

# CHICATA NEWS

A Publication of the Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association

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## Reflections from the Symposium on the Book.

by Teodara B. Burian

The Newberry Library and the Caxton Club, with the support of CHICATA, sponsored this full day seminar given on March 31, 2007. Keenly titled "Remodeling the Tower of Babel: The Translator's Role in a Shrinking World", topics covered judging literary works, contributions made by early printers, viewing the new world through translated texts, and the paradoxes of translation. The day closed with a panel discussion about the computer's impact on the future of this field.

The task of a translator is to transfer as well as possible the message even as it is carried by the form and structure of the original. Yet, as if by default, the translator is a sinner, for realizing a one-to-one equivalence between the original and the translation is a feat doomed to failure because of the constraints imposed by language.

On the other hand, the question is, which message is to be transferred, for each one of us brings his or her associations and feelings to the words on a page. This idea was central to Roland Barthes' essay, *The Death of the Author*; readers, and not individual authors, are the creators of meaning.

Each time the original text is read by a different reader, the meaning shifts slightly. The images evoked by words may not be of a different color, but of a different shade. The same applies to a translation, except that the images perceived by the reader of a translation are through the eyes, or rather words, of a translator.

When translating poetry, both speakers Goran Malmqvist and Douglas Hofstadter agree that the duty of a translator is to make a poem pleasing both to the ear of a listener and the eye of a reader. Malmqvist said, "If a translator fails to convey the architectonic beauty and rhythmical tension of the poem, it is cold-blooded murder." And Hofstadter

exclaimed, "If a translator cannot achieve it [accuracy on all levels], he is not trying hard enough."

For example, in translating a Chinese poem, Hofstadter demands equivalence on all levels, adhering not only to the rhyme and syllabic patterns of the poem, but also to the position of the characters on the page. Therefore, Hofstadter places the English words vertically from right to left, and in order to reproduce the look of the original as closely as possible, he also breaks the words up into syllables.

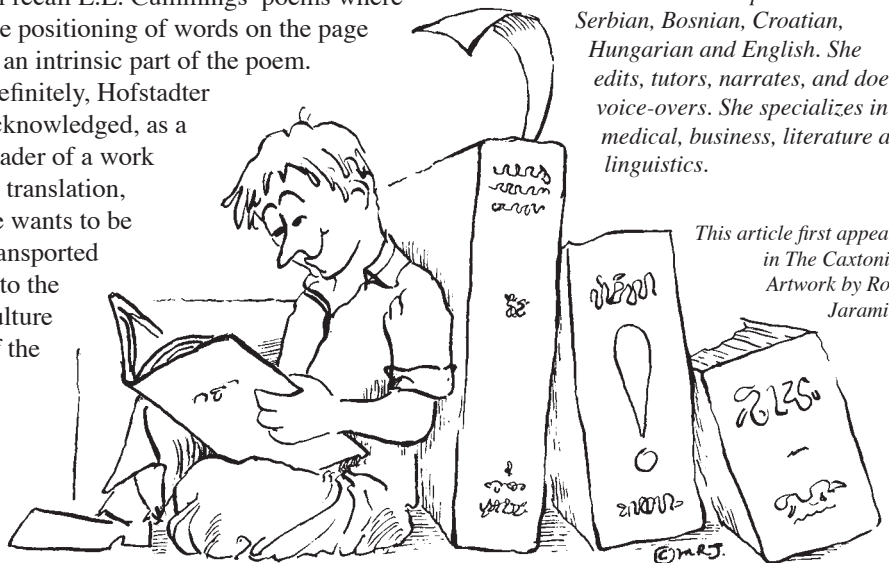
This "translational variant" of the Chinese poem produces a striking visual effect. And why shouldn't it? We can all recall E.E. Cummings' poems where the positioning of words on the page is an intrinsic part of the poem. Definitely, Hofstadter acknowledged, as a reader of a work in translation, he wants to be transported into the culture of the

original, "to eat Mexican and not Taco Bell tacos when in Mexico."

