



THE GOTHAM TRANSLATOR

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In March of this year, The New York Circle of Translators suffered a great loss. Susana Greiss, who was one of the Circle's founding members, passed away.

Susana touched many lives personally and professionally during her long and distinguished career as a language professional. The formal obituary included in this issue speaks to Susana's formidable achievements in her field, but this is only part of the story of this remarkable woman. Susana was also a warm, lively and invigorating personality, and she touched many lives. We also wanted to share these personal memories of Susana — from her friends, colleagues and mentees — with all the members of the Circle.

As a relative newcomer to the Circle, I did not know Susana for very long. However, the outpouring of emotions and reminiscences when the news was published clearly revealed the affection and esteem in which she was held by Circle members. I would like to turn this issue of the *Gotham Translator* over to those voices.

This issue of the *Gotham Translator* is dedicated to Susana's memory.



IN MEMORIAM: SUSANA GREISS 1920-2006

by Gabe Bokor from obituary which appeared in the Translation Journal on March 21, 2006.

Our beloved and admired colleague, friend, and role model, Susana Greiss, passed away on March 19, 2006.

Susana was born in Russia shortly after the Revolution. Her parents had to leave the country when she was still a child and emigrated to Brazil. Susana lived in Brazil, France, Uruguay, Argentina and, for the past 40 years of her life, in the United States. She spoke Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, French and English fluently and was ATA certified in five language combinations.

Those of us who had the privilege of knowing Susana will have a hard time imagining the ATA and our profession without her. She left her mark on all aspects of our Association and the translation industry. She was one of the

founders of the Portuguese Language Division and the Spanish Language Division, and the founder and Administrator of the Slavic Language Division. She was active in the Certification Program as a language chair and grader. She served as Secretary and Chair of Continuing Education in the New York Circle of Translators. Her presentations about the translation

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profession at ATA Conferences served to introduce many a younger translator to the profession, as did her book *Survival Kit for Translators*.

Susana was always ready to help those in need. She was active in the ATA Mentoring Program and had several mentees under her generous wing.

Susana was an Honorary Member of the American Translators Association and, in 2002, she was awarded the ATA's highest honor, the Gode Medal for distinguished service to the profession.

Susana was featured as the Translator Profile in the April 2000 issue of the *Translation Journal*. ■

The following charities were closest to Susana's heart:

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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

By Rosene Zaros

It is with great sadness that we dedicate this issue of the *Gotham Translator* to

Susana Greiss, our dear friend, colleague, mentor and role model who passed away on March 19, 2006.

I will always remember the day she came into my life. It was at the ATA Conference in Toronto in October of 2004. I had completed Mentee Training in August and was attending another session on Mentoring, hoping that I might learn more about the mentoring process and, perhaps, even find a mentor. After several mentor/mentee pairs spoke about their successes, Susana raised her hand and stood up. "I'm an orphan mentor," she said with a little smile.

She went on to explain that her mentee had underestimated the time and effort required by the mentee-driven program and had not completed the year. As she was talking I took note of her language combinations: Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English. They were the same as mine! For some reason she had

chosen not to include Russian and Italian on her badge. Perhaps it was too small. It was not until later that I realized that she was the Susana Greiss whose articles I had read and loved in my Intro to Translation Studies courses.

At the very first opportunity, I hurried to take the empty seat beside her and introduced myself. We spoke for a bit and she agreed to be my mentor. We made it official before she had to dash off to catch her flight back home. The course of my life changed that day. Before Susana came into my life, being a translator was somewhat of a dream for me, something for the future.

I was very nervous before our first meeting on November 11, 2005. She had graciously agreed to meet me on Veterans' Day so that I would not have to miss a day of work. The weather was still very nice and we walked a bit before having lunch at a little Mexican restaurant near Carnegie Hall. She looked at everything I brought to show her and listened attentively to my life story, after which she told me about herself. When I later related some of her story to other friends, they

expressed disbelief: Nobody could be fluent in that many languages! But, as we all know, Susana was.

When I read her Mentoring Report on our first meeting, I was quite flattered by the things that she said about me. I vowed not to disappoint her and to live up to all her expectations for me. She introduced me to the New York Circle of Translators, which was in a sad state at the time. It was she who called together old members to revitalize the group. She guided me through my first year as editor of the *Gotham* and arranged an internship with Eriksen, Inc. I could see that the "future" was quickly becoming the "present."

As our year was drawing to a close, she stressed that, even though our year as Mentor/Mentee was over, she would always be there for me – never more than a phone call or an e-mail away. In some ways I feel that she still is, but in other ways, it is I who now feel like an "orphan" mentee. I am consoled by the fact that I am not alone in missing her. ■

CALL FOR PAPERS

The *Gotham Translator* accepts and welcomes contributions of articles about all aspects of translation and translator-related issues. These may include, but are not limited to, specific translation problems or approaches to translation, legal issues, and the business of translation. We also welcome dictionary and hardware/software reviews as well as reviews of books, conferences and workshops. The "Members' Voice" section of each issue is devoted to translations, stories, and poetry written by members.

