Interpreting, not Regurgitating,
by Johann Paoletti-Schelp

(This article is also appearing in the November 2002 issue of the WITS newsletter.)

By Sam Mattix

Participants at the NAJIT Regional Conference in Portland found the last session particularly provocative. We were told that most members of our profession do not interpret, we regurgitate. We were told to grow up from black-and-white adherence to the rules we learned in Legal Interpreting 101 and become professionals who use discretion to know how to deal with shades of gray, who can answer clearly, confidently and convincingly when called to account for giving “non-verbatim” renditions.

The presenter travels widely in his business. He often hires the services of interpreters. When he asked his audience how many of us hire interpreters, no hands were visible. He challenged us to get personal experience as consumers of our product, so we can understand what our clients need and expect from us. The “rules” vary according to the situation. Professionals are able to assess the situation and adapt appropriately.

The difference between effective and ineffective interpretation was compared to receiving an orange, peeling it [separating words/grammar-the “peel” from the meaning - the “edible portion”], and passing on either the edible portion [the meaning] or the peel [the verbatim form of the source utterance lacking effective meaning]. The first two presenters at the conference emphasized this same point. Our job is not to interpret words, but meaning. One example given mentioned the word “fifth.” Competent English users will recognize that “I plead the Fifth,” “I’ll take a fifth,” and “Please take 5th” refer to the U.S. Constitution, hard liquor and travel directions respectively. Verbatim interpretation of such utterances is clearly a disservice. As professionals it is our job to understand the meaning of each of these utterances, to know what misunderstanding or nonsense will result from verbatim interpretation, and to know how to interpret meaningfully into the target language within the spirit of not adding to, omitting from or changing the meaning of the source utterance in context.

Near the end of his talk, Mr. Paoletti-Schelps introduced the concept of low-context vs. high-context as an explanation of why interpreters may need to supply implicit information in order to enable communication. “I plead the Fifth” provides very low context. Most of the meaning is left implicit, but doubtless present, so that if necessary an inter-
NOTIS Notes

Welcome to New Members

Suzanne Blangsted [Danish]
Jessica Cohen [Hebrew]

ATA Accreditation Workshop

In preparation for the American Translators Association Examination, NOTIS will again offer an Accreditation Workshop scheduled for Saturday, January 25, 2003, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Please arrive by 12:45 p.m., if possible. Presented by NOTIS, the workshop will help you prepare for all the “major and minor do’s and don’ts” of the exam. Registration deadline is Monday, January 13. Cost before deadline: $20 for members of NOTIS, SOMI, WITS; $25 for non-members. You may join NOTIS at registration. After the deadline, if places are available: $25 for all. To register and for other information, including advance handouts, call Jean Leblon at (425) 778-9889. If there is no answer on the phone, please leave a message with a clear mention of your name, spelled out, and the telephone number(s) where and when you can be reached.

ATA Accreditation Workshop, Saturday, January 25, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. at University of Washington campus, Balmer Hall 209. Pre-registration is required.

General Announcement

NOTIS member, Marilyse Benyakar, would like to start a French/German Special Interest Group with monthly meetings mainly for conversation but also networking, special events, education, sharing of interests, etc. The list is not exhaustive and suggestions are welcome.

If you’re interested, please contact her by email at marilyseb@attbi.com so you can be notified of upcoming meetings.

Marilyse Benyakar
Technical translator [French, German, English]

NOTIS/WITS Picnic Photographs

Photos of the August 2002 NOTIS / WITS family picnic can be viewed at the NOTIS website: www.notisnet.org. Thanks to all those who made it a success!
I WOULD HAVE HAD A FIT!
(had I not attended the XVI World Congress in Vancouver, BC from August 7-10, 2002)
(This article first appeared in the MICATA Monitor Vol. XVI No. 5 and has been reprinted in this edition of NOTIS News with the gracious permission of the author.)