How faithful a translation is to its original is always a matter of degree. Translators, like any readers of a work of art, bring their own interpretation to it. In addition, as Malmqvist reminded us, beautiful translations, just like beautiful women, are not always the most faithful ones. To this, Hofstadter added the words of his colleague, "Beauty trumps truth." Yet beauty is also a matter of taste, and tastes can change, so it seems almost inevitable for multiple translations of the same work of art to exist side by side. ●

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*This article first appeared in The Caxtonian. Artwork by Rocio Jaramillo.*



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# CHICATA NEWS

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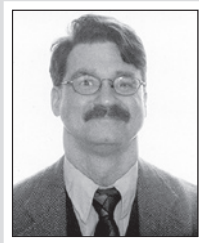
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CHICATA News, published four times a year, is distributed free of charge to all its members. Membership dues are currently \$35. The newsletter provides up to date information about its members, association activities, as well as news of the translation and interpretation profession. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the views of the editor, the association or its officers, and are solely those of their authors. Articles submitted become the property of CHICATA News and are subject to editing. No part of the newsletter may be reproduced in any form without the written permission from the editor. Materials for publication may be e-mailed to the editor at mrociocj@earthlink.net. Maria Rocio Jaramillo may also be called at 708-383-0453.



## *Message From the President*



This year marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of CHICATA. Later in the year, CHICATA will celebrate its 20th anniversary with a party. We will keep you posted with details.

The CHICATA Executive Committee has decided to confer the title of CHICATA Honorary Life Member on two of our founding members, Arnolando Higuero and Ernst Schuetz, in appreciation of their valuable contributions to our association and to our profession. It is most fitting that we confer this honor on two of our most dedicated founding members.

One of our most ambitious projects has been to upgrade and enhance our website, so that it will include a searchable on-line directory and an on-line payment option. Members can also update their directory profile at will and at any time. Unlike many other organizations, CHICATA also allows members to provide a narrative description of their services in their on-line profile. These upgrades and enhancements have taken more time than we anticipated. There are many pieces to put together, and I apologize for the delays in the process.

Nominations and the election process have also been delayed, but we will get caught up on everything, and once we get back on track, things should proceed normally once again. I view all of this as part of the "growing pains" of our association as it enters a new phase in its development.

The CHICATA Executive Committee always welcomes suggestions from members on program topics, speakers, and venues. We also need volunteers to help with publicity and with special projects. We are open to suggestions from our members on how we can improve CHICATA even further.

In closing, I would like to thank all of the wonderful volunteers who work so hard to make CHICATA a truly professional association!

Sincerely,

*John F. Bukacek*

# SHOP TALK

by Adrienne B. Allen

Despite fiercely cold weather and an impending snow storm, a lively and informative discussion was held at the Shop Talk meeting of February 24, 2007. Adding to the cozy ambience were the very tasty cookie treats and beverages of hot chocolate, coffee, and tea.

John Bukacek opened the session with the caveat that a discussion of rates was precluded, followed by a few introductory remarks and updates regarding the CHICATA web site, the on-line membership directory, negotiations with PayPal, and a free program, "Symposium on the Book".

Attendees also shared views on their favorite tools, gadgets, and software. Subsequent to this meeting John sent a President's Message to the membership echoing much of the same information. Items offered for the favorite list and some highlights follow.

## CHICATA AFFAIRS

\* Regretfully, membership renewals have been delayed, but should be sent soon. We are still considered members in good standing until the renewal process is completed.

\* The membership directory will have a few innovative features. Members will have the ability to update their respective password-protected profiles. Profiles are searchable by language pairs and 10 key word categories. The paper version of the directory will be discontinued.

\* Discussion touched on the possibility and advisability to have a table on March 31 at the "Symposium on the Book" displaying book translations by CHICATA members, CHICATA mem-

bership applications and other marketing materials, and our own respective promotional pieces.

\* As the officer in charge of programs, Deborah asked for the participants' reactions to and fresh ideas for CHICATA's events, including the possibility to explore more outreach and networking with



other organizations. Among the organizations considered were the Chicago Bar Association and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (formerly named The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations).

This led to a discussion of how to market CHICATA and advance its mission through the use of search engines and iPodcasts. Responses would be referred to the Executive Committee for its thoughts.

\* A question was raised regarding the dues dollars lost by using PayPal. CHICATA would have to pay PayPal a percentage for the service.

## DICTIONARIES

\* Verizon's Samsung cell phone-PDA, similar to the Blackberry, was appreciated because one can check e-mail on it and insert a card containing a dictionary. Mobipocket dictionaries, albeit limited in scope, are available at CompUSA.

\* Quicktionary Voice scanner, purchased in France for approximately US \$150, has good memory size and is great in a booth when one might panic. Mention was made of the utility to use an electronic dictionary in an interpreter's booth.

