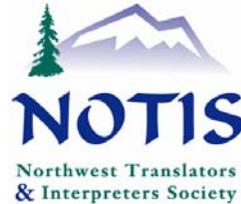


# The Northwest Linguist



## LETTER FROM THE NOTIS PRESIDENT

By Faiza Sultan

### Happy spring!

We have a rainy spring this year! I cannot wait to see the sun again!

I hope everyone had a productive time with work and a happy time with family. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims of Japan's earthquake and tsunami. We are glad to hear that the family members of our Secretary Toby Kawahigashi are all fine and in good health!

I would like to thank Rosa Bendezu Allen for her tireless service as NOTIS Membership Coordinator. She has resigned from her posts and our Office Manager, Jonas Nicotra has taken over her responsibilities. We will miss her beautiful smile and calm voice! We wish her peace, health and happiness.

Also, I would like to thank our board member Julie Wilchins for her period of service with NOTIS as a board member and co-chair of the Program Committee. We wish her the best. She was full of energy and we loved having her as a member of the Board of Directors for NOTIS this year.

The NOTIS Program Committee and MedSIG have been busy and have already offered two great workshops for medical interpreters. The first was a domain expertise workshop, especially designed for medical interpreters and offered at PacMed on Beacon Hill in Seattle on March 31<sup>st</sup>. The second one was on HIPAA for Medical Interpreters, and it was held at North Seattle Community College on April 9<sup>th</sup>. We are very grateful to have Louise Morehead as our NOTIS Program Committee Chair and our MedSIG Co-chair. She is an excellent example to all of us with her work, dedication,

and achievements. We are very proud and happy to have her on the NOTIS Board of Directors.

We are actively looking for more board members who can take on the responsibility of working with NOTIS board members and can dedicate their time to attend board meetings and committee meetings as needed. Our success cannot be achieved without the support of our NOTIS members. We are calling for nominations for new board members. If you know someone in our membership who might be a good candidate, please send us his or her contact information.

NOTIS board members have decided to send the Northwest newsletter electronically. We have been short of volunteers to help us with the work of folding and sending the printed copies. It is also a part of our spirit of going green! With each issue, you will receive an email notifying you that the newsletter has been published and providing you with a direct link to the latest edition.

We are dedicated to offering our members more useful workshops. We have exciting plans for International Translators Day, and plan to add more learning opportunities as well. If you have any suggestions for topics of workshops you would like to see, please do not hesitate to send them to our Program Chair or Office Manager.

We are still working on revamping the NOTIS website. We are trying to make it easier for our members to update their information and to check job postings by adding many other features to the website. We will update you soon on our progress!



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A Chapter of the  
American Translators Association

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**NOTIS Membership Fees**

Individual & Institutional: \$45.00 a year  
 Student (without directory listing): \$15.00  
 Corporate: \$80.00 a year

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Sam Mattix [laothailangsvcs@comcast.net](mailto:laothailangsvcs@comcast.net)

For information on membership to WITS visit the WITS web page at:  
[www.witsnet.org](http://www.witsnet.org) or write to: WITS, PO Box 1012, Seattle, WA  
 98111-1012.

**The Northwest Linguist is a quarterly  
 publication published jointly by  
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The Northwest Linguist is published in February, May, August, and November. Letters to the Editor, short articles of interest, and information for the calendar and other sections are invited. Please send submissions to the Editor at [translationskg@comcast.net](mailto:translationskg@comcast.net). Please note that all submissions become the property of The Northwest Linguist and are subject to editing unless otherwise agreed in advance. Opinions expressed are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor, the Society, or its Board. Submissions should be limited to no more than 1,000 words.

**Editor and Layout:** Kathryn German [translationskg@comcast.net](mailto:translationskg@comcast.net)

Deadline for next issue: **June 15, 2011**

## NOTIS NOTES

### NEW MEMBERS

Andrews, Amy	
Behanna McMurty, Jennifer	Spanish > English
Child, Reed	Spanish < > English
Cortes Ortiz, Raúl	English > Spanish
D'Louhy, Daniella	Bulgarian < > English
Dolimer, Celine	French < > English
Dover, Jessica	
Duran, Aurelio	
Egal, Safia	
Field, Christopher	Japanese > English
Hashimoto, Takashi	
Hicks, Diane	French < > English
Ikeda, Kumi	Japanese < > English
Johnson, Ian	German > English
	French > English
	Italian > English
Kim, Eunyoung	English < > Korean
Kim, Woonmi	
Kobus, Pietje	Dutch < > English
Lentz, Tami	
McGivern, Elena	
Pinto, Michelle A.	
Potts, Samuel A.	
Sil, Ayari Gabriela	English > Spanish
Small, Stacey	Spanish < > English
Wang, Edward	
Wans, Ashley	Spanish < > English
Xiao, ZhenQi	
Yang, Wu-Hsun Tom	Chinese > English

### STUDENT MEMBERS

Burrel, Capril	
Hodson, Lorelei	
Wright, Duane	French > English

## WITS NOTES

### NEW MEMBERS

Adrian Chiang Bradley	Mandarin
Reed Child	Spanish
Dimas Diaz	
Safia Egal	Somali, Arabic
Barry E. Fatland	
Laura Friend	
Eunyoung Kim	Korean
Kumi Ikeda	Japanese
Monica E. Jeffries	Spanish
Katarzyna Litynska	Polish
Sophie Lapaire	French
Akiko Nunn	
Michelle A. Pinto	Spanish
Samuel A. Potts	Spanish
Edward Wang,	Mandarin, Taiwanese
ZhenQi Xiao,	Cantonese, Mandarin

