this issue you will find further appeals for help with some of our activities. Representatives of NOTIS, WITS, the Society of Medical Interpreters, The Translators and Interpreters Guild, and the Society of Translators and Interpreters of British Columbia are meeting during the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters Conference to talk about im-

proving communication and coordinating programming, with an eye towards perhaps establishing a regional grouping. Cindy Roat's article on medical interpreting, reprinted in this issue, points to continuing issues for interpreters as the Washington State situation moves and changes. Funding has been cut, and the Department of Social and Human Services continues its efforts to change the way interpreting services are provided. All of these subjects represent "volunteer opportunities." I hope that each of you, dear readers, will think them over carefully and consider whether one of these opportunities might not be the one for you.

The fact of the matter is that being active in a "mutual benefit association" helps not only your fellow members, but you yourself. Working together to help bring some note of rationality into the public's perception of our

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**Northwest Translators
and Interpreters Society
(NOTIS)**

OFFICERS

President	Ann G. Macfarlane
Vice-President	Caitilin Walsh
Treasurer	Jochen Liesche
Secretary	Katalin Pearman

COMMITTEES

Computers & Translation	Michael Broschat (206) 328-6138 BBS
Membership	Caitilin Walsh (206) 382-5642
Program	Open
Hospitality	Lilly May Bayley

**SPECIAL INTEREST
GROUPS**

Literary	Ghuzal Badamshina (206) 527-6299
Slavic	Karina Watkins (425) 562-7156

NOTIS News is published six times yearly in odd-numbered months. Letters to the Editor, short articles of interest, and information for the calendar and other sections are invited. Submissions become the property of NOTIS News and are subject to editing unless otherwise agreed in advance. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor, the Society or its Board.

Editor	Pieter Zilinsky (206) 932-5118
Editorial Board	Willy Evans Katalin Pearman
Pagemaking	Annegret Keller-Davies (425) 820-6523
Production Assistant	Ursula Zilinsky
Deadline	10th day of month before issue

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Membership in NOTIS	
Individual & Institutional	\$35.00 a year
Corporate	\$50.00 a year

For membership information write to NOTIS or call NOTIS Voice Mail (206) 382-5642.
E-mail: NOTIS@compuserve.com
Home Page: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/NOTIS>

NOTIS is a Washington State non-profit organization.

NOTIS NOTES

**WELCOME TO
NEW MEMBERS**

Anne Arntson, Ursula Christenson, Persida Drulea, Yoshiko Ozaki La Salvia, Luz Angela Lopez-VanHilst, JoAnn Strasik, and Yumiko Yamamoto.

THANK YOU

Michelle Privat Obermeyer has volunteered to share the work of producing NOTIS News in the role of Copy Editor. Abby Clay will be producing the reminder postcards for our members. A thank you to Michelle and Abby.

**FAREWELL
AND THANKS**

Michael Broschat, a founding Director of NOTIS, has stepped down from the Board of Directors in preparation for his forthcoming move out of Seattle. Michael has been a member of the Board for almost ten years. His faithful service will be sorely missed.

LITERARY SIG NEWS

NOTIS welcomes member Ghuzal Badamshina as the new coordinator of the Literary Special Interest Group. Please give Ghuzal a call if you are interested in participating in the LitSIG's activities.

**CORRECTIONS TO THE
MEMBERSHIP LIST**

By now you should have received your updated membership list. If you have any corrections or changes to the list, please let us know by dropping a line to our PO Box or e-mail, or by leaving a message on our voice mail.

**DIRECTORY LISTING
FORMS DUE**

New members please take note: If you haven't already returned your directory listing form, you'll need to get it in to us soon to beat the July 31 deadline for inclusion. If we don't receive a listing form by then, you will not be listed. If you've misplaced the form, or aren't sure if you sent it in, please ask—we want YOU in the Directory. Renewed members: If you were in last year's Directory, don't worry, you'll be in this year's. Everyone will receive a proof sheet for the listing this summer.