In general, articles and other submissions should be limited to around 1500 words. All text should be submitted as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word format. We prefer unpublished contributions. In the case of previously published submissions, please advise us of this fact at the time of submission. ■

■ SUSANA GREISS, BIG SISTER

Obituary:

"a usu. short account of the significant aspects and accomplishments of a person's life published upon the person's death"

Некролог

"статья, посвященная умершему, с характеристикой его жизни и деятельности"

Nécrologie:

"article sur une personnalité décédée"

Obituário:

"diz-se de ou nota de falecimento ger. publicada em jornal, acompanhada de perfil biográfico do morto"

Necrología:

"noticia comentada acerca de una persona notable, fallecida hace poco tiempo"

Necrologia:

"Cenno biografico di persona morta recentemente"

Dear Susana,

We miss you already. It took more than seven professional translators, the UN and eleven dictionaries to find the concepts, skirt the false cognates and translate just one word into your languages. There is no single replacement for your wisdom and knowledge. And if, as is our wont, we translators you left behind get into a great tizzy and eternal arguments over the above translations, or should they bring us all together, either way we'll miss you even more. Below is some information you forbade me to disclose while we shared this good Earth.

From the original introduction for the *Beginning Translator's Survival Kit* (all

proceeds go to the New York Circle of Translators):

(Note from editor: Susana deletes the following paragraph every time a draft of the book is sent to her.)

"When Susana first asked if I'd be interested in joining her in writing a booklet about the translation profession, I hesitated. My first thought was, 'What in the world could I add to anything Susana Greiss has to say about the translation profession?'"

In her generous, patient way, she suggested I think about the idea, and we'd talk in a day or two, which we did. My response to her in turn, based on the fact that I couldn't believe she'd actually asked me to consider doing this project with her, was to ask permission to take a look at what she was writing to see if there was indeed anything I could offer. In terms of her experience and the wisdom she imparts, of course, what's to add?" (For those of you who own the book, you may now add this to the Introduction.)

In a heart-to-heart conversation long ago, you told me about your life. What has always stuck in my memory is what

happened to you after your family had left Russia and you had contracted tuberculosis in Brazil. You were taken to France for treatment and interred in a medical facility on the coast. Every day they would wheel you out to the beach and leave you for the day. An indelible picture formed in my mind of a little bundled-up girl, all by herself, sitting



and watching the ocean day after day. Every time I've thought of you, been with you or talked to you, I've seen that little girl, who

had entered my heart and stayed there. You were the best translator I've ever known or worked with. You were never once late with a job, and since, as anyone in our profession is aware, "no news is good news" after we deliver the job, my admiration and gratitude were boundless when your translations elicited calls from the clients praising the quality. Once, during a reorganization of our company, you completed a large translation. When it was time to pay, you called and said, "Please do not pay me now, I know you have extra expenses, so pay me when it's convenient for you." Thank you for investing in the profession, in our company and in me; as long as we were in business, you were

too. After 9/11, you called and offered your services for free for the rest of the year. You also volunteered as an interpreter for the families of the victims of that tragedy. At the time, you told me that service to humanity was what was important. Then, last year you called and said you wanted to give something back to the profession that had sustained and nurtured you and allowed you to raise a family. You wrote a book for beginning translators and donated the proceeds to the New York Circle of Translators, a gift that will continue indefinitely, and perhaps increase as the profession grows.

You planted and nurtured the seeds of the Portuguese, Spanish and Russian SIGs in the ATA, you mentored us, you taught us how to study for and pass the certification exams, and thereafter you even graded those exams that launched our careers. We were all so proud when the ATA recognized your lifelong dedication and efforts on its behalf. You won the Gode Medal for all of us; you won it from the trenches; you won it as a translator.

The last memory that will fit in this allotted space was the time I tracked you down in the reception area of the ATA Annual Convention in St Louis. We found a chair for you and I sat on the step below. As we began to talk, a person saw you from across the room and

MEMORIES OF SUSANA GREISS

Susana was my mentor through the ATA program throughout most of last year. She was extremely giving both as a professional and as a person — from her useful advice on dealing with translation agencies to the meals she would prepare for me whenever we had our meetings. She was a formative influence in my life and will be dearly missed.

— Jordan Fox

rushed over to say hello and thank you for something you had done for her.

Then another came, and another, until

there was a stream of

people greeting and

thanking you for one thing and another; I

felt as if I were in a

queen's court. Have

no doubt about it,

our profession did

not lack for royalty.

On that occasion,

you showed me my

own egocentric

world. Up until then,

I had only been

aware of your

generosity and

kindness toward me.

