



NOTA BENE

Vol. XXVII, No. 2

March 2004

Upcoming Events

ATA Certification Exam

Saturday, June 19, 2004, 10:00 a.m.
Satterfield Hall,
Kent State University

**Interested parties need to apply for ATA membership
by May 19th and register for the exam by June 5th.**

East Side Discussion Group:

Wednesdays, April 14, May 12, June 9,
7:00 p.m. at Borders in Solon

West Side Discussion Group:

Wednesdays, March 31, April 28, May 26,
7:00 p.m. at the Tri-C West Campus

La Tertulia

3/14 (En → Sp)	6/13 (En → Sp)
3/28 (Sp → En)	6/27 (Sp → En)
4/18 (En → Sp)	7/11 (En → Sp)
5/02 (Sp → En)	7/25 (Sp → En)
5/16 (En → Sp)	8/08 (En → Sp)
5/30 (Sp → En)	



22 translators gathered in early January in the computer lab of the Institute for Applied Linguistics at Kent State University to learn about the various Trados tools. In addition to some of our own NOTA members, attendees came from as far away as Bowling Green, southern Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania. One ATA board member even flew in from South Carolina to attend. The seminar was led by Jill Sommer and Anne Chemali and received wonderful feedback from the attendees.

La Tertulia

continues to meet every other Sunday at 3:00 p.m.
at **AROMA COFFEE**
(445 E. EXCHANGE, AKRON).

We continue to face up to the challenge of translation, and we have even devoted some time to consecutive and simultaneous interpretation. We strongly believe that our experience in these sessions is not only relevant and meaningful to our everyday work, but also contributes to the advancement of our professionalism as we seek to establish a respected position for our profession. For our upcoming meetings see the above schedule.

Come and join us! For more information contact:

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Welcome to our new members

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NOTA BENE is published by the Northeast Ohio Translators Association, a chapter of the American Translators Association.

Other newsletters are welcome to reprint materials from NOTA BENE, provided they acknowledge the source and send us a copy.

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NOTA membership fees:

Individual:	\$20.00/yr
Corporate/Institutional:	\$30.00/yr
Student:	\$10.00/yr

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President's Message

Spring is almost here. After the brutal winter I am thrilled to hear the birds chirping. It can't be long until the snow and ice are a distant memory, and we once again see buds sprouting from the ground and the trees.

It has been quite a ride over the last few months. NOTA continues to grow by leaps and bounds. We currently have 111 members and two pending applications. The Trados seminar in January was extremely successful, and we were able to welcome four new members because of it and gain a lot of professional standing with the ATA board. The feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly positive, and we are already receiving follow-up reports from the participants who have upgraded or are busy importing their terminology lists into MultiTerm. We are also receiving many inquiries about when the next seminar will be held. We are planning a one-day seminar on Internet research in May or June, which was a direct result from my WinAlign portion of the Trados seminar. I frequently find entire English texts of my German translations on the Web and will be offering tips on how to use search engines more effectively. More on that later!

After a severe job drought in December and January, I was seriously considering hanging up my hat as a translator. However, I decided to be proactive and start a very successful e-mail marketing campaign instead. I chose not to send my resume right off, but instead sent a "cover e-mail" to the ATA corporate members detailing my background and experience and gave them the choice of requesting more information. I am pleased to report that I have been flooded with work ever since. I'm kicking myself that I didn't do this sooner. It was such a simple solution and has already resulted in a few new clients, who are keeping me extremely busy. I shared my experience and tips in early to mid-February at the East Side Discussion Group as well as La Tertulia. If the interest is there, I will be happy to post them on our web site as well.

With that in mind, I would like to take this time to address something that has become a problem in the last few weeks. Perhaps it is because I have become extremely busy and no longer have the time to answer every inquiry in detail, but it seems like everyone has a question about the industry nowadays and is running straight to me for the answer. Don't get me wrong, I enjoy helping you all, but that is why we have the NOTA listserv. I would like to encourage you all to use the Internet – but most especially the NOTA listserv – to look for answers to your questions about translation and interpreting. I am only one person, whereas the NOTA listserv has a variety of members with varying backgrounds who may be more suited to answer your specific questions.