### Institutional:

Puget Sound Skills Center -  
Translation & Interpretation

### RETURNING MEMBERS

Renee Palermo	Spanish
Fernanda Spratt	Portuguese

### NOTIS (CONT)

### RETURNING MEMBERS

Denoix, Richard	French < > English
-----------------	--------------------

### CORPORATE MEMBERS

Universal Language Services, Inc.  
Owner, Elena Vasiliev



*"To convey  
meaning  
between people  
and cultures  
faithfully,  
accurately, and  
impartially"*

*ATA's New Code of  
Ethics and Professional  
Practice*

## ATA Adopts New Code of Ethics

At the American Translators Association Convention in Denver held October of 2010, the ATA endorsed a new Code of Ethics and Professional Practices.

This will be just the first part of the Code as it will be followed in time with specific examples and applications of the Code. This commentary is intended to be a living document, providing in-depth explanation and examples that reflect our common experiences.

As a chapter of the ATA, NOTIS and its members also abide by this Code of Ethics and Professional Practices, and all members should be familiar with its tenants.

### AMERICAN TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

We the members of the American Translators Association accept as our ethical and professional duty

- To convey meaning between people and cultures faithfully, accurately, and impartially;
- To hold in confidence any privileged and/or confidential information entrusted to us in the course of our work;
- To represent our qualifications, capabilities, and responsibilities honestly and to work always within them;
- To enhance those capabilities at every opportunity through continuing education in language, subject field, and professional practice;
- To act collegially by sharing knowledge and experience;
- To define in advance by mutual agreement, and to abide by, the terms of all business transactions among ourselves and with others;
- To ask for and offer due recognition for our work, and compensation commensurate with our abilities; and to endeavor in good faith to resolve among ourselves any dispute that arises from our professional interactions,

mindful that failure to abide by these principles may harm ourselves, our fellow members, the Association, or those we serve.

## Words Words Words

by Verla Viera

For a long time, as I've seen that the word for Germany was wildly different in several languages, I've wondered about its origin. The ones I'd noticed were:

English—Germany  
 Spanish—Alemania  
 German—Deutschland  
 Slovak—Nemecko

I knew that the name in the other two romance languages I've studied was essentially the same as Spanish, just spelled differently according to the languages' phonetics—French *Allemagne* and Portuguese *Alemanha*. But what was up with all this variety? The answer is fascinating!

While a librarian colleague has chided me for turning to Wikipedia, in this case the best explanation I discovered for the question was found there. Germany's geographic location in the middle of Europe and its history of tribal and regional divisions resulted in almost all world languages taking names for the country from six different sources. The names I was familiar with represent four of those six.

English is one of a large number of languages whose names for the country originate with the Latin *Germania*—the biggest group of the six. Oddly, the romance languages I knew of take theirs not from the Latin, but from a tribal name, *Alamanni*—the second largest group. (There are also romance languages in the *Germania* family.) The next largest group of names comes from the Old High German *diutisc*, which in turn comes from a Proto-Germanic word meaning “of the people.” Germany's *Deutschland* belongs here, of course, along with similar names not only in the expected Dutch and Afrikaans, but also in languages as varied as Vietnamese and Nahuatl. Nearly as many derive their names from the Proto-Slavic *němьсь*, “a foreigner.” *Nemecko* falls into this group.

In addition to these four, there are two small groups that take names from the Saxon tribe (e.g., Finnish *Saksa*) and the Germanic word for folk (e.g., Lithuanian *Vokietija*), as well as a handful of names that come from other sources. My favorite is the Navajo name for the country, *Béésh Bich'ahii Bikéyah*. It literally means “Metal Cap Wearer Land,” and was coined by the WWII code talkers.

Read more of Verla Viera's blog at <http://wordswordswords.info>

## NOTIS ON FACEBOOK, LINKED-IN, AND TWITTER

JOIN US ONLINE!

NW Translators & Interpreters Society is now on Facebook, Linked-In, and Twitter.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Northwest-Translators-Interpreters-Society-NOTIS/168641789850432>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/search?q=%23translation>



## NOTIS Visits Portland by Kathryn German

Faiza Sultan, President of NOTIS, Kathryn German, Vice President of NOTIS, and Nancy Leveson, Certified Court Interpreter for the State of Washington, traveled together to the ATA's Board Meeting that was held in Portland, Oregon on January 28th and 29th. NOTIS hoped to extend a warm welcome to the ATA, remind them of our presence, and express our hope that an upcoming national conference could be held in Portland.

A dinner was organized in honor of the ATA Board by Virginia Anderson and the Associated Linguists of Oregon. The dinner was attended by numerous members of the Associated Linguists of Oregon, as well as former ATA Board members from Washington state, and other prestigious members of the translation and interpretation community. The ATA Board members freely mingled with all attendees, making all feel welcome.

On Sunday Faiza, Kathryn, and Nancy attended the ATA's Board meeting. It was a wonderful experience to see how true professionals conducted their meeting with efficiency and equity. We had the opportunity to reiterate our wish that the ATA schedule a national conference in the area. Sadly, they had thoroughly explored the idea and found that Portland had no hotels that were large enough to accommodate such a large group. They did indicate, however, that they loved Portland and would encourage the ATA divisions to hold their conferences there. San Francisco was chosen as an alternate site for Portland.