But of course! I

wasn't alone, there

were countless

others! So I can only impart a tiny piece of what your life has meant to so many. Perhaps others will write their stories and share them with the rest of us as well.

Goodbye for now, Oh, Susana! We are comforted to know we have a guardian angel over our shoulders whenever we need her, encouraging us to get it right and offering us a hand up. До свидания; nous nous reverrons un jour; até que nos veremos de novo; hasta que nos volvamos a ver; arrivédérci; until we meet again, from all of us to you, dearest Susana.

Your honorary Little Brother ■

IN-HOUSE POSITION PART-TIME

InterNation, Inc., a translation company specializing in foreign language voice-overs and subtitling with full AV facilities in lower Manhattan, is seeking a production coordinator for an initial part-time opening. Duties vary and will include; search, audition, screening and evaluation of VO talent in any of 85+ languages, coordinating and scheduling recordings, database management, liaison and coordination with other project managers, and special assignments.

Native fluency in Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, French or Mandarin Chinese highly desirable. Knowledge and understanding of the post-production environment and HTML proficiency a plus. Good phone manners, organizational and computer skills a must.

For more information please contact Erick Derkatsch at 212.619.5545 or info@internationinc.com

NYCT APRIL MEETING
MICHAEL SMOLENS, dotSUB LLC

SUBTITLING — NEW INCOME STREAMS FOR TRANSLATORS

Article and interview by Lana Rachkovskaya (based on material provided by presenter)

On April 6, 2006, Michael Smolens of dotSUB LLC made a very informative presentation that raised a lot of questions and made us begin to think in a new direction. The topic of the presentation was "Revolutionary Approach to Subtitling — New Income Streams for Translators," which certainly captured the attention of a lot of people.

Just imagine a world where the stories of every culture would be accessible to all others. Until now, translation of films into multiple and diverse languages has been difficult and expensive. Consequently, only a handful of films are translated each year and, then, only into languages with readily identifiable market audiences.

Michael's company, dotSUB, has developed a free-for-use browser-based subtitling tool that he demonstrated at the meeting. Some members even had a chance to experiment with it. After the initial two rounds of beta-testing, the company is considering the simultaneous pursuit of three different distribution/business models for its tool.

One of them would allow the tool to be used as a plug-in or API (Application Program Interface) — which would allow the tool to be embedded on any

website. The second would provide film makers with a means to have their films/videos subtitled through dotSUB on a work for hire basis. This would have the potential to create thousands of immediate income opportunities for translators that did not exist before dotSUB. The third option, which is the most radical, would be to locate and to obtain the appropriate permissions from thousands of film makers around the world who wish to have their films seen but have no money, and then to create multiple language versions of these never-before-seen films and make them available for free, non-commercial viewing on the web. The company is planning to experiment with numerous emerging digital distribution models for their unique catalogue of multilingual/multi-cultural films and, thus, to create income for the filmmaker, for the translator, and for dotSUB. This concept is currently impossible under traditional media rules.

The company invented this new approach to subtitling from which I, personally, believe the industry will benefit tremendously. Besides the options that

were presented at the meeting, one can think of so many applications for this tool in the translation and subtitling industries.

According to Michael, completely new income streams can be created for translators who select those films they would

Just imagine a world
where the stories of
every culture would be
accessible to all others.

like to translate (or check the translation of others). Translators will receive 10% of all revenue derived from accepted translations of films, as well as a credit at the end of the film and a link to the translator's URL. The

company is launching this global experiment (beta-test), in all languages and all translators are encouraged and welcome to participate. Just go to <http://dotSUB.com> and see how much fun it is. In the first three weeks on line, the six short films on the site have thus far been subtitled by volunteers into 31 different languages — Abkhazian, Afrikaans, Arabic, Catalan, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Farsi, French, Galician, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hungarian, Japanese, Kinyaunda, Polish, Portuguese-Brazil; Portuguese-Portugal, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish,

Tamil, Uzbek.

dotSUB believes strongly in the power of open-source business methods and models. Wikipedia quickly became the largest and most visited encyclopedia by opening itself up to submission from anyone, without any pre-ordained quality or submission standards. The nature of open source, like nature, is organic and it creates its own structures, quality control systems, and hierarchies. The other well known successful open-source effort is the Linux operating system, which has become, totally through the passion of its volunteers, a major threat to Microsoft.

All of this content is being made available only in its native language, and its creators/distributors are focused on how to position themselves in this rapidly changing landscape — they do not yet have the luxury of thinking about other languages. dotSUB makes it possible for all this video content to be made available in all languages, at the lowest price, using various business models.

