

CHICATA NEWS

A Publication of the Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association

Summer, August 2006

The Eighteenth Annual Conference sheds a new light on getting down to business.

The Eighteenth Annual Conference on Translation and Interpretation was held on May 6, 2006 in the charming Talbott Hotel located near Water Tower, in the heart of downtown Chicago. This annual conference is always an eagerly awaited event for translators and interpreters in the greater Chicago area, Indiana and Wisconsin because it provides an opportunity to get together with colleagues, to talk about the trade, and to listen to interesting sessions.

The theme of this year's conference was "Achieving Success in the Global Language Services Market." Various aspects of business one needs to know in order to succeed were revealed.

Morning sessions

by Diane Van Hoof-Sisodia

After brief opening remarks by John Bukacek, CHICATA's President, the approximately fifty attendees were treated to two interesting sessions in the first part of the conference.

During the first talk entitled "Developing and Growing a Translation and Interpretation Business," Harriet Genberg, Arnaldo Higuero and Jacques Lacava told us how they started as interpreters and translators.

Harriet Genberg, a native of Sweden and currently residing in Michigan, started translating gradually, first by helping out friends and acquaintances that had Swedish texts to

translate into English. Harriet became active in her community, specifically in Swedish organizations and community groups, and gradually gained a reputation as someone you could count on whenever a Swedish text needed to be translated.

Harriet assembled a series of clients through word of mouth and personal contacts rather than by mailing out résumés. She works mostly for private clients rather than translation bureaus. What was originally a service she provided to friends and acquaintances became a business.

Jacques Lacava, a native of France, emphasized the importance of diversifying. Jacques took every opportunity that was offered to him to work as a linguist. He was a full-time in-house translator and interpreter for Rotary International, taught foreign languages and eventually started out on his own as a free-lance translator. He emphasized the importance of having sufficient financial means to fall back on in order to survive in this business.

Arnoldo Higuero provided the participants with a handout that gave an overview of issues one should consider when starting a business. He discussed the prerequisites for success in translation, various approaches to getting started, and the value of networking, client education, cash flow issues and keeping abreast of language changes in your field of expertise. Like Jacques, Arnaldo emphasized the importance of having a niche but also warned that beginners

want to diversify because a niche may not be able to sustain your business for a prolonged period of time.

The second session, "Timely Topics for Translators Starting a Business" by attorney Richard Schell, involved a discussion on general business and legal aspects to consider for those who want to start a translation business. Richard discussed the importance of entity choice, insurance translators and interpreters may want to buy--such as the errors and omission policy--types of contracts translators should use employee and credit issues, and taxes.

He provided us with a handy list of the top ten business points translators should consider. Richard also emphasized the importance of developing a business plan that takes into account big problems that may occur, such as downturns, disability, divorce and death. Once a business becomes more than a means of self-employment, personnel becomes a very important issue as well.

Afternoon sessions

by Ursula Kewer

The afternoon session began with a presentation on training and certification by John Bukacek, Andrea Friedmann and Susan Hoffman.

Susan Hoffman is currently enrolled in an on-line certification program offered by New York University. Since she is working full-time as a

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CHICATA NEWS

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Message From the President



I hope that everyone is having an enjoyable summer. As is our usual custom, CHICATA takes off the months of June and July, and then we have a social event in August, with our regular programs resuming in September.

I would like to express my appreciation to all of the volunteers who make CHICATA such a fine organization. We have a very hard-working Executive Committee, whose members put in countless hours on behalf of the membership. I would also like to thank the volunteers who work "behind the scenes": Floriana Bivona-Lockner, who handles the P.O. Box and Membership Directory sales; Cecilia Davila, who helped organize the Holiday Party; Adrienne Allen gave very valuable assistance during the Translators Institute; Yves Lassere and Vesna Zafirovski took photos at meetings; Arnoldo Higuero manages the CHICATA phone line; Boris Silversteyn did the internal audit of the Association's financial records; Linda Marianello, Cristina Villanueva, Adrienne Allen, and Spring Stillman brought refreshments to meetings; Andrea Friedmann organized the Spanish Language Group; and Vojin Drenovac, Arnoldo Higuero, Rita Richter, served on the Nominating Committee. Volunteers are the life-blood of an organization like ours. Special thanks to all volunteers for your help!