Also, we have established a committee for the web site. Since the web site is there to serve its members, the committee would really like feedback from the members as to what should be included on the site and how to improve its appearance. If you are interested in serving on the committee, please let me know. The only requirements are that you work well in a group and have a few minutes to communicate via e-mail with the other members. Anne Chemali has also arranged a meeting with two local programmers about programming the member database. Hopefully we will have it up and running by the ATA conference at the very latest.

I hope you all have a very successful and enjoyable spring.

Jill Sommer

A Practical Guide for Translators

by Geoffrey Samuelsson-Brown. Bristol, PA: Multilingual Matters, 1993. (xi + 142 pp.)
ISBN 1-85359-188-2 (paperback), 1-85359-189-0 (clothbound)

Review by David L. Parker

The words "A Practical Guide" were what first intrigued me enough to buy this book. It "is intended for those who have little or no practical experience of translation in a commercial environment" (back cover). Not that I consider myself as being in that situation at this point, but nevertheless, I sensed that there would probably be useful information in it for me. And there is.

The guide contains chapters on the basics of becoming a translator, working environment & tools of the trade, data retrieval and file management, quality control and accessibility, presentation/delivery of translations, running your own translation business and "what to do if things go wrong."

For me, the first really valuable page for a beginning translator is devoted to questions the translator should ask him/herself before accepting a job. Some are perfectly obvious. Others are less so, for example, "Will the client be sending the translation to a foreign subsidiary for checking? If so, can constructive comments be relayed back to me?" Also, "Is there a particular house style which should be adhered to?"

He doesn't come down on one side or the other on the source word vs. target word billing dilemma. But, even if the translator is charging by target word and puts in conversion factor on the number of source words (to give the client some kind of ball park estimate up front), that method is not always reliable because "there is little or no comparable ratio that can be applied to all word processing packages." (p. 77)

Dealing with the matter of how fast checking/editing (by which I assume he means, in the main, seeing whether any mistranslations have occurred) and proofreading can be done, he quotes these figures:

"Checking and proofreading take time, if they are to be done properly. It takes about an hour to proofread about 6-10 pages of translated text *and* [italics mine] compare it with the original (assuming about 300 words per page)." (p. 58) So, 1800 –3000 words per hour, i.e., 30-50 words per minute to do both operations, proofreading and editing? Now, he doesn't make it clear whether that is simply his speed or it is an average of his own and several other translators he has polled to come up with those numbers. As a point of interest, in the appendix there are several pages showing the British Standard proofreading marks. To what

extent the American ones would be the same, I do not know.

Again, as regards differential rates for evening/weekend rush jobs, he suggests a 25% surcharge for evening work (he doesn't say when the evening begins for him --- 5 PM? 6 PM?) and a 50% surcharge for weekend work.

Perhaps the most valuable part of the book, for me at least, is a series of flow charts in the chapter "What To Do If Things Go Wrong." At many points in these flow charts, one will proceed along depending on whether the question at that point is answered *Yes* or *No*. These flow charts cover the following problems, among others: 1. The translation was not received by the client on time. 2. The translation is (supposedly) incorrect. 3. The translated text is incomplete. 4. The style of the translation is unsuitable for the intended purpose. 5. The client is not satisfied with the service provided.

Concerning this last problem, he brings up an interesting point to consider. If the dispute cannot be handled by informal discussion, it may have to be referred to "one of the professional associations or your insurance brokers" for arbitration. However, this should come as no surprise to the client, since "you should have this stated in your terms of business" (pp. 95-96). The professional association he mentions is the ATC (Association of Translation Companies), presumably a UK-only organization. Whether the ATA assumes a similar function in the US, I do not know, but there are probably NOTA members who do.

A couple of caveats: Since the copyright date of the book is 1993, some of the computer information is obviously out of date. Also, it will not take long for the reader to discover that the book seems to be targeted primarily at translators living in the UK. Certainly everything in the chapter "Professional Organizations for Translators" is strictly UK-related. And all money figures are quoted in pounds, not dollars. Similarly, there are other UK-terms that the author simply assumes you are familiar with, an A4 size sheet of paper, for instance (the closest size the UK has to an 8 ½ x 11 in.).