We also pointed out that Seattle had been a very popular site in the past for an ATA Conference and perhaps it could be considered again. The response on the part of the board was enthusiastic and they said they would



keep it in mind.

NOTIS trip to Oregon was a wonderful opportunity to welcome the ATA Board and to get to know some of the Associated Linguists of Oregon better. We extend our thanks again to the Associated Linguists of Oregon for making this opportunity possible. It is our hope to hold more trainings in Portland in the future and to forge a tighter bond with the translation/interpretation community in that beautiful city.

## In Memoriam

WITS and NOTIS mourn Eva Combs, our friend and colleague who passed away on March 21, 2011, at Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital.

Eva was born on October 12, 1938, in Imperial, California, where she grew up and attended school. She married Richard Combs in 1962. The couple had two sons, Richard and James. After graduating with a bachelor's in Education from San Diego State University in 1975, Eva taught elementary school, first in California, then Yakima where she and her family moved.

She also taught English as a second language.

Eva began interpreting in court in 1985. In 1991, shortly after court interpreter certification became available in Washington State, she became one of the first to attain the credential. She practiced the profession in and around Yakima until her retirement in 2002. She was a mentor and role model to many Washington State interpreters.

We are glad to have known Eva and will miss her and remember her fondly.



## Letter from the WITS President by Barbara Robinson

Since 1974, National Volunteer Week has grown exponentially, drawing the support and endorsement of U.S. presidents, governors, mayors and other respected elected officials. This year, National Volunteer Week is April 10-April 16, 2011.

The celebration of volunteerism is about inspiring, recognizing and encouraging people to seek out imaginative ways to engage in their communities. National Volunteer Week is about taking action and encouraging individuals and their communities to be at the center of social change—discovering and actively demonstrating their collective power to foster positive transformation.

Volunteers serving on the board and committees of WITS are doing great work to fill a busy calendar for the rest of the year. Our Program Committee has come up with a great workshop schedule throughout the year. The next workshop and annual meeting will be held on June 4, 2011, with dynamic speakers, engaging topics and great networking opportunities. Please mark your calendar.

Our Membership Committee has spent an enormous amount of time redefining the membership types, benefits and obligations for our members. We are updating our brochure and mounting major membership drives. Rural areas are on

our radar to develop more WITS awareness and new regional liaisons.

Our Advocacy and Outreach Committee has been working tirelessly to bring the members' concerns to courts and other state agencies, as well as advocating for interpreters in general. We look forward to working closely with other professional and grassroots organizations in the state to promote our profession and enhance the interpreter's image.

We will continue sending our members a printed newsletter, unless you prefer to receive it in electronic form only. We feel the newsletter binds our members better and is a great tool for outreach and membership development. See the important announcement from WITS regarding the newsletter.

National Volunteer Week is our moment not only to celebrate our volunteers, our board members and committee members, but to enable the whole organization to share ideas, experiences, and stories, wherever they happen, and shaping a movement to re-imagine the notion of an interpreter, a translator for the 21st century. If you have any ideas about how to make WITS a better organization representing our members, please be sure to contact me at [hua@goamcan.com](mailto:hua@goamcan.com) or any of the board members listed on the inside of this newsletter.



*"To represent  
our  
qualifications,  
capabilities, and  
responsibilities  
honestly and to  
work always  
within them"*

*ATA's New Code of  
Ethics and Professional  
Practice*

## WITS MEMBERS: YOUR FEEDBACK IS REQUESTED by Barbara Robinson

Our sister organization and newsletter partner, NOTIS, has stopped printing their newsletters for NOTIS members. NOTIS members will now be receiving a notification when the newsletter has been posted to the NOTIS website with a direct link to the newsletter.

WITS needs to hear from each member to know how you would prefer to receive your newsletter in the future. Please send your feedback to our office manager at [LaoThaiLangSvc@comcast.net](mailto:LaoThaiLangSvc@comcast.net). We will decide from your feedback if we will continue to mail out the printed newsletter.

*"To hold in confidence any privileged and/or confidential information entrusted to us in the course of our work"*

*ATA's New Code of Ethics and Professional Practice*

## WITS/NOTIS Member Among Early AmazonCrossing Contributors

By Verla Viera

Kenneth Barger's English rendition of the Spanish novel *Doña Luz* has recently been published by AmazonCrossing, Amazon's new translation publishing imprint. The 19<sup>th</sup> century work by Juan Valera is one of the first titles published by AmazonCrossing, and his works are all available both in print and for Kindle, Amazon's e-book reader. Their first title, Tierno Monénembo's *The King of Kahel*, was published last August, with its Kindle release following about three months later.

Barger got this opportunity after a friend of his who had been job hunting on Craigslist pointed out an ad seeking translators. He had already planned to spend the summer

of 2010 in Québec in a French-language immersion program; he had assumed that he'd have little ability to earn any income during that time. He followed up on the ad and was eventually offered the chance to do the project, making it possible for him to work via phone and email on the project while in Canada. In the mornings, he would attend his intensive French classes. For the rest of the day, he was free to spend time with his French-speaking host family, to enjoy the local culture, and to work on translating *Doña Luz*.