During the previous year, we had the following programs: August 2005 was our CHICATAFest summer social gathering; the September 2005 program featured Maricela Ponce de Leon presenting "Court Interpretation Technology Used in U.S. District Court"; in October 2005 there was a presentation by Manuel on Gloria Abundis on their medical interpretation training program; November 2005 featured a presentation by Peter Less titled "Memoirs of a Pioneer Simultaneous Interpreter"; December 2005 was our Holiday Party; in January 2006 we held our annual Shop Talk program; there was no program in February 2006; the Translators Institute on Revising & Editing was held in March 2006; our April 2006 Literary Translation program featured Amy Greenberg, translator of *Mujeres de Ojos Grandes*; and in May 2006, we held the CHICATA Conference.

CHICATA now has a new logo and a new website. We are still working on developing an on-line directory that will be fully searchable, and that can also be updated by the members themselves. I apologize for the delays in producing the on-line directory. We aim to put a pilot version of the on-line directory on the website in the near future.

This coming February, CHICATA will celebrate its 20th anniversary. I would welcome suggestions on how to celebrate!

Sincerely,

John F. Bukacek

The annual conference

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librarian, she particularly appreciates the freedom to complete her assignments on her own time and at her own pace. She is also pleased with the guidance and support she receives from faculty and staff. At this time, the program offers a limited number of language combinations. The enrollment process includes a 300 word online test.

Andrea Friedmann gave an overview of the ATA certification process and how it has changed in recent years. She briefly touched on the heated discussions this has generated. She believes that certification signals professionalism and commitment to her clients, but emphasized that learning does not stop once you have passed the test. According to current rules, ATA-certified translators have to acquire continuing education points to maintain certification. A major drawback of the ATA test is that the use of computers is not permitted, at least not yet, and therefore it is clearly not representative of our day-to-day work environment.

John Bukacek explained the certification process of The Translators and Interpreters Guild, which is the only nationwide union for freelance professionals. Unlike the ATA certification, TTIG requires client and peer references to pass. The organization also offers an extensive referral service.

John then went on to talk about certification of a different nature: Clients often require translators to certify their work. John presented a number of examples that he has personally used, ranging from a short paragraph to a two-page document, and including the dreaded "... under penalty of perjury" phrase, eliciting a mixture of chuckles and groans from the audience. John also pointed out that although clients frequently ask for certification, they are uncertain what they mean and that it is up to us to clarify.

Jost Zetzsche is a freelance English German translator and a localization and translation consultant. His presen-

tation, titled "The Cons of Not Being a Pro: Translators and the Fear of Being a Professional" started out with a brief overview of the history of translation and a grim statistic that resonated with everybody in the room: worldwide, over 200 translators and interpreters have been killed in the line of duty in the past several years. The talk then turned to cheerier topics.

Even for the "technically challenged," it is difficult to resist Jost's obvious enthusiasm for computer programs designed to make our work easier. He strongly believes that anybody who is not using computer-assisted translation tools has not graduated to the 21st century. Based on the numbers he cited, however, many CAT programs (or computer environment tools, as he prefers to call them) appear to be gathering dust somewhere: While 50,000 copies have been sold, only 10,000-15,000 are believed to be in actual use.

According to Jost, this is most likely due to inadequate training, but a major problem with many people in our field is that they are reluctant to view themselves as professionals. As a result, they neglect basic aspects of running a business and fail to keep up with technology. He offered tips and tricks for every facet of a translator's business, from basic word count to invoicing.

While some of the programs he mentioned are pricy enough to be out of reach of most freelancers' pocketbooks, I suspect some of us, even "non-techies," will eventually add an icon or two to their control panel. ●

Diane Van Hoof-Sisodia is a fulltime English and Dutch translator and interpreter residing in Chicago. You can reach her at dvanhoof@sbcglobal.net or at www.distinctlydutch.com.

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Executive committee meets at the annual conference

by Luisa Ranieri Brantingham and Rocio Jaramillo

Present: John Bukacek (President), Alex Gualino (Past VP for Programs), Karin Bauchrowitz (VP for Membership), Luisa Ranieri Brantingham (Past-Secretary), Arnoldo Higuero (Nominating Committee Chair) and newly appointed Deborah Joyce (VP for Programs), Chun-Yen "Spring" Stillman (Secretary).