All in all though, I feel this book is a worthwhile read, especially for those in the relatively early stages of their translating career.

**Please let us know if you would be willing to receive the NOTA BENE via e-mail.
It would be faster and save our organization quite a bit of money.**

"The Interpreter's Rx Revisited"

by John P. Shaklee

During the past five years as a telephone interpreter, I have had to interpret in many medical settings. They ranged from an emergency room where a frantic mother tried to explain why her baby was ill to a nurse anesthesiologist who requested a sight translation of a consent form. I needed a reliable and easy-to-use text for quick consultation. The Interpreter's Rx, now ten years old, has filled the gap well. I believe those who are considering medical interpreting would benefit from a look at this training program. There are many other texts available on the market. Let's consider this one of the possibilities.

The Interpreter's Rx

Author: Holly Mikkelson

Publisher: ACEBO

Publication date: 1994

Number of pages: 262

Number of cassettes: 3

ISBN: 1-8880594-11-0

Price: \$65

Available from: www.acebo.com

Holly Mikkelson is the author of ACEBO's interpreter training products and Director of the International Interpretation Resource Center (IIRC) at the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS) in Monterey, California. She has been a professional court interpreter and translator since she received her M.A. from MIIS in 1976. Holly is a state and federally certified court interpreter and is certified by the American Translators Association. She conducts training workshops throughout the United States, and has been a consultant to numerous court-interpreter testing and regulatory entities, including the California Judicial Council and the National Center for State Courts.

The training package for Spanish speakers includes a 262-page text and a set of three one-hour audio cassettes. The Rx covers Sight Translation, Consecutive Interpretation, and Simultaneous Interpretation. The text, with an extensive reference section including specialized bi-directional glossaries and anatomical illustrations, sets a standard for training medical interpreters for several settings, such as hospitals or a doctor's office. The Interpreter's Rx is ideal for those studying for medical interpreting certification exams.

The format consists of two columns per page with lexical units in boldface for an easy read. After more than five years of hard use, the binding on my copy is still intact. The book is divided into four chapters, three for training purposes and the fourth for terminology. The training chapters describe the three modes of interpreting medical interpreters regularly use (sight, consecutive and simultaneous). The reference section provides terms not

found in any specific dictionary, but from the author's experience over the years in situations such as interpreting in emergency rooms. In addition to terms, The Interpreter's Rx provides clear graphics of internal and external views of organs, bones and body parts.

For those averse to Web-based training or who don't have the funds to devote a semester to study in Monterey, this book offers a self-study section. Interspersed in this section are tips on how to better skill sets. For example, the author suggests, "Interpreting isn't a skill you can develop overnight. Don't try to move through the lessons too quickly, or you won't acquire the mastery you'll need to be a professional medical interpreter." Rx is also ready for use in the classroom, and the author provides suggestions on how to utilize the text in conjunction with supplemental materials.

The layout makes it easy to rifle through the text quickly when on the job. Before I knew the correct protocol, one of my fears as an interpreter was what to do if I had to look up a word. Wouldn't I look foolish? How long would it take? The categories printed in upper case letters atop each page and the clear illustrations make it easy to use this text as an on-the-spot reference for cardiovascular/gynecology/obstetric terms, among others.

The sight translation lessons help the interpreter read a document smoothly in the B or target language in situations when the interpreter is asked to sight translate. A clever addition to the lesson is samples with different typefaces and formats so the interpreter will feel at ease with various types of documents. The author suggests that you record some of the sight translation exercises for self-monitoring. Exercises include: Consent for Testing Blood to Detect Antibodies to the HIV Virus, Accident Report and four *informes médicos*/medical reports. The Consent for Angiogram text is a particularly good example of the dense and sometimes quirky idiom of medicine: Try this rendering with no preparation: "Bleeding at the puncture site, clotting at the puncture site, pain with catheter and needle placement are local problems that will be watched for carefully during the procedure." (Mikkelson 1-14)

The tapes contain consecutive and simultaneous lessons with accompanying scripts. The consecutive lessons are from typical medical situations, such as obtaining a medical history, hospital admissions and a visit to a cardiologist. Here the student will find concise instructions on how to practice with the tapes. Another training aspect details how to strengthen listening skills that are requisite in consecutive interpreting. An interpreter can choose to take notes or not, develop a set of symbols, or depend on visual memory for an accurate rendering.