It is impossible to predict how the future of digital distribution of films will evolve, or what the various revenue models might be. However, the company is sure that more people in every country of the world need to have a better understanding of other cultures, and the easiest and best way to do this is through their films. The range of applications for dotSUB tools is unlimited: Filmmaking and Distribution, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)/Non-Profits/Governments, Education, Global

Digital Film Distribution Network, Corporations. It becomes obvious that translation companies would be eager to explore the possibility of using this tool in their processes where the quality will be controlled by the translation companies and freelance translators will be hired for the subtitling projects the same way as for any other translation-related project. Therefore, it really makes sense to make ourselves familiar with this new trend and understand how it can and will be used in the modern translation industry where technology becomes more and more advanced.

After the presentation we asked Michael a few questions:

NYCT: Your topic raised a lot of questions and discussions during the presentation. Do you think it's a good sign?

Michael Smolens: Yes.

NYCT: And, would those comments affect what you are doing right now?

Michael Smolens: Not at all. I spoke with scores of translators at a prior presentation. I had a good idea of what the feedback would be — the questions from the audience were consistent with my earlier conversations. I just wanted to make sure that the presentation covers

what the translators need to know. We thought very carefully about all the questions asked previously.

NYCT: You are a successful businessmen who works in areas that have very little to do with translation. What actually made you come up with this idea?

Michael Smolens: The first event happened in the 90s in Azerbaijan when I was doing a project there and I had an Azeri cell phone. In the middle of nowhere, I had such a clear connection. That was where the idea came from — to use com-

munications technology. A part of this thinking was video technology and penetration of the Internet, and that there probably would be a way to create a program that would enable interested people around the world to volunteer their time to the project so that everybody would have a chance to share the culture. I thought this offered a very interesting opportunity to create a new area of business that is currently overlooked.

NYCT: What do you envision for your tool in the future? How do you think it will be applied by people?

Michael Smolens: I hope that people will use it as a verb "to dotSUB" — any time they want a video to be done in other languages, they would say, "I want to "dutSUB" it. The use of the tool would become ubiquitous.

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NYCT MARCH MEETING
KERRI MODLA, VICE-PRESIDENT OF SALES, MERRILL BRINK INTERNATIONAL

MARKETING AND SALES FOR FREELANCE TRANSLATORS

Article and interview by Lana Rachkovskaya

Con March 1, 2006, Kerri Modla, Vice-President of Sales from Merrill Brink International made a very interesting and useful presentation on Marketing and Sales for Freelance Translators. Kerri Modla has devoted most of her professional career to sales in the translation industry and works for one of the largest translation companies in the world. Merrill Brink International is a division of Merrill Corporation. The company came into existence when Merrill acquired PH Brink in 2005. The company has offices in New York, Minneapolis, London and Galway. The companies have a combined experience of 25 years serving the translation industry.

Kerri Modla began by declaring that the translation field is a growing multibillion dollar industry where the earning potential for translators is huge. She further explained that her company works in various verticals — legal, financial, technical, medical and corporate translations.

The main question for everyone was "How do I succeed?" This was addressed by Kerri in a very motivational manner: It all comes down to having the ambition and knowing what you want to accomplish. She further suggested that the translators should target companies with

a need for their areas of expertise. She stressed that the knowledge of the relevant translation technology is extremely important in our day and age. "Continue to expand your knowledge", stated Kerri.

Another important aspect of achieving success is being a good time manager. As a translator, you need to determine whether you want to become a SLV (single language vendor) or whether you want to expand your business and become an agency. Being a team player is also very important in our business. Project managers, sales people, translators and editors — we are a team. It is critical for translators to have excellent communication with their project managers and their colleagues. Be responsible and responsive — this will secure your business.

Kerri basically laid out a plan for translators to start their marketing campaign: have your resumes ready, start sending them out, have your business cards with you at all times and/or send them out, compile a pamphlet about your services, design a website and market yourself. Kerri also explained that translators should constantly be thinking about their business opportunities — no matter where you are: in the elevator, on the plane, at a conference, all you need is to

talk to people and pass your business cards along. But, be prepared to tell somebody in a short period of time about yourself.

Kerri's presentation was very interactive — we all had a chance to participate. A lot of questions were asked, many were answered and generally everyone felt motivated. Kerri explained that legal and financial work is readily available here in New York and those translators who specialize in these areas are in a great position.

Kerri also talked about prospecting and how she personally prospects for her clients. It is not easy and requires a lot of discipline and persistence. "Continuously putting yourselves out there and planting the seed — the more you do that, the more business you will get", stated Kerri. You have to have a suit of armor when prospecting — just pick up the phone and make your calls. With every "no" you get, you get closer to a "yes". Just decide for yourself that for the next 3 days you'll be making the calls as per your list and do it. "If you do that, you will generate business", guaranteed our speaker. According to Kerri, "prospecting" is the most challenging; however, she can confirm from her own experience — the person who calls a lot, will

succeed. "There is a simple formula to success", says Kerri: "Jobs/Projects = Sales = Success"

Kerri also talked about the current situation in the translations market. It appears that the market is very different from what it was ten or even five years ago. A lot of factors affect our business. However, Kerri assured us that in the translation field, the sky is the limit .