By Bill Bergerson

Minutes of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario remind us that: “September 30 has been declared National and International Translation Day by the Canadian Translators and Interpreters Council [Conseil des traducteurs et interprètes du Canada, aka CTIC: www.synapse.net/~ctic] and the International Federation of Translators [Fédération internationale des traducteurs, aka FIT: www.fit-if.org].” In the spirit of this year’s theme: “Translators as agents of social change,” I feel privileged to offer my impressions of the recent World Congress as hosted and organized by these two federations, which represent the interests of translators’ and interpreters’ associations at national and international levels, respectively.

Implicit in the term “agent” is the concept of agenda, and the multifaceted program of this XVI World Congress did not disappoint. Under the conference theme of “New Ideas for a New Century,” more than 500 global attendees experienced a rich atmosphere conducive to professional, interpersonal and - one might even contend - spiritual enrichment!

To wit: Plenary sessions for the three mornings struck a fitting balance between translation and interpretation (T&I), where we first heard of R. Brighurst’s extensive work in translating native North American literature; followed a day later by H. Obst’s unique approach to “omnilingual interpreter training;” culminating Friday in A. Melby’s insightful talk on technology and its effect in blurring the distinction between the two disciplines.

One did not need to look far to re-experience a one-two T&I punch or synthesis in the general sessions either: Examples ranged from the abstract “Model of the Translation Process” offered by W. Lorsch; over the concrete approach to “Web-Based Interpreter Training” (S. Carr, D. Steyn); to G. Hung’s incipient proposal for combining T&I programs in the US to increase synergies and critical mass, and hence the visibility of our professions.

Apropos visibility; our own professional organization was well-represented: Both J. Stejskal’s recap of his ongoing Chronicle series on international certification and the ATA informational session hosted by T. West and P. Krawutcheke played to packed houses.

Coming back to our mandate as agents of social change, I was particularly intrigued by the panel discussion: “What does the future hold for Canadian translators, terminologists and interpreters?” (J. Boucher, B. Knowlden, B. Cohen, S. Whitman). The presenters noted that Canada, as a country with two official languages, has long enjoyed an extensive T&I infrastructure. The requirement that services be available in both English and French has not only led to better public appreciation for the intricacies of translation, but to a corresponding receptivity toward accommodating those of other tongues as well. One consequence is that demand for language professionals will far outstrip supply for the foreseeable future. Perhaps this climate helped tip the scales for the three T&I associations that have since managed to gain “legal professional recognition by their provincial governments” [cf. J. Stejskal. 2002 “International Certification Study: Canada Revisited.” ATA Chronicle 31 (3): 10-12]. It certainly prompted me to think about our US situation in a very different light, particularly as regards the potential benefit to our professions of a dual official language policy in this country...

But the need to effect social change transcends professional issues per se. During the Congress, FIT was asked to take a position on the boycott of Israeli academics that led to the ouster of two faculty members from the boards of British journals of translation. Without taking sides, FIT issued a statement clearly affirming that the organization “denies any discrimination on the basis of race, religion, nationality, gender or language.”

One small, yet visible means of demonstrating personal support for the federation’s work is to spring a mere five dollars for an attractive, quarter-sized, lapel pin of the FIT logo. Contact secretariat@fit-if.org for these, or for copies of the proceedings, which remain available to those interested in learning more about the individual sessions.

Shifting now from professional to interpersonal aspects, I found the size of the congress quite conducive to personal interaction. Jump-started by an opening reception that featured fare from the West coast of British Columbia and a generously varied luncheon buffet on the

Continued on page 6
A Translators & Interpreters Day Treat

By Chaouky Kaboul

A number of language professionals and their guests celebrated International Translation Day at the Courtyard by Marriott on Saturday, October 5th at an event that was co-hosted by NOTIS and WITS. Lunch, coffee and dessert were served. I heard many of the attendees proclaim the tiramisu with a chocolate covered coffee bean on top as a favorite. But the real treat was listening to UN interpreter trainee, Laura Wolfson, share with us her journey from a freelance interpreter to the professional halls of the United Nations.