Amazon uses customer feedback and data from their sites around the world to select books for translation and publi-

cation through AmazonCrossing. They seek to "identify exceptional books deserving of a wider, global audience," according to a press release issued last May. Some of the titles are recent works—Monénembo's novel, for example, is from 2008. Others (like *Doña Luz*) are older and in the public domain.

It can only be a good thing to expose monolingual English readers to works from other countries and cultures. And on the way, if more work is created for translators, so much the better.

## ProZ Webinars

by Kathryn German

We all want to keep our skills current, keep abreast with changes in the translation industry and changing technology. One easy way to do so is through the website **ProZ**, which was designed for professional translators. The website continuously offers online courses (on demand and prescheduled), webinars, and video training to improve the skills of those in the profession.

<http://www.proz.com/translator-training>

Prices are more than reasonable, and can be grouped by topic, and translator training packages are available for even lower rates. ProZ members have access to special offers on training and occasional free webinars. You must become a member of ProZ to access these training courses, and there are two levels of membership, including one that is free, with differing levels of benefits.

Some of the current training areas offered include:

**Translator Business Development** (58 courses): personal branding, finding new clients, career planning, rate determination, negotiations, increasing pro-

ductivity, time management, working with agencies, etc.

**Software, Tools, and Computing** (73 courses): training in computer assisted translation tools and other software to keep abreast of the tools currently used by translation professionals. Courses in localization management, desktop publishing, and computer security

**Translation Skills Development** (50 courses): specialized training to improve translation efficiency, learn new translation processes, and learn new skills, etc.

**Agency Business Development** (27 courses): training in ways to improve the efficiency of your agency, earn certifications, implement new processes, project management, etc.

**Linguistics, Theory, and Pedagogy** (9 courses): training to improve language skills, translation basics and translation theory.

**SDL Trados Training and Certification** (22 courses): approved online training for SDL Trados products conducted by SDL Trados Certified Trainers.

## Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about HIPAA!

By Kathryn German

Thanks to the dedicated and tireless efforts of NOTIS's Program Committee and MedSIG Chair, Louise Morehead, members of WITS and NOTIS were treated to an excellent presentation on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 on Saturday, April 9th at North Seattle Community College. This law, most commonly known simply as HIPAA, can be bewildering in its complexity to medical interpreters and translators alike.

At this workshop we were treated to a concise and comprehensible summary of the provisions of this act and their myriad applications and associated issues, by an expert in the field. Joana Ramos, MSW, is a founding member of WASCLA, served on its Interim Advisory committee and is currently Chair of the Pharmacy Language Access Workgroup. Her background includes work as a Portuguese medical interpreter, a translator for health organizations, and the child welfare field. Ms. Ramos explained HIPAA's relationship to state regulations, the 18 identifiers for protected health data and how these all affect patient privacy in the realm of medical interpreting. Ramos pointed out that interpreters are also governed by additional Codes of Ethics for Medical Interpreters and by the rules of mandatory reporting of situations of abuse.

The second half of Joana Ramos's presentation dealt with practical applications of the HIPAA regulations with day-to-day scenarios that a medical interpreter might encounter on assignment. This led attendees to participate in the lively discussion and gain new insights.

We thank Joana Ramos sincerely for sharing her expertise with the local translation and interpretation community!



*"To enhance those capabilities at every opportunity through continuing education in language, subject field, and professional practice"*

*ATA's New Code of Ethics and Professional Practice*

## WBSA Looking for Volunteer Interpreters



The Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) is the regulatory body and trade association for more than 34,000 lawyers in the state of Washington. We are a mandatory association that puts a high value on providing service to our community. Our Board recently adopted a strategic plan that is focused on “enhancing the culture of service” among members of our organization. While we have many lawyers who already provide thousands of hours of public (pro bono) service in our communities, WSBA as the members’ association, is committed to providing additional opportunities for our members to give back.

One project we’re getting ready to launch involves lawyers in urban areas agreeing to provide free legal services to clients in rural areas of the state. We’ve learned over the years that many of our rural counties don’t have enough lawyers in their communities to provide free legal services. As you can imagine, the bulk of our 34,000 members work in the King County area. Our project is a pilot and is being developed in order to tap into the large legal resources within the most populated cities in order to provide much needed legal services in rural communities. We’ve identified as our first rural community, Grant County (Moses Lake area).

**The Need** - The number of people facing barriers to justice in Grant County is climbing.

According to the Washington State Office for Civil Legal Aid, more than three quarters of all low income households experience at least one important civil legal problem each year – including fundamental issues like personal and family safety, shelter and housing. However, more than 90% are left to navigate the legal system alone because they lack the resources to pay for legal help. Low income women and children are most likely to face a civil legal issue, and domestic violence survivors have the highest number of needs of any segment of the low income population. Facing the legal system alone can be daunting and dangerous, especially for those with high barriers, like Limited English Proficiency.

The people of Grant County are disproportionately in need of free legal help:

Financial strain on families is high:

The poverty rate is 18.6%, as compared to 12.3% statewide.

Unemployment is 12.2%, as compared to 9.2% statewide.

65.2% of female-headed households with young children live below poverty.

According to the National Institute for Justice, domestic violence increases during times of financial strain on families.

32.5% of Grant County adults don’t speak English – nearly twice the statewide rate.

Grant County has one of the smallest lawyer populations in the state.