NOTIS NEEDS

DIRECTORY ADVERTISING

It's springtime, and we're already revving up for advertising in this year's Directory of Translators and Interpreters. This year, we will again be offering advertising to our members at a considerable discount. In addition, we are able to reference paid advertising in your member profile. If you have never advertised before, this is a terrific opportunity to market yourself. Our *Directory* is distributed to more than 600 potential clients. A business-card-sized ad can help you stand out from the crowd, and for members, the cost is only \$30! If you'd like to reserve your space now, or if you have any questions, please leave a message for Elsa Brodin on our voice mail. The advertising deadline is September 1, 1997.

NEW NIB

The Summer update to the NOTIS InfoBase will be appearing at the beginning of July. Look for it on our home page (<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/NOTIS>). The deadline for changes to information (if you have a new area code, see below!) for the next update is the 15th of June.

AREA CODE ALERT

Effective April 27, 1997, two new area codes have been introduced in Washington State: 425 for the Northern Tier and 253 for the Southern Tier. The Northern Tier (425) consists of the exchanges between and including Everett and Kent, and includes the existing 206 area code exchanges east of Lake Washington. The Southern Tier (253) includes the exchanges between Auburn, Des Moines, and Tacoma, plus Lakebay, Fox Island, Gig Harbor, and Burley. Please make sure to let us know if you have a new area code for any of your numbers, i.e., home, work, fax, pager, cellular, etc.

NO SOLICITING?

Have you been getting unsolicited mailings as a result of your listing in the NOTIS Directory and InfoBase? We try to discourage this practice by making it difficult to copy our data, but it seems to be a by-product of our aggressive distribution policy. Please let us know of any repeat "offenders," and we'll try to stem the flow.

PRODUCTION VOLUNTEER

NOTIS is seeking a Production Volunteer to handle ENN (Electronic NOTIS News). The work requires Pagemaker 6.0 or higher and will take about one hour every two months. Please contact NOTIS Voice-mail, Attention: Caitilin Walsh.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

To provide informative, lively and timely programs for the members of the society, NOTIS needs several members to contribute ideas, collect details, arrange sites and publicize meetings. If you want to support and strengthen NOTIS, please call NOTIS Voice Mail and volunteer for the program committee.

ORGANIZERS OF A JOB FAIR

Volunteers willing to organize a job fair for the membership in the fall of 1997 are needed by NOTIS. A model exists in the activities of the San Francisco area translators and interpreters. If you want to promote the profession while helping your colleagues, please call NOTIS Voice Mail and contribute your expertise.

DIRECTORY TEAM MEMBERS

Society members are needed to assist in producing our directory. If you can help by receiving advertisement copy, negotiating with printers for the best rate, or proofreading, please come forward and call the Voice Mail. A member with ASSET software capability is also sought to maintain our database of firms receiving copies of the directory. A little effort here helps produce a great return!

MISCELLANEOUS

Work for Interpreters and Translators

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is seeking qualified Language Specialists and Contract Linguists in **Arabic, Chinese** (all dialects), Farsi, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Document translation and oral communication translation are involved. Some travel is required.

Beginning salary ranges for Language Specialists and hourly rates for Contract Linguists depend on foreign language-related education and experience.

U.S. citizenship is a requisite for application. Potential candidates must successfully pass a battery of language tests which includes written translations from the foreign language into English, as well as oral tests in both languages. Applicants must undergo a background investigation, including drug and polygraph tests, and pass an audiometer examination.

To apply contact the Applicant Coordinator at the FBI field office closest to your home. [The FBI is an equal opportunity employer.]

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MEETING REVIEW: RÉSUMÉ PREPARATION AND NOTIS DIRECTORY LISTING

PIETER ZILINSKY

On the evening of April 3, in a mutually supportive, twin bill program, Courtney Searls-Ridge, an agency owner, and Caitilin Walsh, creator and manager of the NOTIS InfoBase (NIB), guided thirty NOTIS members to new levels of confidence and competency. In the now familiar and comfortable space of Gowen 201 at the University of Washington, another NOTIS workshop was aimed at serving the perceived and voiced needs of local translators and interpreters.