Global companies will always need translation services, because of litigations and lawsuits. This industry is the great industry to be in and being up to date on the new technology will help you to benefit even more.

After the presentation we asked Kerri several questions:

NYCT: Kerri, do you think anyone can sell translations?

Kerri: That's a difficult question because it really depends... To be able to sell translations, you need to have the background. In my opinion, you need to have an international angle — you need to be able to understand other cultures. And you have to be very motivated and ambitious. Let's make an analogy here: Translators to me are artists — it's a special skill that they have. You have to

have a natural ability. Being able to sell is a natural ability. When you look at

As a translator, you need to determine whether you want to become a SLV (single language vendor) or whether you want to expand your business and become an agency.

artists — can they successfully sell their artwork? Can translators successfully sell their skills? In my opinion, it's best for translators to work with translation companies. Let the translation company get the sale and the translator can deliver. It is rare to find someone who has the capability of being a

translator and also is able to sell directly to companies and law firms.

NYCT: What motivates you when you get up in the morning and you know that you have to sell?

Kerri: Money.

NYCT: Anything else?

Kerri: My financial goals, pressure from my boss. That's about it.

NYCT: Do you ever get nervous when you are on a sales call with a client? And how do you overcome this feeling?

Kerri: I only feel nervous with a prospective client if their industry is something that I'm not familiar with, for example, biotechnology. The way I deal with it is to do extensive research on their industry. That's really the only time I get nervous. I also have other people

who have the expertise needed.

NYCT: Is there a "best time" to be making sales calls?

Kerri: Yes, I would say typically that Tuesday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm is prime time, with the exception of lunch.

NYCT: How far should one go in terms of persistence with clients?

Kerri: Until they tell you to stop calling.

NYCT: How do you avoid being annoying and pushy during the sales call?

Kerri: Extremely polite, soft sell, and I typically defer to the client and ask them how they would like to move forward.

NYCT: What are the signs that tell you that you should not continue a sales call?

Kerri: There is a client I've been after for probably about eight months now, and we've done a couple of small projects for them. The client mentioned pricing as an issue a couple of times and when I recently met with the client, pricing came up again. I reviewed the pricing and found that we'd given the lowest rates, so now I'm cutting them off. There is nothing more we can do and I had to communicate this to the client. This is an example of not comparing translation providers of the same level and magnitude.

NYCT: But, what if you are on the phone with a client that you are trying to sell? What are the signs that tell you that you should stop?

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Kerri: The signs are that you feel that you are being given the run around. Even in that situation, it is appropriate to ask, "Would you seriously consider my services or is there somebody else I should talk to within your company?"

NYCT: So you are just suggesting taking it a step further?

Kerri: Yes.

NYCT: As we all know, translation agencies receive hundreds of resumes. How do you get through to them?

Kerri: You have to treat it like a sales call to a company that you want to hire you. Persistence is critical.

NYCT: But the competition is so huge. How do you get noticed?

Kerri: Persistence again. And if you can give names of organizations you've done translation work for, that would be excellent to share.

NYCT: Because your experience would make you stand out, right?

Kerri: Yes. That's correct.

NYCT: Is it harder to sell now than in the past?

Kerri: Yes. Because there are so many translation providers and pricing is very competitive.

NYCT: In your opinion, can a freelance translator dare to charge premium rates these days without fear of being rejected for a job?

In this market I don't see how translators can charge premium rates unless they have highly specific areas of expertise.

Kerri: In this market I don't see how translators can charge premium rates unless they have highly specific areas of expertise. We are talking about people who have Ph.Ds in their area of expertise.

NYCT: Some sales people suggest that you should come up with a formula as to how many calls you should be making per day. What do you think about that?

Kerri: Yes, I agree. I would say I need to make ten phone calls a day, and then once a month I'll do an e-mail blast by sending marketing .pdf files that could go out to a hundred contacts.

NYCT: Do you find e-mailing is an effective prospecting tool?

Kerri: Yes. It has to be done on the regular basis

NYCT: Don't you think people will complain about receiving unsolicited e-mails?

Kerri: Maybe. It depends on what the content is. For example, if you can share recent news, updates in the industry, basic information that would be a bit useful to the prospect, that would be good.

NYCT: What do you think are the most popular areas for translation right now? Legal, Medical?

Kerri: Every market. All markets are growing.

NYCT: Well, literary translations would not be that popular vs. legal and financial?

Kerri: Definitely. Legal, Financial, I would say, is a vast market and will only continue to grow.

NYCT: How about Pharmaceutical?

Kerri: Yes. Strong growth market.

NYCT: Thank you so much for your time, Kerri.