Without free legal help, Grant County’s poorest families are vulnerable in legal matters. In a survey conducted last year by the American Bar Association’s Coalition for Justice, 62% of judges responding said parties coming before them without representation fared worse than those with representation. The local legal aid network is significantly strained and has asked for help. With the closure of North Columbia Community Action Council, a local Volunteer Lawyer Program now works together with Columbia Legal Services, the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, and Northwest Justice Project to help low income people access legal assistance and representation for matters involving housing, health, safety, and more – and it’s not enough. The WSBA has designed an innovative solution to bring more pro bono legal assistance from urban communities into rural communities, and the opportunity is ripe to pilot this model in Grant County.

**The Solution** – The Urban/Rural Legal Aid Project

Through the Urban/Rural Project, WSBA will recruit, train and prepare lawyers from King County to use telephone, video-conference and, web-based technology to advise and represent income-eligible Volunteer Lawyer Program clients in Grant County. A high number of those cases will require professional Spanish language interpretation. While meaningful language access in court is required by law, few resources exist for professional interpretation within Grant County to enable communication between a monolingual Spanish-speaking pro bono client and an English-speaking volunteer attorney.

Our hope is that WITS members will join with WSBA’s members to help provide access to justice for those in need in Grant County. The program is currently recruiting lawyers who will be providing free legal help. We are looking for WITS members who are also willing to provide free interpreter services as part of our pilot program. You will be able to work closely with some of the best and most public-service-oriented lawyers throughout the state. It is also an incredible opportunity to help those in need who desperately need it. If you are interested in serving or to receive more information about the pilot you can contact WSBA’s Public Service Program Manager, Catherine Brown, at 206-733-5905 or [CatherineB@wsba.org](mailto:CatherineB@wsba.org). Thank you!

## Dear Editor:

### National Certification for Healthcare Interpreters: Another Viewpoint

#### Part 1: A History



**By Cynthia E. Roat, MPH**  
**National Consultant on Language access in Healthcare**

**Editor's Note: Received in response to last issue's article  
 "WA Interpreters Face Two National Healthcare  
 Certifications"**

Northwest linguists may have read in last month's edition an article about national certification for healthcare interpreters. It is certainly a confusing situation, one that can easily be misinterpreted and misrepresented by those who are not familiar with events as they occurred. As one who lived this history and is intimately involved with the national movement to build the healthcare interpreting profession, I'd like to share a personal view of the current situation with certification.

Last month's article was correct in stating that Washington State was ahead of the rest of the country when it established state certification for social service interpreters in 1993. A law suit brought against the State by Evergreen Legal Services resulted in a consent decree requiring DSHS to guarantee the quality of the interpreting for which it paid, which it did only hurriedly after several years of procrastination. The test was focused on social service interpreting, however, and healthcare interpreters complained that the test did not reflect their actual work. So a certification test for *healthcare* interpreters was instituted in eight languages two years later, in 1995. The associated test for all other languages was launched a year after that. Altogether, over 8,000 interpreters have been certified by Washington State. Yet, there have been many concerns about the quality of interpreting provided by those certified interpreters. Why is that?

Washington was forced to develop certification at a time when the field of healthcare interpreting was really in its infancy. Absent a national consensus about healthcare interpreter ethics, standards of practice, standards for training – and even training at all – DSHS depended on input from legal interpreters in designing its certification process. This is understandable, since in 1993, healthcare interpreting could barely have been called a field at all.

It wasn't even until 1994 that a national working group on healthcare interpreting was convened by the Cross Cultural Health Care Program here in Seattle. That working group met annually, growing every year between 1994 and 1999, and the discussions, centering principally on the interpreter's role, were passionate. Far from causing a schism in the field, however, the on-going discussions actually created a growing consensus among the attendees. Those who had previously seen the healthcare interpreter role as being limited to the more circumscribed role of the judicial interpreter came to understand that the needs of communication in the collaborative healthcare setting were different from those of the adversarial legal setting.

And those who had seen the healthcare interpreter as principally a social worker and advocate accepted that the interpreter's principle role had to focus on communication, not service provision. As an interesting side-note, by 2000 this understanding of the role of the healthcare interpreter had been widely accepted in the field. Indeed, this discussion of the purpose of the interpreted discussion and its impact on role has since been taken up among legal interpreters and conference interpreters as well, leading to a wealth of innovative thought by such interpreting luminaries as Drs. Robert Pollard and Robyn Dean (University of Rochester Medical Center) and Holly Mikkelson (Monterey Institute of International Studies). The general agreement is that interpreters are not only capable of shifting roles between different venues, they *must do so* in order to truly serve the purpose of the conversations they are interpreting. Interpreters who find this too difficult should certainly limit themselves to interpreting in one venue only.

In the year 2000, the working group decided to formalize its association, becoming the National Council on Interpreting in Healthcare (NCIHC). A five-step plan was adopted to professionalize healthcare interpreting in the U.S. The first step of the NCIHC's plan, the result of the previous six years of national dialogue, was the publishing in 2001 of a seminal paper on the role of the interpreter in healthcare settings.<sup>1</sup> Based on this understanding of the interpreter's role, the NCIHC went on to the second step in its plan: the building of consensus around a National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care.<sup>2</sup> Two years in the writing, this Code of Ethics was based on input from working healthcare interpreters all over the United States, including many here in Washington State, and affirmed regional codes of ethics developed previously by the Massachusetts Medical Interpreter Association (MMIA) and the California Healthcare Interpreter Association (CHIA). This National Code of Ethics, published in 2004, was followed in 2006 by National Standards of Practice<sup>3</sup>, also developed through national consensus building and also receiving input through focus groups like those held by the Society of Medical Interpreters (SOMI) here in Seattle. The Standards of Practice were followed by the fourth step in the National Council's plan: Standards for Healthcare Interpreter Training Programs, which will be released in May of this year.