Courtney, an American Translators Association director, with an eye on résumés moving about nationwide, as well as in the northwest, handled "Résumé Preparation," in a multimedia format using sound, screen, laptop, and hard copy. After she posited that preparing a résumé demands solid, credible content, she stressed that presentation, — guaranteeing a noticeable, eye-catching you among the facts, was equally important.

Creating a "master biography," a renewable resource, allows you to choose those traits and experiences which can be shaped to the specific requirements of a client. A broad view of one's self will also show patterns of success as well as undesirable or stressful conditions.

An essential content list must have:

1. Contact details - where and how to find you;
2. Language pair and direction - From > To;
3. How and where you learned your languages;
4. Practical experience - "I did...." In today's market, computer skills and equipment must be affirmed in your profile. Affiliations, degrees (Be precise

about foreign certificates and diplomas), and current accreditations can add to the impact of your résumé. Also useful are citations of publications, special projects and information resources; e.g. specialized dictionaries.

Before the participants went into small groups, hands-on reviews of a slew of résumés (names omitted), and a valuable cautionary list of DO NOT's appeared: mention travel less than six months in duration, show too

on colored paper. If the material is scannable, art work will not travel.

E-mail resists formatting, WWW might allow a competitor to read you before your potential client does. All these forms have their plusses and liabilities. The choice is yours.

If thinking résumé, Courtney reminded her now newly aware listeners, "There is no right way to write it, but you must do it. The sooner the better."

Caitilin Walsh, NOTIS vice president, focused everyone's attention on the advantages of using the NOTIS Directory as a marketing instrument. As one of the services of NOTIS, a member is offered a Directory listing, provided that the person is a member in good standing by June 30 and returns a response form to the *Directory* editor before July 31, 1997.

To make a positive statement, choose wording that will clearly show your abilities, not your wishes. By fine tuning the description of the types of work you prefer and your specific skills, you will attract attention. Keep in mind that although you have the society's name and widespread distribution capacity behind you, other members are also making their appeal to potential clients. It takes more effort to stand out, but it pays to do so. As Caitilin insisted, "Get the client's attention!"

Observing technical limitations; e.g. character limits, one language per space, and supplying accurate dedicated telephone numbers, enhances your ability to attract an offer of work.

A further opportunity for self promotion is available through the advertising section in the *Directory*.

It was obvious to everyone who reserved the time and made the effort to share with their colleagues that NOTIS again helped those who help themselves.

MOVING?

Please let us know your new address and phone numbers so we can keep your membership record and directory information current. Remember, the electronic directory updates quarterly, and we want potential clients to be able to find you!

many language pairs, or submit a generic career résumé.

The review exercise gave each person an opportunity to find the most impressive features that go into shaping the vibrant résumé, and avoid the worst and the mediocre. With a suitable résumé in hand, targeted at a real client, the next challenge is to decide in what medium this valuable asset can be presented.

Hard copy demands good quality paper and an easily readable font. Fax will not survive

THE CERTIFICATION BLUES: PITFALLS AND PEAKS ALONG THE ROAD TO CERTIFYING MEDICAL INTERPRETERS

In 1992, the Department of Social and Health Services of Washington State (DSHS) embarked on a pioneering endeavor: certification of medical and social service interpreters. While legal interpreters are certified in several states, no other state has a program to certify interpreters in the medical and social service arenas.

Both DSHS and the interpreting community have struggled with this unfolding process and have learned along the way. The first test, developed and administered by the LIST (Language Interpretive Services and Translation) office within DSHS, had no study materials attached, so interpreters had no way to prepare for it. After a year and numerous interpreter complaints, study materials were developed and are now routinely distributed. The test included an evaluation of an interpreter's skill at simultaneous interpretation in a legal setting, an advanced skill that most medical and social service interpreters use rarely. After many interpreters failed the test partly due to this section, DSHS created a dual level of certification, one of which did not require the simultaneous skills. The test itself focused exclusively on the social service setting, and many medical interpreters felt it did not measure the knowledge and skills needed in their work. DSHS responded to this concern by developing a second test focused specifically on medical interpreting. In response to a concern about the quality of interpretation in other non-certified languages, DSHS also developed a non-language-specific test for use with other language interpreters.