\* The electronic dictionary, PageMark, has conversion features for weights, currencies, distances, temperatures, and more. Franklin Bookman and Oxford-Hachette sell electronic dictionaries and translators for both the written and spoken word.

\* Other dictionaries recommended at the assembly were Hachette (French-French), VOX (Spanish-Spanish), and Merriam-Webster (English-English). ECTACO tends to break down but has good vocabulary.

\* Although many found the web sites [www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com) and [www.eurodicautom.com](http://www.eurodicautom.com) (sourced from the European Union) and Google as useful resources for dictionaries, it was still encouraged to double and triple check the word search results against other dictionaries.

## FAVORITE GADGETS

\* Earpieces, speakers and microphones are often available at Radio Shack and CompUSA. However, for microphones, looking into Shure Brothers on Touhy Avenue in Niles, Illinois, was recommended. Other brands mentioned were Williams Sound, Listen Technologies, and Phillips for infrared products.

*continued on page 4*

*artwork by Rocio Jaramillo copyright 2007*

**SHOP TALK***continued from page 3*

\* It was suggested in some instances that it might be better to rent equipment, pass the rental cost through to the client, and never assume all equipment is in working order—check it! However, it was also emphasized that we should never rent a walkie-talkie for conference interpretation.

\* Various uses of equipment were commented on. For example, with respect to conference interpretation, when would one best be able to use the scanning devices? Furthermore it was proposed that one obtain a copy of the speech before it starts. Better yet, it was advised to have a laptop computer with an electronic dictionary wherein one can begin to create a glossary.

\* Clarification was sought between “machine translation” (such as Babelfish, which is “pre-set”) and “translation memory software” (such as TRADOS, in which we build our own database of terminology).

\* Opinions on typing in a foreign language seemed to vary by translator’s knowledge of software and keyboarding skills. Helpful methods involve using Microsoft Word’s foreign language tools, creating a macro for certain symbols, and changing one’s keyboard.

Some details were also shared regarding how to keyboard languages

with completely different alphabets from English. Japanese and Russian are among the examples given.

**GENERAL TOPICS**

\* Input was given on how to handle proofreading a translation when the source document is confusing and poorly written as well as how to manage the client.

\* Advice was sought regarding health insurance. Responses included UniCare, NASE-National Association of the Self-Employed, Chambers of Commerce, ATA.

**CONCLUSION**

Quite a lot of useful information was shared during this Shop Talk session. Furthermore, the ideas for improving CHICATA’s activities will surely benefit the membership. ●

*Adrienne Allen, president of Adbridon Corp., translates between English and Spanish and between English and French for B2B and B2C projects. She can be reached at this telephone number 847-869-9755 or adbridon@earthlink.net.*

Karin Bauchowitz, Vice President for Membership, and Deborah Joyce, Vice President for Programs, have stepped down. While ballots are counted for the next elections, President John Bukacek appointed Vojin Drenovac and Patrizia Leoni for the respective chairs, and Pippin Michelli as webmaster.

**CHICATA’s 2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**January 13, 2007:** Court interpreting issues and liability .

**February 10, 2007:** Executive committee meeting.

**February 24, 2007:** Annual shoptalk at Sulzer Library.

**May 7, 2007:** Global legal skills.

**June, 2007:** Summer vacation.

**July, 2007:** Summer vacation.

**August 18, 2007:** CHICATA Fest summer social.

**The Newberry Library and the Caxton Club**

More than one million books, manuscripts, and maps in languages from all over the world may be enjoyed at the prestigious Newberry Library. Scholars can examine published works printed before the printing press existed. The earliest holdings date back to the eleventh century. Book of Hours, or a more modern calligraphy collection are a viewer’s delight. For the enthusiasts the library gives classes in history, music, genealogy, and literature.

The potential for research at the Newberry is tremendous. A valid photo Identification and a sign in procedure is required. The books must be handled in a specific manner in accordance to their age. The library has reprinted some of their books. This may provide an excellent opportunity for translators, or a study may be carried out for ones own enhancement.

Founded in 1895, the Caxton Club was named after the first English printer, William Caxton. He is credited for printing the first book in English, a translation of “The Recuyell of the Histories of Troye”, around the 1470. Every month members meet to hear invited speakers and share interests in the content, design, making, preservation and history of books. The club already produced sixty books, and plans to publish one small book every two or three years, and a large one every five to ten years. A few are translations. ●

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