Absent: Yves Lassere (Treasurer), Rocio Jaramillo (Newsletter Editor).

President's Report: John welcomed the newly appointed officers and thanked the Executive Committee for other volunteers who contributed their time and energy.

Volunteers are needed to carry out various functions that keep CHICATA running smoothly. Some tasks are very simple, among them providing refreshments at meetings. More complex tasks involve helping with audio-recording production. Recording, editing, receiving and filling orders must be done.

Volunteers are also needed to carry out functions of the Publicity Committee which at the moment is inactive and has no participants.

John sent out a notice calling for volunteers. Regrettably, the response was very limited. The possibility of outsourcing tasks is being considered.

Webmaster's Report: John is overseeing CHICATA's website. Caitilin Walsh, a professional web designer, gave the pages a new style and applied the new logo. Martin Wilson, another web designer, is incorporating searchable features and more links for members to input their own updates. Unfortunately, the website is not currently readable to all browsers.

Vice-President for Program's Report: Alex recounted the past fiscal year's activities. Peter Less' presentation

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To err is human

by Olga Collin

The workshop, created by Mr. Brian Mossop and titled "To Err is Human: Improving Your Revision Work" showed the attendees of the March 25 CHICATA Translators Institute that to get sick is just as human. Unfortunately, the author of the presentation couldn't share his insights on the topic of revision personally, due to a sudden case of laryngitis. Nonetheless the workshop turned to be a very enriching session as well as yet another great networking opportunity.

Actually, the very fact that John Bukacek, our President, decided not to cancel the long anticipated program provided a chance for me and other colleagues to attend the Institute. As the enrollment was limited to twenty-five, I found myself on a waiting list without too much hope to attend. The surprise

call came the evening before the workshop and the next morning I found myself in a cozy atmosphere of the Talbott Hotel with John taking the initiative in his hands and conducting a session, using Mr. Mossop's outline and materials.

The theoretical part of the workshop offered some thought-provoking questions and ideas. Among the discussion topics were issues of quality, revision terminology and parameters, correcting principles, challenges of revising others, thoughts on checking the documents on screen or on paper, and other topics. After determining what a revision is and understanding that quality is not absolute but rather relative to the needs of the client, John presented Mr. Mossop's structured system of editing which is connected to the various levels of quality as well as to the purpose of a translated document and the audience receiving it. That system

sparked a lively discussion with the participants sharing their ideas and experiences. The challenges of revising others provided for another great conversation.

After lunch we had an opportunity to apply the principles of revision to sample translations prepared by the author. Apart from that, Mr. Mossop created an outline with the key ideas, practical solutions and a list of the suggested readings. The workshop was based on his book "Revising and Editing for Translators," the second edition of which is to be published in June 2006.

On behalf of my colleagues present at the Translators Institute I would like to thank John for doing a great job facilitating this informative session. ●

Olga Collin specializes in translation and medical interpretation into and from Russian, Ukrainian, German and English. She can be reached at 847-729-2964 or through her email olgacollin@msn.com.

Annual conference meeting

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on "Memoirs of a Pioneer Simultaneous Interpreter" given in November, boasts the highest number of attendees.

The tape recording of this session, along with Maricela Ponce De Leon's meeting on Court Interpretation Technology is pending at this time.

The CHICATA Audio Library Project required more time than anticipated. Help from volunteers will be needed in order for this program to continue.

Members indicated interest in having weekday programs and in receiving sturdier mailed announcements.

Alex expressed his sadness for not being able to continue to serve as VP for Programs due to circumstances. In spite of some difficulties, he is glad to have had the opportunity to serve and he offered to remain available to assist the incoming VP for Programs.

Vice-President for Membership's Report: Karin said CHICATA has 136 members in good standing. The paper

directory was published in January.

For the online directory, the idea of creating six specialization categories was debated. They are 1) Business and Financial, 2) Technical, 3) Legal, 4) Art & literature, 5) Medical, and 6) General.

The overall consensus was that six categories are insufficient. Some members even objected to having any categories at all.

Even though the year was very labor-intensive, Karin found it to be enjoyable and rewarding. She invited every one to send her their comments and suggestions.