In developing this pioneering certification system, LIST has had to meet innumerable challenges, both logistical and with respect to content, in order to provide some standard in interpretation in multiple settings, multiple languages and multiple localities around the state. However, now that the system is in place is not the time to rest on any proverbial laurels, but the time to seriously evaluate how appropriate and effective the testing system is.

For example, a look at the percentage of candidates passing the written and oral medical tests in different languages raises some questions. As of the end of January 1997, LIST reported that Spanish-speaking candidates were passing the written test at a rate of 97%, while only 48% of Laotian interpreters were passing. What does this mean? Are Spanish-speaking candidates coming to the test better prepared? Is medical vocabulary easier in Spanish than in Lao? Is the written test more appropriate in its form for Spanish speakers than for Lao speakers? If preparation is the key, then why are these same Spanish language interpreters passing the oral test at a rate of only 61%, below the average for all languages?

Another area of concern is the raw number of interpreters coming to take the test. Although certification is now required in 7 languages, the state-wide number of candidates presenting themselves for the test is very low in some of those languages: 62 for Cambodian; 80 for Korean; and only 21 for Lao (as of 1/30/97). In the non-certified languages, whose interpreters take the non-language-specific qualification test, only 4 Hmong interpreters have taken the test, and only 1 Mien interpreter. When the rates of passing are applied, we see that very few interpreters are being certified or qualified in some language communities, making the provision of services difficult.

At this point in the process a serious evaluation is needed to determine what is going on. The first series of questions, of course, focuses on the test itself. Is the test geared to an appropriate level? Is the form of the test appropriate? For example, the reading level on the written test is college-level English. Did we mean to be testing reading comprehension at that level? Is it necessary for the job of medical interpreter? Is it realistic to expect from all language groups? But then, has the test even been validated for all language groups? If not, can we adequately use only one test for all

languages? The second series of questions looks at candidate preparation. If we determine that the test is fair, then how can we help interpreters better prepare for it? What part of the test is posing a problem? Do we need to be teaching more ethics, more medical vocabulary, or better reading comprehension? The third area of inquiry is about outreach. Why are so few interpreters taking the test in certain language groups? What are the barriers in their eyes? What could we do to make the certification process more accessible to them?

These are questions that need to be looked at, if not by LIST, then by community organizations concerned with interpreter issues. Around the country, medical centers and health departments are becoming more aware of the need for quality interpretation for patients who speak limited English. Certification requirements for medical interpreters are being considered at this very moment in Oregon and California, as well as in other states, and they are looking at Washington State for a model to follow. We need to ensure that the model they are offered is effective and appropriate, and won't leave them singing the blues.

This article originated in *Across Cultures*, the newsletter of the Cross-Cultural Health Care Program at Pacific Medical Center (April 1997), and is reprinted by permission of the author.

*Cynthia E. Roat, MPH,
Interpreter Training Coordinator,
Cross Cultural Health Care Program*

THE PROFESSIONALS SPEAK OUT

BOOKDA GHEISAR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CYNTHIA E. ROAT, INTERPRETER TRAINING COORDINATOR OF THE CROSS-CULTURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM AT PACIFIC MEDICAL CENTER ADDRESSED A TIMELY AND URGENT ISSUE IN THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT.

April 11, 1997

Governor Gary Locke, Olympia, WA
e-mail: governor.locke@wa.gov

Dear Governor Locke:

We have recently learned that the new state operating budget under consideration by the legislature contemplates discontinuing funding for the reimbursement for interpretive services for limited-English-speaking patients with Medicaid. Instead, we understand, DSHS is being encouraged to expand its telephone interpretation systems. We wish to protest this unwise cut. This withdrawal of state support of medical interpretive services will undoubtedly have marked effects on the quality of services provided to limited-English-speaking patients in the State of Washington.