WITS president, Emma Garkavi welcomed the attendees and NOTIS president, Alex Mosalsky, introduced the keynote speaker, Laura Wolfson.

As a distinguished translator and interpreter for more than a decade, Laura was growing tired of worsening work conditions of freelance interpreters, yet she did not want to leave the profession that she loves so much. As a conference interpreter, she was increasingly frustrated with managers and client’s unreasonable expectations to save money at any cost. A conference interpreter cannot perform without a partner in order to allow the required breaks needed for optimum performance. The most seasoned conference interpreters need a break during the very taxing activity of simultaneous interpreting if they are to faithfully render the spoken word accurately. Some clients did not think so. Laura began to contemplate a way out of this situation.

An ATA conference provided the perfect networking opportunity for Laura. Meeting the recruiter for the United Nations was the beginning of the journey that led her to where she is today: training at the UN to become a staff interpreter. Laura needed to retool for this career shift. Laura’s career as an interpreter for almost 12 years was based on interpreting into Russian (her second language). That is not surprising considering that 90% of Russian-English interpreting is into Russian.

The UN requires all interpreters to ‘translate’ into their native language. Additionally, all UN interpreters are required to have a third language from which they can interpret. Laura’s college level French n’est pas suffisant! If she is to become successful, she needed to pass English interpreting tests from Russian and French. Aha! Going to Paris was always a dream of hers so why not go to Paris for an intensive course at L’Alliance Francaise? So it was! Paris helped remove the rust and upgrade her French. 12 years of interpreting experience and a score of published translation work did not prepare her enough to pass the tests. So it was time to go back to Paris for four months to hang around and train with interpreters. Being with European colleagues was rewarding as she learned, taught and practiced for 4 months. This experience highlighted some of the main differences between our professional standards in the US and those commonly accepted in Europe. The state of interpreting in the US was analogous to a jazz musician performing art and improvising in different professional settings. The European model, with the structured graduate level training offered in Europe produces classical musicians by comparison. Minimally, our European colleagues are equipped with at least three languages. The A language is the native language, The B language is the second language acquired up to native fluency and C language is working level source language. European interpreters do not interpret into their C language. Meeting European interpreters who can function in 6 or more languages is not uncommon. Skill training is an intensive year-long graduate work with a lot of practice in the art and mechanics of interpreting.

Generally speaking, Europeans view interpreting as a career with the highest professional work conditions; the proper equipment and work environment is always provided. European conference and meeting interpreters have an easier time doing their job mainly because commercial meetings and conferences are highly ceremonial affairs with prepared speeches. This makes it possible to provide the interpreter with the script before hand. In the US, we are more accustomed to a style of speech giving that is spontaneous and spur of the moment; which makes the interpreter’s job more challenging.

Laura felt that her glorious years as a literary translator and almost 12 years of Russian-English freelance interpreting did not make her feel ready for the UN. Training with the UN and becoming accustomed to UN and Diplomatic speech is essential. Interpreting largely for delegates with carefully prepared speeches is quite different from what she is used to. Written language is syntactically more complex and requires a different mode of interpreting. Terminol-
ogy that is culturally appropriate for that global meeting and negotiating place is rather specific. Military danger for example, must always be translated as danger of war or military action as hostility. You must always speak of weapons manufacture and not weapons production, and the list goes on and on.

In brief, she felt that the UN provides less room for the artist that lives inside the interpreter and requires more of a machine-like approach to interpreting with ready-made words and sentences and boiler-plate spoken templates. With the training she is receiving and the work she will be doing, she will stay connected to the world of languages that she loves in an environment that affords the interpreter what she deserves, decent compensation and professional work conditions.

Laura also met with the Slavic SIG for breakfast on Sunday, October 6 from 9 to 10:30 a.m. at the Courtyard Café.

Laura Wolfson is a distinguished translator and interpreter, is currently in training at the United Nations in New York. Laura’s published translations include a work on Russian slang (and worse), a novella by Nina Berberova, and books on Russian history published by Yale University Press. She has interpreted for First Lady Hillary Clinton and a Defense Secretary in the former USSR.