After Kerri's presentation one could not help

but feel powerful and start thinking about new goals. I think everyone needs to be reminded of the business opportunities once in a while in order to be motivated, and it certainly was helpful to get advice from someone who successfully is selling translations in our industry. ■

E-mailing has to be done on a regular basis to be an effective prospecting tool.

REVIEW OF NYCT MARCH MEETING

by Betty Welker

The New York Circle of Translators was pleased to welcome Kerri Modla, Vice President, Translation Sales, Merrill Brink International, to its March meeting held at the Foundation Center near Union Square. Merrill Brink has its headquarters in Minnesota, with offices in New York City and Galway, Ireland. Ms. Modla is based here in New York and specializes in what she described as "taking medical device manufacturers global." This requires translators with special skills in localization (the work is primarily out of English) and a subject background in the life and health sciences.

Ms. Modla has a varied background in the translation field, including previous positions at Berlitz and Accent on Language, in addition to living and working in Japan for an extended period of time. She focused her presentation on how translators can successfully sell their services. While the Circle has had other presentations and workshops on this subject, here was an opportunity to hear from someone who is in the business of selling her company's services and hiring translators. These were some of the key points she mentioned:

- Ambition, energy and enthusiasm, how much do you want it?
- Expertise, have you got it? For example, the translators who work for her must be highly qualified professionals, because of the potential risk inherent to medical device when misused. Translators are involved in writing the patient instructions and directions for use. Her company is certified by the International Standards Organization and must meet its standards.
- Knowledge. This is a given. Translators must know their languages and have a subject specialty.
- Good time manager. Another given, or translators will not be able to meet those deadlines.
- Computer equipment and software. Keep them up to date.
- Team player. Shared projects require a team.
- Excellent communications skills. Translators must have them in order to work with clients and project managers.

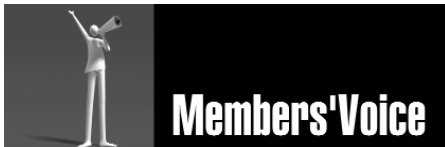
In addition translators need to have the following basic items:

- an effective résumé [discussed at length in the February issue of the ATA Chronicle]
- business cards
- a tri-fold pamphlet
- web site
- a brief "elevator pitch": a description of who you are and what you do in a nutshell, which can be used anytime, anywhere and anyplace you meet someone who may be able to use or knows someone who can use your services.

Translators may adapt some of the techniques Ms. Modla uses in her own work, which she referred to as Prospecting 101 and "dialing for dollars." When prospecting for new clients, she uses sales leads developed by using Hoovers and other business directories. At any given time, she may be working on 20-30 different companies, where she is planting the seeds for future work. All of this effort takes time, and the majority of calls will be rejections. One needs a suit of armor to handle them. However, as she puts it, "each rejection gets you one step closer to a yes."

Practically speaking, most translators work for agencies, and it is up to the translator to sell his/her services to the agency and/or project manager. In order to do that, translators need to have an aggressive presentation, whether face-to-face or by telephone. Although she believes the translation industry is a strong and growing industry, the reality is that some translators may have to accept jobs with high volume but low rates. Others will have specialized skills that command a higher earning potential. [See the March issue of the ATA Chronicle for highlights from the latest compensation survey. The full report may be ordered from the ATA. The web site is www.atanet.org]

An extensive Q and A period followed with a request for business cards and résumés. ■



Several members have expressed a desire to read both the original and the translation of work by members. I hope to "get the ball rolling", so to speak, with the following poem:



PARADA by Pedro Salinas

¡Qué trémulo es el estar
de recién llovida gota
en la hoja
de este arbusto! Cuando iba
fatal, de la nube al suelo,
la delgada hojilla verde
corta su paso
y la para. ¡Qué milagro!
¿La va a sacar de la tierra,
que está tan cerca, a tres palmos,
ávida esperando?
¿o será sólo descanso,
desesperada estación
colgante, allí en el camino
de su arriba a su abajo?
¿La hojilla, verde antesala
sólo, breve, deliciosa,
de su tránsito?
Esta vida, columpiándose,
no es vida, dulce es retraso
de un morir que no perdona.
Un destino se estremece
en la punta de este ramo,
cuando el pesar de la gota
hace inclinarse a la hoja,
ya casi rendida. Pero
si hay algo letal que oprime
algo verde hay que resiste;
si algo hay que hacia un suelo llama,
algo hay trémulo, que salva.
Y la hoja se doblega, va cediendo,
con su gran menuda carga
de tanto y tanto cristal
celeste mas no lo rinde,