Role, Ethics, Standards of Practice, Training: any guesses as to what the fifth step in the Council's plan was? Correct! Certification, to test whether candidates were able to put into practice what they learned in the training that was teaching to standards of practice that reflected the ethics built on the role.

However, certain groups in the country were anxious for certification to happen sooner rather than later, which launched the country rather prematurely into a national certification frenzy. How did this happen?

## National Certification for Healthcare Interpreters: Another Viewpoint (cont.)



Actually, there had been a number of efforts toward certification, dating back to the late 1990's. In 1997, Language Line Services (LLS) launched an internal certification for its own telephonic interpreters. While it is not clear how universally certification was required of LLS interpreters, the test itself was developed with scientific rigor to test telephonic interpreters in the healthcare field and, at the time, followed an industry-specific training course. In 2001, the MMIA's volunteer Certification Committee began development of a certification test for Spanish healthcare interpreters. Their first pilot was inconclusive due to insufficient participation, and, with no funding to fuel it, the project stalled. In 2003, the National Council was able to attract a grant from the DHHS Office of Minority Health to support the MMIA in a partnership with CHIA to re-pilot the Spanish test. While the Council felt that it was too early for national certification, it was clear that Massachusetts and California were the two states in the country where sufficient and consistent training for healthcare interpreters over the years made it feasible to start testing interpreters, and the Council felt that many important lessons could be learned from this two-state collaboration. The pilot did attract sufficient numbers of participants to make it valid, and many valuable lessons were learned.<sup>4</sup> However due to lack of on-going funding, further development of the test was permanently postponed.

By 2005, however, there were stirrings around the country in favor of certification. Private and public entities were developing valid and reliable tests. Oklahoma instituted state certification for healthcare interpreters in 2005, and Oregon, Indiana, Iowa, North Carolina and Texas were moving in that direction.<sup>5</sup> What was behind this movement?

Some of the impetus came from hospitals. Finally realizing that interpreters were a necessity in treating their linguistically diverse patient populations, hospitals wanted a way to guarantee quality and protect themselves from legal liability. In a few states, some of the impetus came from legislatures that were being pushed to access a federal Medicaid match to help pay for language access but feared Washington's experience of being sued over poor interpreting. But most of the push was from healthcare interpreters themselves, who believed that certification would result in increased pay, more respect and a means for certified interpreters to differentiate themselves from their untested colleagues.

In response, the National Council began holding focus groups at national and regional conferences to judge the country's readiness for national certification. The conclusion was that some parts of the country were ready for national certification, but many regions were not even close.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, faced with the potential for 50 redundant state certifications, the Council began seeking funding to start a structured national dialogue about certification, hoping this would lead to the eventual development of a credible certifying body, separate from but supported by all the stakeholders in the field.

Language Line Services, however, had other plans.

At an invitation-only reception at the CHIA conference in March 2007, LLS unilaterally announced the launch of its National Certification Initiative. Without consulting with the rest of the field,

this large for-profit telephonic interpreting company sought to establish its own in-house certification program as a national standard for the entire field.

The International Medical Interpreter Association (formerly MMIA) signed on immediately. IMIA announced that it already had a Spanish certification exam ready, even though the process of validation of the 2003 test had never been completed. CHIA was indecisive; while there were concerns about this initiative, Language Line's CEO and another key employee sat on the CHIA's board of directors. The National Council, however, could not support this initiative. In the Council's view, there were too many conflicts of interests involved for a for-profit language provider to be a credible certifying body.

Over the following months, a different approach was negotiated. LLS agreed to pause its efforts, and the National Council procured the funding it had been seeking from The California Endowment, using it to form a steering committee together with representatives from IMIA, CHIA and the ATA. This steering committee developed criteria for membership in a National Coalition on Healthcare Interpreter Certification (NCC), seeking to include representatives from all stakeholder groups, public and private. The resulting Coalition included representatives from interpreting associations, language companies, hospitals and health plans, healthcare professionals, healthcare interpreter educational programs, government entities involved in language access, accrediting organizations and advocacy groups. In May 2008, the NCC met for the first time, and all involved, including IMIA and LLS, signed a landmark agreement to work toward one single certification program for healthcare interpreters. The group started discussions about how a valid, reliable and credible national certification could be developed.

Unfortunately, consensus-building is a slow process and requires sharing of information. Whether because of the work's slow advance or because of the requirements for sharing information about existing tests, Language Line and IMIA decided in early 2009 to form a joint initiative to create their own national certification process. However, they did not withdraw from the NCC, putting the NCC in the strange position of having to share its content and processes with members who were actively developing a separate testing process and who would not share in return. The NCC had no choice but to terminate its activities.