Treasurer's Report. Yves submitted a brief financial summary for the fiscal period between May 31, 2005 to May 6, 2006.

CHICATA earned \$6,609.89, spent \$9,465.02, and ended with a balance of \$7,058.99.

In the list of expenses was the purchase of a new projector. It was used for the first time at the Annual Conference.

Boris Silverstein, a past CHICATA

president, audited the books for 2005. Harriet Genberg reviewed the books for the year 2006.

Secretary's Report: Luisa conveyed that she was glad to have had the opportunity to serve as Secretary for the past 3 years. Spring Stillman will take over these duties.

Newsletter Editor's Report: Rocio invites all members to submit articles for publication. Various options to simplify the newsletter, including converting it into a bulletin, is being considered.

Nominating Committee's Report: Arnoldo mentioned 120 ballots were mailed and 83 were returned. Rita Richter, and Vojin Drenovac assisted Arnoldo. He announced the names of the newly elected officials and thanked the executive committee and other volunteers who contributed their time and hard work. ●

Gather around the table for shoptalk

by Karin Bauchrowitz

Aside from CHICATA's Annual Conference and the Translators' Institute, Shop Talk is definitely my favorite program. I was determined to make it there even though quite a bit of snow fell during Friday night, and Saturday morning it was still questionable whether one could drive. This was not just about me! I had invited my colleague, Astra Van Heest from Michigan, to drive in with me on that cold day in January 21. I also told a couple, who is interested in joining CHICATA, to meet me at the Holiday Inn in Michigan City. After a few phone calls back and forth, we decided to go ahead with our plan.

The roads were fine and soon a lively "car talk" started (to steal this term from one of my favorite shows on NPR) about the upcoming "shop talk."

To make this into a "Happening," we decided to first have lunch at "Selmarie" on Lincoln Avenue and met another colleague there, Linda Marianiello, who is also interested in joining CHICATA. There was still time left, so off to a little shopping in and then on to the Sultz Library.

The attendance was excellent, numbering about thirty people. Our President, John F. Bukacek, welcomed everybody and made a few announcements about upcoming events.

The discussion started with questions about the paperwork from translation bureaus - the flood of forms a translator has to fill out to get into their databases. Examples were given, and while a few felt this was not extraordinary, the majority agreed that one specific agency went overboard, especially when requesting to promise to not contact anyone of their clients for three years. The general consensus was not to pursue a relationship in such cases because their demands were excessive and it may only get worse down the road. An interesting point was made with the suggestion: Why not ask a prospective

client for their own quality assurance measures. After all, it is a two-way street!

An interpreter who deals in-house with translators and interpreters in a medical environment brought up her negative experience with persons sent from agencies who were not up to the task. They were clearly not qualified, however they were performing work that is critical. The dilemma in this case is that her company has a contract with these agencies, which means she is stuck. We pointed to the CHICATA Directory to find and interview qualified medical translators and interpreters. It was also recommended to educate the management that this could literally lead to a potentially fatal situation and that quality assurance practices, glossaries and in-house training should be implemented.

Liability Insurance was another topic. Should we buy it? John mentioned that it is rare that a translator or interpreter would actually be sentenced for committing an error - sued, yes, but not sentenced. John noted that such cases were always settled out of court.

This is a complicated subject, and I have no opinion about it either way and have not bought coverage myself.

Another important topic was: What to do if you do not get paid!? One CHICATA member told us that he principally asks for pre-payment if the client is new and has not yet had a problem getting prepaid. This is a serious matter, and even experienced translators I know personally have lost thousands of dollars over submitted assignments that were not paid. I gave some examples how I deal with this area: If the client is new to me, I ask for two or three names of translators who have worked for them before. I send these translators an e-mail and inquire about the practices of this unknown client in general and the payment practices in particular. If I get

a positive reply, I accept the assignment. There are also lists one can subscribe to find out if a certain company has a bad payment practices reputation. Moreover, several colleagues of mine exchange their experience with "bad payers" and we keep our own list.