otra vez se yergue y alza,
su luz diamante, en volandas,
Morir, vivir, equilibrio
estremecido; igual pesan
en esta verde balanza.
Puro silencio, el jardín
se hace escenario del drama.
La pausa entre vida y muerte
fascinada tiene, toda
sin aliento, a la mañana.
De miedo, nada se mueve.
La inminencia de un peligro
-muerte de una gota clara-
crea en torno ondas de calma.
¿Y ahora...?
Si no sopla un aire súbito,
si un pájaro violento
que no sabe lo que ocurre
no se cala en el arbusto,
si un inocente que juega
al escondite no viene
a sacudir esta rama.
Si el sol, la luna, los astros,
los vientos, el mundo entero
se están quietos.
Si no pasa nada, nada,
y un presente se hace eterno,
vivirá la gota clara
muchas horas, horas, largas,
ya sin horas, tiempos, siglos
así, como está,
entre la nube y el limo
salvada.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pedro Salinas y Serrano was born on November 27, 1891, in Madrid, Spain. He died on December 4, 1951, in Boston Massachusetts. The Spanish poet, scholar, dramatist, and essayist was one of the outstanding writers of the "Generation of 1927", a group of poets that included Jorge Guillén and Federico García Lorca.



**ABOUT THE
TRANSLATOR**

Rosene Zaros, in addition to editing *The Gotham Translator*, is a teacher and free-lance translator living in Asbury Park, New Jersey. She translates from French, Spanish, and Portuguese into English.

RESPIRE translated by Rosene Zaros

How tremulous is the living room
of the newly fallen raindrop
on the leaf
of this bush! On its terrible
course from the cloud to the ground
the slender little green leaf
breaks its fall
and stops it. Amazing!
Is it going to save it from the earth,
which is so close, only three hand spans
away,
thirsty, waiting?
Or will it be only a respite,
a desperate station-stop
suspended, there on its way
from above to below?
The little leaf, a green waiting room
only, brief, delightful,
in its passing on?
This life, swinging back and forth,
is not life, it is the sweet delay
of an unrelenting death.
Its fate is trembling on the tip of this
branch,
as the weight of the raindrop
causes the leaf to droop,
already almost worn out. But
if there is something fatal that oppresses
there is something green that resists;
if there is something that beckons toward
the ground,
there is something tremulous, that over-
comes.
And the leaf
bends, begins to yield,
with its grand little burden,

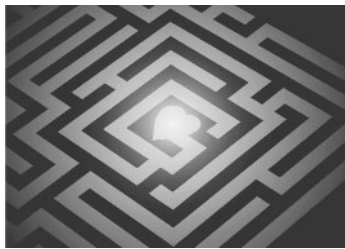
from so much celestial
crystal; but it does not relinquish it,
once more it rises up and lifts,
its sparkling diamond, in the air.
Life and death tremble
in equilibrium, they are one and the same
on that green balance-scale.
Only silence, the garden
forms the backdrop of the drama.
The pause between life and death
has the morning fascinated,
all breathless.
Fear-stricken, nothing moves.
The imminence of peril
- the death of a crystal raindrop -
creates surrounding waves of calm.
And now?
If no sudden breeze blows,
if no awkward bird,
ignorant of what is happening,
swoops into the bush,
if no innocent child playing
hide and seek comes
to shake that branch.
If the sun, the moon, the stars,
the winds, the entire world
remain motionless.
If nothing happens, nothing,
and the present becomes eternity,
the crystal-clear raindrop will live
many hours, long hours
already without hours, ages, centuries
thus, just as it is, saved
between the cloud and the mud.

CIRCLE NEWS

■ A LOVE STORY

This month we have a love story in the news. It comes from our dear friend and colleague, Michelle Mead, who has made us laugh many times with her hilarious stories about her French mother and her travels around the world. When I heard that she was engaged, I asked if she would share her story with us. She agreed and here it is:

In 1973, when I was in my last year of Goucher College, majoring in French Literature, I met and fell in love with a handsome young lawyer, John Armor. We got engaged,



and lived in a fantastic houseboat in Baltimore, which John designed, and had built.

Unfortunately, we were both young and foolish, and we wound up split-

ting up. I left the country for Sydney, Australia, where I lived for 5 years, then Paris, where I lived for 14 years. In 1994, I moved to Turtle Bay in midtown Manhattan, where I have lived ever since.

About two years ago, Susan Shapiro, a freelance writer living in Manhattan, came out with a book, *Five Men Who Broke My Heart*. She had tracked down the five old boyfriends, to find out what had gone wrong with their romances. That got me thinking about my long lost love, John. Fortunately, we now live in the days of the Internet, and after Googling his name, I had numerous hits, including his two websites. I wrote him an e-mail in December 2004, and shortly afterward, received a delightful reply. We exchanged several e-mails, and briefly caught up on the last 31 years.

In October of last year, John told me he was coming up to New York, and asked to see me. As you can imagine,



I wished I were thirty years younger, and thirty pounds lighter. Still, we had a marvelous time, and shortly after, I went down to visit him in his farmhouse on top of Kettle Rock Mountain in Western North Carolina.