Each simultaneous interpreting lesson is preceded by a shadowing exercise on the same subject matter as the lesson. Shadowing means to repeat verbatim what you hear in the

same language. According to Mikkelson, “shadowing practice helps your interpretation sound smooth and natural in the target language ... improves your pronunciation, enunciation, and speed.” (Mikkelson 3-1) Herniated disks, pregnancy and traffic accidents are a few examples of topics covered here in Spanish↔English.

Many Spanish-speaking patients use colloquialisms unique to their culture. In the colloquial term section of Rx, Holly provides this caveat: “Many of the terms in this word list are nonstandard and should be used with caution. Because of the nonstandard nature of many of the terms here, this word list is not included in its entirety in the Combined Medical Glossary.” (Mikkelson 4-49) In my interpreting work, I’ve used many of the terms in this section to facilitate communication and am grateful that the author included them.

Rx is a fine investment for any medical interpreter wishing to improve his or her skills. The package encompasses sight, consecutive and simultaneous texts and tapes and provides a set of useful glossaries. This is a valuable set of tools to prepare medical interpreters for the majority of medical settings.

Web sites of interest:

NCIHC National Council on Interpreting in Health Care.
www.ncihc.org

The International Institute is offering “Bridging the Gap,” a basic/intermediate 40-hour training course created by the Cross Cultural Health Care Program (CCHCP). The program focuses on health-care interpreter ethics, terminology and skill-building training. www.iiakron.org.

Why I Like TRADOS

by Carmen Berelson

This article was originally published in *Interaktiv*, the newsletter of the German Language Division

I have been using TRADOS for about four years now, and I can hardly remember what life was like “before TRADOS.” Maybe one of the main reasons I like TRADOS is that it is extremely user-friendly, as opposed to other CAT tools that I have used. This might not be important to people who are more computer-savvy than I am, but for me, it was important to be able to learn the tools quickly. So far, I have not upgraded to TRADOS 6.0. The following description of features is based on TRADOS 5.5 and might be slightly different in the latest version.

TRADOS consists of: Translator’s Workbench, MultiTerm, TagEditor, T-Windows for PowerPoint, Winalign, FontMapper for FrameMaker, FontMapper for Interleaf.

As opposed to some other CAT tools, TRADOS is not a stand-alone tool, but rather runs on Word. This means that for the translation of a document in Word, PowerPoint, etc., Workbench or other TRADOS features have to be open at all times, and all the features of Microsoft Word can be used, such as Track Changes. Some CAT tools do not allow the use of Track Changes, which I find a big disadvantage when editing.

Translator’s Workbench

The most commonly used feature is certainly Translator’s Workbench, which is used for the translation of Word files, as well as files that have been converted into Word files (such as PDF converted into Word).

The first step is to create a Translation Memory, or TM, either for each client, for each client’s client, by subject area, or just one large TM for all projects.

Personally, I prefer to create a TM for each client’s client, although I sometimes export one TM and consolidate it with another TM if the subject areas overlap. The creation of one

single TM in addition to separate ones can also be easily achieved by exporting the individual TMs into one general TM. According to TRADOS, there is no limit to the number of translation units that each TM can contain. So far, my largest TM consists of approx. 200,000 translation units. (A translation unit is defined by a period, question mark, colon, or exclamation mark at the end of a sentence, by any number of words, or by a hard return.)

When creating the TM, you can set the preferences, i.e., the percentage for the fuzzy matches (sentences that are not 100% the same), the font color for the source and target text, the language combination (the software comes with English, plus three additional languages of your choice), etc.