While the original stated plan of the collaboration had been to use IMIA's test for the written portion and LLS' test for the oral portion, it is not clear whether this was done or whether each organization developed its portion from scratch. What is clear, however, is that the National Board licenses the written portion of its test from IMIA and the oral portion from LLS, so that a

## National Certification for Healthcare Interpreters: Another Viewpoint (cont.)

portion of each examination fee goes to these two organizations. The National Board itself has incorporated as a non-profit organization, but I have not been able to determine whether they have yet received their 501(c)3 determination from the IRS. This question is of interest, because the IRS generally grants 501(c)3 status to organizations that work for the common good, not to organizations engaged in certification of a specific professional group.

Meanwhile, many of the representatives that had been a part of the now-defunct National Coalition still felt that the involvement of a large for-profit organization in national certification was not appropriate or beneficial for the field. They decided to continue their own work, forming the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI). This group incorporated as a 501(c)6, a non-profit professional organization, like NAJIT and the ATA. Instead of naming board members who represented specific organizations, the CCHI chose instead to name Commissioners, experts in the language access field who represent only themselves. CCHI soon procured a foundation grant to begin the development of a certification test and received the support and approbation of a wide range of organizations, from interpreter/translator associations such as the ATA to key healthcare organizations such as the American Hospital Association and the American Public Health Association, to advocacy groups such as the National Health Law Program. In January 2011, CCHI certified its first group of Spanish Certified Healthcare Interpreters, and qualified its first group of Associate Healthcare Interpreters.

What a mess, you say, with two national certifications in addition to our state certification! Well, doubtless none of the players began this process thinking it would result in duplicate national certifications. Still, ASL interpreters will remember the long years of duplicate credentialing in their field (RID and NAD). Judicial interpreters can choose between federal court certification, consortium certification through the National Center for State Courts (in some states) and certification by NAJIT. Perhaps multiple certifications are to be expected in emerging fields. The real question facing Washington State healthcare interpreters is, which certification should they get – if any?

- <sup>1</sup> Beltran-Avery, MP. *The Role of the Healthcare Interpreter: An Evolving Dialogue*. NCIHC, April 2001, 15 pgs. <http://www.ncihc.org/mc/page.do?sitePageld=57022&orgld=ncihc>.
- <sup>2</sup> National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care. NCIHC, July 2004, 23 pages. <http://data.memberclicks.com/site/ncihc/NCIHC%20National%20Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf> ]
- <sup>3</sup> *National Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care*. NCIHC, Sept. 2005. 20 pages. <http://data.memberclicks.com/site/ncihc/NCIHC%20National%20Standards%20of%20Practice.pdf>
- <sup>4</sup> *Final Report on the Pilot of a Certification Process for Spanish-English Interpreters in Health Care*. NCIHC, Nov. 2003, 22 pages. [http://data.memberclicks.com/site/ncihc/NCIHC\\_Certification\\_Pilot\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://data.memberclicks.com/site/ncihc/NCIHC_Certification_Pilot_Final_Report.pdf).
- <sup>5</sup> Roat, CE. *Certification of Healthcare Interpreters in the United: A Primer, a Status Report and Considerations for National Certification*. The California Endowment. Sept. 2006, 102 pages.
- <sup>6</sup> Beltran-Avery, MP. *Are We Ready for National Certification of Health Care Interpreters? A Summary of NCIHC Open Forums*. NCIHC, Oct. 2007. 33 pages. <http://data.memberclicks.com/site/ncihc/NCIHC%20Working%20Paper%20-%20Report%20on%20National%20Certification%20Forum.pdf>

**Next month -- National Certification for Healthcare Interpreters, Part II: Comparing the Tests**



*“To act collegially by sharing knowledge and experience”*

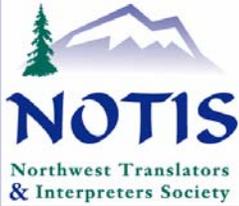
*ATA's New Code of Ethics and Professional Practice*

## NOTIS AND WITS EVENTS CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS	LOCATION
<b>April 30-May 1, 2011</b>	ATA Translation Company Division (TCD) Mid-Year Conference	<a href="http://www.atanet.org/calendar">www.atanet.org/calendar</a>	Chevy Chase, MD
<b>May 5-6, 2011</b>	Swedish Association of Professional Translators (SFÖ) 2011 Annual Conference	<a href="http://www.sfoe.se/">www.sfoe.se/</a>	Malmö, Sweden
<b>May 13-15, 2011</b>	National Assoc. of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators (NAJIT) 32nd Annual Conference.	<a href="http://www.najit.org">www.najit.org</a>	Long Beach, CA
<b>May 14, 2011</b>	Colorado Translators Association (CTA) 2011 CTA Conference	<a href="http://coloradotranslators.wordpress.com/2011-conference/">http://coloradotranslators.wordpress.com/2011-conference/</a>	Boulder, CO
<b>May 14, 2011</b>	Assoc. of Translators and Interpreters in the San Diego Area (ATISDA) Advanced Consecutive Interpreting Workshop	<a href="http://www.atisa.org">www.atisa.org</a>	San Diego, CA
<b>May 15-18, 2011</b>	Society for Technical Communication (STC) TechComm Summit 2011	<a href="http://www.sty.org">www.sty.org</a>	Sacramento, CA
<b>May 17, 2011</b>	ATA Continuing Education Webinar—Is MT Ever the Right Tool for the Job?	<a href="http://www.atanet.org/webinars/ataWebinar90_machine.php">www.atanet.org/webinars/ataWebinar90_machine.php</a>	Online
<b>May 18-21, 2011</b>	Association of Language Companies (ALC) 2011 ALC Conference: The Investment That Always Pays Off	<a href="http://www.alcus.org/education/2011_conference.cfm">www.alcus.org/education/2011_conference.cfm</a>	Las Vegas, NV
<b>May 24, 2011</b>	Localization Project Seminar-National College of Ireland	<a href="http://www.localizationinstitute.com/switchboard.cfm?category=public&amp;display=title&amp;ID=92">www.localizationinstitute.com/switchboard.cfm?category=public&amp;display=title&amp;ID=92</a>	Dublin, Ireland
<b>June 4, 2011</b>	WITS Annual Meeting and Full Day Workshop	<a href="http://www.witsnet.org">www.witsnet.org</a>	TBD
<b>June 8, 2011</b>	ATA Continuing Education Webinar: Revisers: Invisible but Important	<a href="http://www.atanet.org/webinars/ataWebinar91_editing.php">www.atanet.org/webinars/ataWebinar91_editing.php</a>	Online
<b>June 10-11, 2011</b>	Medical Interpreter Network of Georgia (MING) 4th Annual Southeast Medical Interpreter Conference	<a href="http://www.atanet.org/calendar">www.atanet.org/calendar</a>	Nashville, TN