- Withdrawal of funding sends the wrong message to health care providers. By ending reimbursement for interpretive services, the State is sending an unintentional message to health care providers that language access is not an important part of health care provision. This action shows a lack of understanding of the complexity of providing health care across cultures and discounts the need for skilled interpreters.
- Telephone interpretation is simply inadequate to provide clear communication during a medical interview. Patients need interpretive services from the moment that they try to register, through the medical interview, to the blood draw in the lab, to the receipt of medications in the pharmacy. When telephone interpreting is the only service available, it is usually used only for the medical interview. Even during this crucial exchange, telephone interpreting will be difficult to implement, since few exam rooms have telephones. In those that do, the patient and provider end up passing the telephone back and forth, forcing the interpreter to summarize and edit: two techniques that have been shown to lead to inaccurate communication and which completely undermines the patient/provider relationship.
- Telephone interpreting will not save the State money. The most commonly used telephone interpreting service, the AT&T Language Line, charges the equivalent of \$132-\$270 per hour for interpreting (\$2.20 - 4.50 per minute), compared to \$45 per hour which DSHS is currently reimbursing for on-site interpreting. At these rates, it would be cheaper to use an on-

site interpreter for any interpretation over 25 minutes for the lowest rate or 10 minutes for the highest rate. Any medical interview will take more than 10 minutes and most will take more than 25.

- Are we going to return to the days of using the janitor to interpret? Washington State has been a national leader in developing quality interpretive services, training programs, certification programs and even a professional organization for the health sector. Without state support, hospitals and clinics will be tempted to return to the misperceived economies of using unqualified, untrained bilingual or semi-bilingual staff to interpret. It is just this poor quality of interpretation that led to an OCR complaint in 1979 and a law suit against DSHS in 1991.

This scenario is not acceptable! We wish to protest in the strongest terms possible this withdrawal of support for immigrant communities. If there is no recourse but to cut this funding, the State should at least provide some transition period so that adequate strategies can be found to fill the funding gap without compromising the quality of services provided to ethnic communities. In addition, the State has a responsibility to take action to assure that hospital and clinic administrators understand that withdrawal of state funding does not in any way release them from their responsibility to provide linguistically appropriate care. Finally, we would like to urge you to reconsider this ill-advised strategy of expanding telephone interpreting systems. As shown above, these systems are neither cost effective, nor do they provide an adequate service.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

===== NOTIS =====

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"What are the Benefits"

profession, organizing professional and social events in which members participate with pleasure, helping to keep our superb directory available to clients who need our members' services, all of these can be intrinsically rewarding, and can make your name known to your colleagues and to the public. "Networking" is the mantra of the nineties. I propose to you that "networking within NOTIS" might be just the ticket to a medley of many-sided magnificent, miscellaneous and mutual benefits!

COMPUTER INSURANCE FOR FREELANCERS

NANCY A. THIELE

He who liveth by the computer, dieth by the computer. And when the computer crashes, so does the mood of the freelancer, who has, perhaps, just seen an extensive and painstakingly created glossary or a rush job for a very particular client, vanish into never-never land. Now what?

While crashes and similar annoyances can occur despite a diligent file back-up routine, anti-virus scans and other precautionary measures, computer property insurance policies are yet another way free-lancers can protect their work and their means to earn a living. At least one major insurance company offers this commercial policy which provides protection in critical areas not covered by standard homeowner's or renter's property insurance.