Laura Wolfson Shares an Interpreter’s Journey at the International Translation Day Event

By Michelle LeSourd

On October 5, NOTIS and WITS members and guests enjoyed a convivial and informative event. After a tasty lunch buffet, time for animated conversation, and warm welcoming remarks from WITS president, Emma Garkavy, and NOTIS president, Alex Mosalsky, Laura Wolfson treated us to a thoughtful and entertaining presentation. With years of experience as a Russian-English translator and interpreter, and currently in training at the United Nations, Laura offered a wealth of perspective. “From the Kitchen Sink to the United Nations” started with the U.N. and eventually made its way back to the kitchen. Beginning her talk in the lofty register of a United Nations ceremonial address (which U.N. interpreters call a “flower”), Laura made the audience feel a bit like diplomats gathered in the General Assembly. Even after she continued in her natural tone, Laura’s training as a simultaneous interpreter could be heard in the soft but crystal-clear cadence of her speech. Laura described why she decided to leave freelance interpreting, the rigors of training and testing for the U.N., and how U.N. interpreting compares to working in the United States and Europe. Most dismaying was her description of the deterioration of pay and working conditions for interpreters in this country. She gave the example of an increasing number of requests in recent years to interpret conferences alone, rather than with a partner, for the same rate of pay.

Seeking more stable employment, Laura talked with a U.N. recruiter at an ATA conference. Although at first she didn’t pursue the U.N. because she would need French as well as Russian, the recruiter eventually persuaded her to go to Paris and build on her high school French, because she would only be interpreting into English: “Some of our interpreters would be completely lost if they had to order a meal in Moscow or Paris.” After two stints in Paris and an unsuccessful first attempt, Laura passed the U.N. interpreter examination. Laura has discovered that U.N. interpreting is like European conference interpreting. She compared European-style interpreting to the structured work of a classical musician, while freelance interpreting in the U.S. felt to her more like the improvisation of a jazz musician. Europeans always interpret into their A (native) language and, if necessary, into their B (near-native) language. In France, they thought Laura was either “outstandingly gifted or delusional” for having done English into Russian interpreting. Through the U.N. training, Laura says she is being “completely made over” as an interpreter. She feels that, like European interpreting, U.N. work is a hybrid between translating and interpreting, which produces an oral translation from what is essentially written language. With addition of a specialized vocabulary of diplomatic words and phrases, there is “less being an artist, more being a machine.”

The kitchen sink came up in the context of the Soviet-era Russian saying, “Every kitchen maid will direct the government” and Laura’s own life. She shared an excerpt from manuscript in progress about her experiences with language, in which she describes a moment as a small girl in the kitchen with her mother, looking at a tomato, when she realized a word is not the same as the thing it describes.

Two attendees drove two or more hours for the event. New NOTIS member Suzanne Blangsted, a longtime English to Danish medical translator (moving into interpreting) from Bellingham, found the event “enjoyable and worth the trip.” WITS & NAJIT member Lourdes Pearce, an English<> Spanish medical interpreter from Mt. Vernon, values this type of program for learning fresh perspectives and keeping well informed in the field.
Continued from page 1

preter can give it explicitly: “I avail myself of my right according to the Fifth Constitutional Amendment to remain silent.”

Thanks, Johann, for this food for thought, and for this prod toward becoming professional interpreters. This is my interpretation of your talk, digested, not merely regurgitated.

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first full day, many faces quickly became familiar. By the closing luncheon and award ceremony three days later, one would have been hard-pressed not to establish new friendships and professional relationships among the spectrum of attendees hailing from over 40 nations.