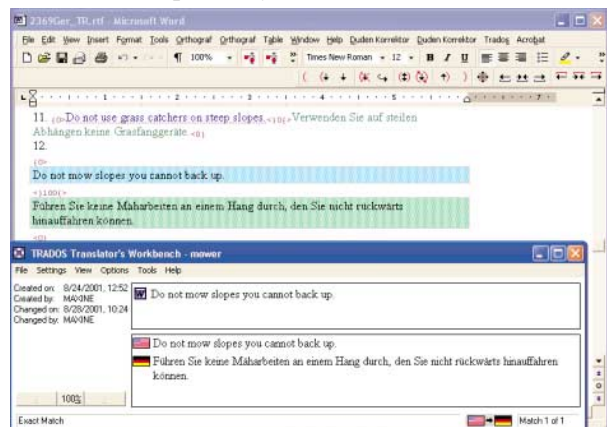
Needless to say, a new and therefore empty TM will not create any matches. As soon as the TM contains translated units and a similar unit comes up, TRADOS brings up the already translated segment, i.e. sentence (if it is a 100% match), or the translated segment that is similar, up to the pre-selected percentage rate. 100% matches and fuzzy matches are displayed in different background colors, so the user can see right away whether it is a fuzzy match or a 100% match. Also, the translation units are separated by tiny brackets. The percentage of the match is displayed between these brackets (i.e. 100, 98, 75, etc.).

Workbench also displays the original source sentence, the already translated sentence, and the new source sentence. The deviations between the old and the new source sentences and any additional words are marked in gray. This way the user does not have to search for the differences because they are clearly marked.

TMs can be updated, merged, or overwritten, plus one can choose between “keep oldest” and “keep most recent”. Updating means that the translated file, including edits, is

cleaned into the TM, which will then reflect the latest version of each translation. This is usually used when only one translator works on a project.

For large projects with several translators, TMs can be merged, meaning that each translator exports his or her TM for all the other translators on the team to share. In this case, the concordance feature (explained below) would display all the translations that have been used for a particular term or sentence. This option is preferable for projects where consistency is not an issue, and is preferable for stylistic purposes to translate the same term differently, such as performance reports for investment funds that need to be written in an upbeat style.



“Overwrite” is used for large projects with several translators, when consistency is an issue. The person who maintains the TM will then export each translator’s TM into one large TM, which is then sent out to all the translators on the team.

TMs can also be exported in segments by specified dates. Again, this feature is used for large, ongoing projects. Each translator exports his TM from a certain date on and imports the TMs of all the other translators on the team from the same timeframe. Thus, it is not necessary to export the entire TM (which can be huge in the case of ongoing projects), but only a segment for the last two weeks, or whatever timeframe was chosen. Workbench also converts numbers and dates into the format of the target language. The analyzing feature allows the user or agency to analyze the source documents and import the analysis into a Word file. This way vague information from the client can be verified, such as “Some of the paragraphs of the new document are similar; I didn’t have the time to actually compare this document with the previous one, but it consists of 6,000 words. Can you do this by tomorrow?” It is now much easier to answer this question after the file has been analyzed, which only takes a minute. In 10% increments, the analysis will show exactly how many matches there are (i.e. 100%, 99-90%, etc.) and how many repetitions. It is quite possible that the analysis will show that the 6,000 word job due tomorrow actually consists of 2,000 words of 100% matches and another 1,500 in fuzzy matches and 500 repetitions, leaving 2,000 new words and therefore a job that is much more manageable within the requested timeframe.

Concordance

One of the features I am particularly fond of is the Concordance function because it basically eliminates the need to create glossaries, although a glossary can be created in MultiTerm as well. The Concordance feature allows the user to highlight one word or any number of words. Workbench brings up another window where all existing translation units that contain the highlighted segment are displayed, as well as their translation and date when the translation was entered. The user can cut and paste the term, or any part of the segment he was looking for in the new translation. Personally, I think this feature is especially useful in patents or legal documents where consistency is critical, even though the text itself is usually not very repetitive.

TagEditor

This feature of TRADOS is used for the translation of HTML and other tagged files. The tags are replaced by TagEditor tags. The other functions are the same, as far as the TM, Concordance, etc. are concerned. TagEditor allows the translator to work with HTML without having to worry about the tags (they cannot be deleted), and for the client, it offers the ability to display the translation on their Web site right away.