To make a long story short, we are once again engaged to be married. I'll be moving down to North Carolina by the end of the year – to a

town of 909 inhabitants, quite the switch from Manhattan. I'm hoping to keep up my interest in the ATA, and join the CATI (Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters). John is currently running for Congress from 11th District of North Carolina, and by the time this comes out, the May 2nd Primary should be over. One thing is for sure – life still has a lot of surprises and adventures in store for both of us. ■

■ NYCT MAY MEETING

Speaker:

Mark Ratafia, Beacon Partners, CPA

Topic:

Tax Planning and Savings.

When:

Thursday, May 4, 2006 from 6:30 to 8:00 PM

New Location:

American National Standards Institute
25 West 43rd Street, 4th Floor
(between 5th and 6th Avenues)
New York, NY 10036

The topic will cover the most operationally efficient legal and tax structures for freelance translators and businesses.

Please join us for dinner afterwards at:

Kellari Taverna
(Cuisine: Greek)
19 West 44th Street
New York, NY 10036



(continued from page 7)

NYCT: Since you mentioned the name again, where does the name "dotSUB" come from?

Michael Smolens: It comes from several months of brainstorming among the founders of the company, looking at hundreds of names that have to do with subtitling until we found something that would sound sharp and hip. It sort of reflects the idea of "Internet subtitling" in that combination.

NYCT: Do you think your company will develop any other tools — or does it have plans for developing other tools that can be applied in the translations industry?

Michael Smolens: We will have another tool complimenting this tool in about five weeks. The deadline is June 1, 2006. We will automate the process of the transcript — web-browser tool. We will later integrate audio with this. Just like right now you can take a pre-existing transcript and the film will be subtitled.

The next step is that once you have the transcript in English and other languages, we want someone to be able to read into a microphone as if they were dubbing. The dubbing and subtitling are different skills but we would like to combine them with the help of translators around the world. I have admiration for the work of translators, and knowing how technology is a scary advance for some translators, I think this is the way to create a new revenue and stream of income for translators that never existed before.

NYCT: This would replace the current voice-over process?

Michael Smolens: It can't. They hire actors and actresses for the film voice-overs with different male and female voices. In this case it would have only one person. It will not replace or compete with normal voice-over. It's a different animal. This is the opportunity to take the concept and enable other people to see this material. Another issue is the price of this, This is going to be much cheaper than under current circumstances. One of the concepts is the commercial hire for pay — this is a new source of revenue. Another scenario is making money on future work. There are different ways to earn money.

NYCT: What kind of feedback did you get from translators who used the tool?

Michael Smolens: The feedback almost universally was that it's easy and that it's fun. We want to make translations fun. It's difficult right now to explain the entire concept without people using the tool. We want to attract people who have never done subtitling before. For instance, an Arabic translator had some important comments about how to make the whole thing better, which we will incorporate into our process. In general, we had a very positive feedback.

NYCT: What kind of material will potentially be displayed for translation on your website?

Michael Smolens: All kinds. There is no limit. It could be narrative, documentary, independent, or public service announcements. Any video content, there is no particular genre.

NYCT: If you had to describe your product very briefly, what would you say?

Michael Smolens: A browser-based tool that enables film to be subtitled from one language to another language on the fly, in real time, without any downloads, at no cost.

NYCT: Thank you so much for your time, Michael. It's been a true pleasure speaking with you.

Michael Smolens: I'm very excited about getting immersed in this experiment with

lots of people all over the world. Thank you.

In conclusion, don't be limited by your high expectations for earnings from using the tool at this point in the time. Try to broaden your horizons and see the big picture — this tool is something that will change the entire approach to the subtitling industry and, therefore, you will eventually be affected by it. Just as we first hesitated about using translation memory tools and other software, I have no doubt that this tool somehow will be integrated into our industry, and we will be working with it in the very near future. ■

I have admiration for the work of translators, and knowing how technology is a scary advance for some translators, I think this is the way to create a new revenue and stream of income for translators that never existed before.



**THE GOTHAM
TRANSLATOR**



The New York Circle of Translators (NYCT) is a New York State not-for-profit corporation grouping independent translators and interpreters as well as companies and organizations. It is a chapter of the American Translators Association (ATA) which is, in turn, an affiliate of the International Federation of Translators (FIT).

NYCT members work in a variety of languages and specialties. Our members are committed to the exchange of ideas and mutual support. One of our goals is to educate the general public about the professional nature of interpreting and translating.

NYCT members enjoy the following benefits:

- Free monthly meetings featuring speakers on all aspects of the translation profession
- Networking opportunities at monthly dinners and annual holiday party
- Professional development workshops and seminars
- Subscription to our newsletter, The Gotham Translator
- Listings in the NYCT Online Membership Directory and the annual NYCT printed Membership Directory
- Referrals (if you indicate that you accept them, existing members may direct work requests to you or clients may contact you directly)

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