European representation was particularly strong, thanks in large part to a pronounced Scandinavian component, which, at eighteen percent equaled the combined total for the United States and Mexico. While the Finnish presence may be related to hosting of the next FIT Congress (August 5-10, 2005, Tampere Finland - mark your calendars!), the Norwegian numbers seem to infer that there is no need to search for ulterior motives. Percentages by continent were as follows: Americas: 54.7%; Europe: 34.3%; Africa: 1.2%; Asia 8.4%; Oceania: 1.4%.

And what of that spiritual enrichment that I alluded to at the onset? I found it in Vancouver’s majestic setting, which, throughout the conference, was graced with clear skies and idyllic temperatures belying the region’s true identity as a temperate rainforest. I found the hospitality of the residents to be as warm as the daytime skies, which in turn were illuminated in spectacular fashion after dark for the Grand Finale of an international fireworks contest the closing night of the congress. The opportunity to “step outside the border” and reflect upon our profession under these conditions was inspirational indeed!

In summary, the FIT organizing committee is to be commended for orchestrating a conference that, in this author’s opinion, succeeded on all counts. Whether these thoughts reach you before or after International Translation Day this year, my hope is that all will be inspired to not only attend the next World Congress in 2005, but to function as agents of social change to such an extent in the interim that the involvement alone will propel you to Tampere.

NOTIS News Editorial Calendar

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<td>T&amp;I Professional Practices in the NW</td>
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<td>November / Fall 2003</td>
<td>T&amp;I Technology in the NW</td>
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Submission Guidelines:
1. Articles are due by the 15th of the month prior to publication (i.e., January 15th for February/Winter publication).
2. Articles should not exceed 2,500 words.
3. All articles must be published in English.
4. Articles may include a brief biography (6 sentences maximum) along with a digital photo of yourself if you wish. Please do not send photos via US mail without express permission.
5. Please submit all articles electronically via email to: sgarriott@wal.org
6. Text should be formatted for MS Word.
7. All articles become the property of NOTIS News once they are submitted and are subject to editing for grammar, style, punctuation and space limitations.
8. A proof will be sent to you for review prior to publishing only if you so request.
2002 Elections

The NOTIS 2002 nominating committee, consisting of Olivier Fabris, Chila Harrington, and Ann G. Macfarlane, has put together a superb slate of six candidates for our 2002 elections to be held on Saturday, November 23rd. We are grateful to those incumbents who are willing to serve another term and to the new candidates for their desire to contribute their time and talents to the society. Please find the candidates and their statements below.

Candidate Statement for Alex Mosalsky
I have been working as a Russian / English translator and interpreter for ten years. My work has been divided fairly evenly between translating and interpreting. When I began, I didn’t have any idea of what was involved in being a language professional. I thought that all that was needed was knowledge of languages and subject matter. I have since learned that a lot more is needed to be a language professional. This profession is rapidly growing and changing. The role of organizations such as NOTIS and the ATA is to assist those in the profession to keep up with the changes, as well as help new people get started. NOTIS sponsored many valuable and interesting programs over the years. As a member of the board, I would like to explore ways to be able to receive as much input as possible from the members about what type of programs they would find most valuable and informative.

Candidate Statement for Caitlin Walsh
I am honored to be standing for a sixth term on the NOTIS board. It continues to be a pleasure to serve our membership together with such congenial colleagues. I joined the NOTIS board in 1991. In 1992, I inherited the directory and authored the first version of the NOTIS Web site on an embryonic Internet. I published the InfoBase from 1994 until this year, when it was replaced by our online directory. Over the years, I have served NOTIS as secretary, vice president and president. During my tenure as president, NOTIS became a chapter of the ATA and gained tax-exempt status.
I am proud of my work with NOTIS, and I look forward to continuing my work of bringing more services to the membership, focusing my efforts on the NOTIS Website and directories.
I thank you for the trust you place in me and in your colleagues.