FontMapper

Personally, I have never needed to use FontMapper for Interleaf. I did use FontMapper for FrameMaker a couple of times. The only difference between working in a regular Word file and a converted FrameMaker file is that the FrameMaker tags are visible in the Word file. Apart from that, the file looks like any other Word file.

T-Windows for PowerPoint

The translation is performed within the PPT file, with Workbench and T-Windows open in the background. All the features of Workbench and PPT are supported.

MultiTerm

MultiTerm is used to create glossaries, either one big glossary or individual glossaries by client or subject matter. Within MultiTerm, each term can be marked, i.e., with client preferences, context, etc. When a document is translated with TRADOS and a term that is in MultiTerm comes up, it is automatically inserted into the translation, where it can be accepted or rejected. As far as I know, Déjà Vu glossaries can be imported into MultiTerm. I have never done this myself, so I cannot speak from experience.

WinAlign

Another great feature of TRADOS is WinAlign. It allows the user to align the source and the target file of a previously translated document. I am sure we have all worked on projects for which the client supplies a lot of reference files, indicating that the new file is similar to ones that were previously translated, and the translator is required to use the established terminology. In the past, this meant searching and comparing the reference material for existing terminology or similar, previously translated paragraphs.

With WinAlign, one can create a TM by aligning source and target files, i.e. TRADOS compares each paragraph of the source and target files and creates the TM. Needless to say, it is now much easier to search for terminology that has already been established by means of the Concordance function.

Matches will be displayed just like with a TM that was created with your own translation. It is important to understand that the matches (100% or fuzzy) do not have to be accepted. You can change the translation to your liking (unless the client states that the existing translation is binding).

Technical Support

TRADOS maintains an extensive Web site (Knowledge Base) that provides answers and solutions to almost all the problems one can run into, like “why can’t I clean the file?” or “I translated a footnote, and now I can’t see the toolbar any more!” All you need to do is enter the problem you are facing and you will be provided with a number that allows you to look up the solutions to that problem, most of the time with step-by-step instructions. TRADOS also provides generous e-mail support, and of course technical support by phone. One can choose between a fee per problem, which can work to your advantage or disadvantage depending on how quickly the problem is solved, or an hourly fee charged in 15 minute increments.

In my experience, the TRADOS customer service staff is very knowledgeable and supportive and returns phone calls within a short period of time. Most members of the technical

support staff also teach the training courses and therefore know the software extremely well.

Personally, I have made it a rule to always use TRADOS, even though a document does not have any repetitions. I even use it for documents that seem to be one of a kind when I am positive I will never have a need to look up the terminology or I will never get anything similar again. All too often I have regretted not using TRADOS because – contrary to all expectations – I did get a similar document and then I had to start searching for often unusual terminology, complicated legal concepts, or seldom used abbreviations all over again.

Even though TRADOS is extremely user-friendly and easy to learn, there is undoubtedly a learning curve during which productivity is reduced. As soon as I was past this learning curve, I noticed that my productivity increased dramatically, even though as a legal and financial translator, I usually do not have a lot of repetitions. Because the need for a glossary is eliminated, I save a considerable amount of time and consistency is still guaranteed. The time savings and quality improvements have been well worth the capital investment.

Carmen E. Berelson is a native-born German, freelance English>German translator specializing in law, finance, business, patents and software. She attended language school in Munich, Germany. Due to a stint in the arts and antique business, she also specializes in gemology as well as art and antiques-related documents. She resides in Doylestown, PA and may be reached via CBerelson@aol.com.

Ask Jill

I have decided to offer this column to answer your questions. The column will also contain an overview of some of the questions I receive each month from members as well as non-members. While answering these questions, I realized there were a lot of people out there who could use some tips that most of us who are active ATA members find self-evident.

Q: I recently learned that most translators charge by the word. I was just wondering if you could tell me how much I should charge for my services.

A: Most translators in the U.S. charge by the target word, whereas a lot of my German and European clients charge by the target line (based on 55 or 50 characters per line). A lot of agencies use the word count feature in Word, but that is really not an accurate tool since it does not count text in text boxes or footnotes. I find that Trados or counting tools like TextCount or PractiCount offer a much more accurate word count. To determine the line count, I take the total characters (including spaces) and divide by 55.