## NOTIS AND WITS EVENTS CALENDAR (cont.)

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS	LOCATION
June 11, 2011	Advanced Topics for Certified and Registered Court Interpreters, Consecutive, Simultaneous, and Ethics –AOC Court Interpreting Program (2 credits)	<a href="http://www.witsnet.org/programs/INDEXcalendar.htm">www.witsnet.org/programs/INDEXcalendar.htm</a>	Highline College Des Moines, WA
June 14, 2011	ATA Continuing Education Webinar: Ensuring Payment Before, During, and After the Project	<a href="http://www.atanet.org/webinars/ataWebinar92_payment.php">www.atanet.org/webinars/ataWebinar92_payment.php</a>	Online
June 17-18, 2011	InterpretAmerica Second North American Summit on Interpreting Quality Interpreting in a Push-Button World	<a href="http://www.interpretamerica.net/summit">www.interpretamerica.net/summit</a>	Washington D.C.
June 25, 2011	Crime Scene Investigation: Homicide Carol Meredith and Diana Meredith (6 general credits)	<a href="http://www.witsnet.org/programs/INDEXcalendar.htm">www.witsnet.org/programs/INDEXcalendar.htm</a>	Bellevue, WA
July 17, 2011	Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) 2011 RID National Conference	<a href="http://www.atanet.org/calendar">www.atanet.org/calendar</a>	Atlanta, GA
August 1-4, 2011	XIX Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs World Congress	<a href="http://www.fit2011.org">www.fit2011.org</a>	San Francisco, CA
August 3-5, 2011	Nebraska Association for Translators and Interpreters (NATI) 12th Annual Regional Conference	<a href="http://www.natihq.org">www.natihq.org</a>	Omaha, Nebraska
August 12-14, 2011	Translate in the Catskills 2	<a href="http://translateinthecatkills.com/">http://translateinthecatkills.com/</a>	Maplecrest, NY
September 9-11, 2011	Tennessee Assoc. of Professional Interpreters and Translators (TAPIT) - 9th Annual TAPIT Conference	<a href="http://www.tapit.org">www.tapit.org</a>	Nashville, TN
September 30, 2011	International Translation Day: Bridging Cultures	<a href="http://www.fit.org">www.fit.org</a>	Worldwide
September 30 - October 2, 2011	2011 New Mexico Interpreters Conference	<a href="http://www.witsnet.org/programs/INDEXcalendar.htm">www.witsnet.org/programs/INDEXcalendar.htm</a>	Albuquerque, NM
September 30 - October 2, 2011	2011 International Medical Interpreters Conference Client Education - Everyone's Responsibility	<a href="http://www.imiaweb.org/conferences/2011conference.asp">http://www.imiaweb.org/conferences/2011conference.asp</a>	Boston, MA
October 1, 2011	International Translation Day: NOTIS Workshop with Judy Jenner: "No Pain, No Gain: Active Marketing to Direct Clients" and "Web 2.0 for Entrepreneurial Linguists"	TBD	Seattle, WA.



## NOTIS/WITS BOARD MEETINGS

Organization	Date and Time	Location	Contact
WITS	April 29, 2011	Julia Davidov's home	<a href="mailto:hua@goamcan.com">hua@goamcan.com</a>
NOTIS	May 7, 2011	Faiza Sultan's home	<a href="mailto:info@notisnet.org">info@notisnet.org</a>

## NOTIS Volunteers Needed

Would you like to assist the translation and interpretation community in the Pacific Northwest? Do you have great ideas you would like to share with others? Are there trainings you would like to see and assist with? NOTIS is actively looking for volunteer board members. If you are interested, please send your résumé to any of the Nominating Committee members. Jonas Nicotra at [officemanager@notisnet.org](mailto:officemanager@notisnet.org) or Katrin Rippel at [krippel@notisnet.org](mailto:krippel@notisnet.org) or Kathryn German at [translationskg@comcast.net](mailto:translationskg@comcast.net).

Not enough time to serve on the Board? We would love to have your help setting up trainings and events. If you can do this, please contact Louise Morehead or the NOTIS office manager, Jonas Nicotra at [officemanager@notisnet.org](mailto:officemanager@notisnet.org).