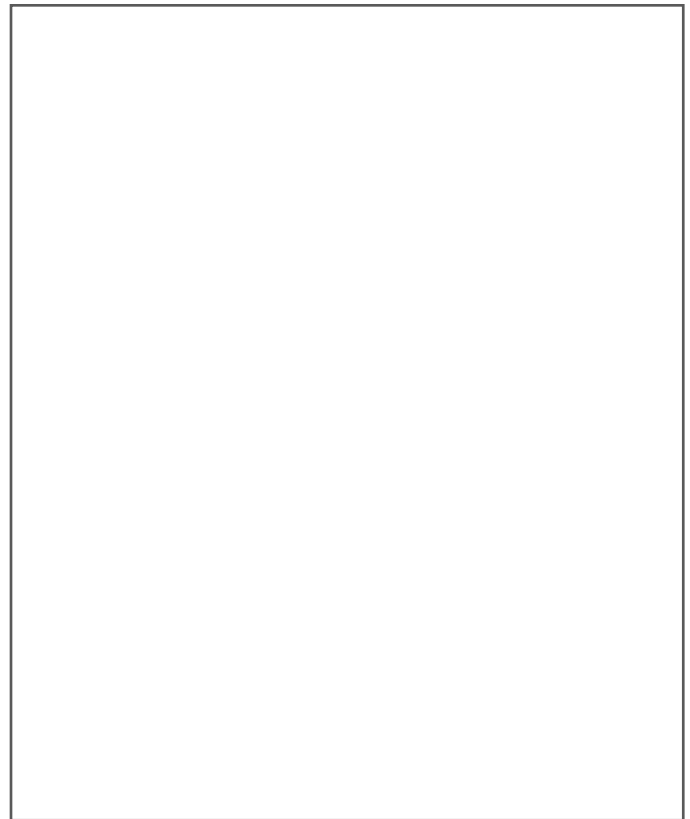
Some of the most attractive elements in a commercial computer policy include coverage for:

- Accidental and magnetic erasure of data
- Mechanical breakdown, including head crashes
- Computer viruses
- Error in design, faulty workmanship, or repair
- Earthquake and flood
- Power failure both on and off the insured's premises

There is also an option to provide coverage for loss of income and extra expense, beyond that provided for repair and/or replacement of equipment and the reproduction of lost data. Keep in mind that commercial computer policy availability, coverage options, and costs may vary between insurance carriers.

When data is lost or the system crashes, whether due to an act of Mother Nature, mechanical gremlins or a sneaky virus, the end result is

frustratingly the same. Experience, and Murphy's Law, tell us it is likely to happen in the middle of a long and complicated job, when the workload is heaviest, and when time is at a premium. But then, is there ever a good time for a crash or other mysterious computer goings on? A commercial computer policy may just be worth looking into.



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"Miscellaneous"

Directory Listing 101

1. The Directory is great "bang for your buck"—make sure you're included! Renew by June 30, and return your listing form by July 31. Members who don't return forms won't be listed. This reduces the number of "empty" pages in the Directory.

2. Decide what you want to emphasize about yourself. There's not much room, so it's better to choose fewer points and abbreviate less. You don't want your listing to read like a classified ad.

3. Respect database limitations on character limits, languages, and telephone numbers. These limitations are clearly marked

on the listing form. If you need to explain a situation, use the "other" space.

4. Reflect your abilities and not your desires! List only those subject areas and languages in which you are willing to accept work, giving an accurate reflection of your abilities. This kind of accuracy makes the client more likely to continue using the Directory, which benefits us all.

5. Consider advertising as a way to stand out from the crowd.

A business card-sized advertisement for a member costs just \$30!

Bilingual Glossaries of Medical Terminology

The Cross-Cultural Health Care Program is developing glossaries of English medical terminology for speakers of various languages: Chinese (Traditional and Simplified), Khmer, Korean, Lao, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

These glossaries are being offered to the general public. Please call (206) 621-4474 for a Publication Order Form, and leave your name and fax number. If you do not have a fax, leave your mailing address.

CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS	TIME & PLACE
Friday - Sunday May 16 - 18	NAJIT 18th Annual Meeting and Educational Conference	National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators - All Topics -	Embassy Suites Hotel SeaTac
Tuesday May 20	NOTIS Meeting	Transferring Files Electronically	6:30 - 8:30 pm University of Washington Gowen Hall 201
November 5 - 9	38th Annual ATA Conference	Details to follow	San Francisco

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 Seattle, WA 98125-2201
 Voice Mail: (425) 382-5642.
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 BBS: (206) 328-6138