Two good points were made with regard to getting paid:

First, offer 2 % discount to trigger faster payments (I offer that). If a client would like to pay by credit card, suggest to send you a check from his credit card company (a hint by Astra van Heest)

Secondly, CHICATA is considering receiving dues or conference fees through PayPal. Recently PayPal members received suspicious looking e-mails and fake websites. I was one of them, but I knew about this problem and didn't fall for it.

These were the main points of our discussion, and to end it with a nice dinner, six of us went to "Jury's Food & Drink," also on Lincoln Avenue, and continued a lively exchange of ideas and suggestions about our interesting and challenging profession. ●

Karin Boehme Bauchrowitz is a German Translator and Interpreter and is ATA-Certified from English into German. She may be reached at 219-362-3602, karinbauchrowitz@comcast.net. or Fax: 219-324-2903

Mark your calendars!

**Interpreting in the
Tour Guide Field**
Donna Primas Presenter
September 23, 2006
2:30 to 4:30
Lake Shore Park Field House
808 N. Lake Shore Drive

Executive committee meeting minutes of February 4, 2006

by Luisa Ranieri Brantingham and Rocio Jaramillo

Present: John Bukacek (President), Alex Gualino (VP for Programs), Karin Bauchrowitz (VP for Membership), Yves Lassere (Treasurer), Luisa Ranieri Brantingham (Secretary).

Absent: Rocio Jaramillo (Newsletter Editor).

President's Report: John appointed Anoldo Higuero as Nominating Committee Chair. Arnoldo will choose his committee members and send the ballots 60 days before the annual meeting held in May every year.

Budget, venues, maximum participants, and needed materials for Translators Institute day were discussed. Themes, titles, and location for the annual conference were suggested. Possible presenters and topics were planned.

John listed the technical problems and improvements needed for the website. An online searchable and updatable directory is needed. The current directory is in excel and not integrated. An expert web designer capable of completing this task should be hired.

Vice-President for Program's Report: Alex called for volunteers. Handling the audio library and programs is an overwhelming amount of

work. Active participation should be promoted. A point system with rewards could be implemented for volunteers. A dedicated webpage could indicate who is doing what.

Alex mentioned the nomination procedure should be restructured giving everyone a chance to run for positions or to submit suggestions for nominations. In addition, the length of time an officer could serve should be redefined.

One PDF audio program was not in working order. The problem is slowing down the project but is being resolved.

Alex felt future meetings should be scheduled earlier (from 1:30 to 5:00pm) to allow more time for networking. Reversing the order of events-serving refreshments first and networking later-could be considered. Time slotted for networking will be indicated in the announcements. Perhaps networking with other organizations could be planned. Also, board members felt events should continue to be scheduled every month.

Treasurer's Report: Yves will investigate the allowable financial limits for non-profit organizations. He mentioned CHICATA should provide more networking opportunities, be a source of information, and provide links to other organizations (i.e. universities)

Vice-President for Membership's Report: Karin reported CHICATA spent \$1,445.27 for 200 copies of the directory. Extra copies will be sent to non-profit organizations or sold at \$25 per copy. The board expects to collect \$500 from these sales. Floriana Bivona-Lockner handles directory sales.

Karin is entering new member profiles and changes into the directory file. Arnoldo and Floriana will proofread this list. The web-designer will then convert the file to a format suitable for the website. Outsourcing a few tasks this job requires would relieve some of the burdens. In addition, the workload of entering membership data will be reduced when the website becomes directly searchable and updatable by the members.

Online payment of dues is being considered. Security is a concern and PayPal is one option being researched.

Newsletter Editor's Report: Since Rocio has taken sick leave the newsletter has been postponed. Articles are needed and may still be submitted.

General Reports: The CHICATA brochure needs updating. A discussion on outsourcing some work, especially clerical, would help the workload. ●

CHICATA CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- October 22, 2005:** Medical interpreting training.
- November 19, 2005:** Memoirs of a simultaneous interpreter
- December 2, 2005:** Holiday potluck party.
- January 21, 2006:** Annual shoptalk at Sulzer Library.
- February 4, 2006:** Executive committee meeting.
- March 25, 2006:** Translators Institute. To Err is Human.
- April 22, 2006:** Lost in Translation. Literary program.
- May 6, 2006:** Eighteenth annual conference.
- August 19, 2006:** Concert and cruise night social.
- September 23, 2006:** Interpreting in the tour guide field.

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