I really can't tell you how much to charge, because everyone has different needs and specialties – as well as different language combinations (not to mention the fact that the ATA was accused of price fixing years ago and therefore prohibits its members to talk about their rates). However, I can point you to several good resources that may answer that question for you. If you register (for free) with www.translatorscafe.com, you can access its rate survey and view the various word rates the members charge. Translators café, Aquarius and Proz.com also allow you to publish a profile, which could bring you some jobs. Also, the ATA offers a compensation survey of income data for purchase (see <http://www.atanet.org/bin/view.fpl/13761.html>). As far as editing rates are concerned, I charge by the hour and base it on whether it is machine-translated or translated by a native speaker of that language. Machine translations take a lot more time to decipher (and make you want to tear your hair out), so I charge a higher hourly rate.

Q: I've just graduated with a B.A. in Spanish. Could you tell me how one goes about becoming a translator?

A: It helps if you have a very strong grasp of both your target and source languages. Spending a little bit of time overseas helps build a strong cultural and linguistic base. A degree in a specialized field or interest in a specific field also doesn't hurt.

A good web site for beginners is www.linguabase.com/tips.html. Chantal Wilford offers a lot of excellent tips for beginners and old hands alike based on her experience receiving correspondence from translators looking for work (even though she herself is a freelance translator).

You do not need a degree in translation (I know many excellent translators who are bilingual and have a degree in business or engineering) or ATA certification to become an established translator, but it certainly helps your credibility when a client is shopping for a translator. Since you are from the Cleveland area, you might want to consider getting a Master of Arts in translation from Kent State University. It is a two-year program and is one of the few universities offering M.A.s in translation that are also affordable. Internships are available to qualified candidates.

You may also want to consider joining the American Translators Association and getting a mentor, who would be able to answer your specific questions based on his or her many years of experience in the business. After a few years of solid experience, you should then look into taking the ATA certification exam.

Q: I have a bachelor's degree as a teacher of English and speak fluent Russian, Ukrainian and English. I spent many years teaching English in the Ukrainian school system and as a private tutor. I am very interested in becoming a certified translator through ATA.

I found the information about ATA on the web and found that you have the only Ohio chapter. I have sent an email to the national organization about what is required. I was

wondering if you could help me with any advice for the certification process?

A: In the U.S., state certification is not available in all languages and ATA certification is available only in language combinations that involve English. The ATA certification exam is very difficult and has a pass rate of around 20%. Most people recommend you have at least three years of solid experience translating before you try to take it. It is also a good idea to take the practice exams before signing up to take the exam itself. You must be a member of ATA for at least four weeks prior to the exam date and offer proof of eligibility in order to register for the exam. Registration forms must be sent to ATA headquarters at least two weeks before the exam.

ATA certification is by no means a guarantee of quality. There are excellent translators who have failed the exam (or who simply don't feel the need to take it in the first place) and mediocre translators who have passed (although I don't personally know anyone who fits that description). The certification exam evaluates your performance in one 3-hour sitting. The exam includes three passages of approximately 225–275 words, one in each of the following categories: general, science/technology/medicine, law/business/finance. These passages have the character of typical texts within these domains but should not require mastery of a particular field. You need to complete two of the three passages: the mandatory general passage and your choice of one of the two elective passages. For security reasons, the exam is handwritten and you can only use paper-based dictionaries during the exam. You are allowed to bring as many dictionaries as you can carry to the exam; however, with time being a factor you will not want to look up every word. If you find yourself having to look up every word though, you may want to reconsider your career choice. One downside of the new ATA certification program is that once you stop paying your annual dues or do not earn 20 Continuing Education points within three years, you lose the right to call yourself ATA-certified.

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NOTA Election

2004 is another election year for NOTA.

We are seeking candidates for all offices: President, Treasurer/Membership, Public Relations, Programs and Secretary. If you would like to nominate a fellow NOTA member for any of these offices and have the member's consent, please send your nomination by May 1st to

Karin Debelius at 102265.121@compuserve.com or
Reinhold Federmann at rfedermann@aol.com