Candidate Statement for Ken Wagner
These days internet language forums provide a venue for professional and social exchange among translators from all parts of the world. A translator can even support him- or herself through remote on-line translation services directories like those maintained by the ATA and, now, by NOTIS. However, nothing can replace the intangible benefits a person derives from interacting with people of like interests in local professional groups like NOTIS. Local groups are often responsible for many of these remote services. Such groups also provide other services: newsletters and programs that are educational, interesting, or just plain fun. That is why I enjoy serving on the NOTIS board and feel that contributing to NOTIS is some small way is crucial to our profession and my own economic survival.
As for myself, I live in Shoreline, WA with my wife Toshiko and two children (Ken Jr, age 14, and Lisa, age 11). I have been translating Japanese technical literature into English since 1987 and specializing in health sciences since 1994. I have served on the NOTIS board since 1997, in the ATA Japanese-English accreditation program since 1996, and in various positions in the ATA Japanese Language Division.

Candidate Statement for Lilly May Bayley
Lilly May Bayley received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English at St. Joseph’s College in Manila. Prior to moving to the US in 1978, she was working on a Masters Degree in Media Communications at the University of the Philippines and was teaching at the Far Eastern University. While rearing her three children in Spokane, she volunteered as an ESL tutor to recent immigrants at the Refugee Resettlement Center.
Lilly May has over 12 years of interpreting and translating work experience. In 1998 she became a California Certified Court Interpreter. She has served on the board of WITS, and is a member of NAJIT as well as NOTIS. As a member of the NOTIS Board, Lilly May will work toward encouraging more Asian language speakers to participate in the organization.

Candidate Statement for Marilyse Benyakar
Born and raised in Paris, Marilyse Benyakar lived in Berlin for four years during the 80’s and worked there as an interpreter. She then went back to Paris to study and received a degree in Foreign Languages from the Sorbonne University.
She’s lived in the United States for twelve years working as an in-house and freelance translator, mostly in the localization and high-tech industry. She’s been a member of NOTIS for several years but since she moved to Seattle last year, she’s wanted to be more actively involved.
She would like to have more networking events, mixing it up with fun too. She also wants to start a French/German Special Interest Group. Her passions are gardening and flowers, teaching her son French, cooking, hiking and spending time with friends.

Candidate Statement for Marissa Wright
It is an honor to be nominated to run for a position on the NOTIS Board of Directors. I am a recent graduate of the T& I Institute, a freelance translator from German into English, wife, and mother of a daughter who has just started school. As an ATA member, I have contributed articles to Interaktiv (the German Language Division newsletter) and the ATA Chronicle.
NOTIS and the ATA have made me aware of the importance of professionalism within our industry, and if elected I will work with and through NOTIS to continue to raise public awareness of issues related to translation and interpreting. I am willing to invest time and energy to help provide continuing education for NOTIS members—both long-time practitioners and fledglings—as well as helping NOTIS attract and retain new members.
I hope you will give me the opportunity to serve you and NOTIS.
## Calendar

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<td>November 23, 2002</td>
<td>NOTIS recap of ATA Conf. &amp; Annual Meeting / Elections</td>
<td><a href="http://www.notisnet.org">www.notisnet.org</a></td>
<td>1:00 - 4:00 PM, Ballinger Room Shoreline Center, 18560 1st Ave. NE Shoreline, WA 98155</td>
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<td>December 7, 2002</td>
<td>NOTIS / WITS / SOMI Holiday Party</td>
<td><a href="http://www.notisnet.org">www.notisnet.org</a> Potluck Event!</td>
<td>Time TBD UW Waterfront Activities Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 25, 2003</td>
<td>ATA Accreditation Workshop</td>
<td><a href="http://www.notisnet.org">www.notisnet.org</a> Pre-register by January 13!</td>
<td>12:45 - 4:00 PM University of Washington Balmer Hall RM 209</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 26, 2003</td>
<td>ATA Accreditation Exam</td>
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<td>May 23-25, 2003</td>
<td>NAJIT Annual Mtg. &amp; Educational Conf.</td>
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**NOTIS**  
P.O. Box 25301  
Seattle, WA 98125-2201  
Voice Mail: (206) 382-5642  
E-mail: info@notisnet.org  
Website: www.notisnet.org

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