NOTA BENE

Upcoming Events

ATA Medical Division Conference
Intercontinental Hotel
9801 Carnegie Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44106
next to the **Cleveland Clinic**
May 31 to June 3, 2007
with ATA Certification Exam 6-3-07

Annual Picnic
Time and place to be announced

The Business Side of Translation
Seminar
Time and place to be announced

The following advertisement appeared in the Akron Beacon Journal, Sunday, 3/11/2007:

Translator
RGH Enterprises, Twinsburg, OH seeks temp (May to Nov 07) Translator for Chinese written, oral text into English and vice versa; proofread, edit, revise translated materials; 40 hrs/wk 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; $14.77/hr; requires Associate Degree in Business; Education, or Translation, Chinese/English fluency and at least one trip to China (2 to 4 weeks duration). Send resume or letter of interest to OWD REF #16224, PS Pox 1618, Columbus, OH 43216.

Should we laugh or be insulted?

NOTA Executive Board Meeting
March 9, 2007

Members present: Lee Wright, Jill Sommer, Amanda Ennis, John Shaklee, Cindy Hazelton

Tax Seminar: Jill reported that our Tax Seminar was a great success. A total of twenty-two members learned a great deal about financial planning, incorporation and tax preparation for freelance translators or interpreters.

Next Seminar: We are planning a seminar entitled "The Business Side of Translation." Location and exact date will be announced, but we are planning to hold this seminar near the end of July. Topics will include the use of Excel software, the use of Translation Office software and the Payment Practices lists.

Medical Division Conference: The ATA Medical Division Conference will be held at the Intercontinental Hotel, next to the Cleveland Clinic, on May 31-June 3. The program is being finalized, and we are currently recruiting sponsors and exhibitors. If you would like to be a sponsor, please contact Jill.

Certification Exam: The next ATA certification exam will be held on June 3 at the Intercontinental Hotel in Cleveland, in conjunction with the ATA Medical Division Conference. Check the ATA website http://www.atanet.org/certification/ for test details, including how far in advance you must register for the exam.

Submitted by Cindy Hazelton, NOTA Secretary

In this Issue:

President's Message

For the last couple of days I have been staying at my parents' house while my house was being rewired for a big construction job that is supposed to start any day now. I simply brought my laptop over there, logged into their neighbor's secured wireless network by registering my wireless card with his router, and I was able to work without any interruption. The experience reinforced two things for me. First and foremost is the convenience our job offers. We can be anywhere - staying at a hotel while travelling, grabbing a coffee at a coffee shop or even sunning ourselves on the beach - and business can continue relatively seamlessly as long as we have the proper tools and a good Internet connection. I only had to lug two specialized medical dictionaries with me (my trusted Reuter-Reuter medical dictionary and Pucher's Dictionary of Medical Imaging) since I am translating several cardiology reports for a client at the moment. My general dictionaries, my Trados software, and my medical termbase and memory were already installed on my laptop. The second thing that I realized was the importance of a good desk chair. My parents don't use their computer for extended periods of time, so they use a wooden chair from my father's old workplace. I really missed my desk chair with lumbar support and my ergonomic setup in my office.

Now that I have returned to my home office, business continues as usual. Tricia Yacavone and I are still busy planning the ATA Medical Division Mid-Year Conference. It will be held at the Intercontinental Hotel from May 31st-June 3rd, and I could really use some help contacting local restaurants and shops for donations for a raffle at the Welcome Reception. Please contact me if you can spare an hour and call a couple restaurants.

The Medical Division Mid-Year Conference promises to be a good one. Several doctors from the Cleveland Clinic, including Anne Chemali's husband Kamal, have volunteered to speak to us. Holly Mikkelson has agreed to be the keynote speaker. We also hope to have a live feed from the operating room to the hotel, so that we can witness surgeries first-hand. The Intercontinental is also a great venue, with lots of room and a good location.

If you are planning on taking the ATA certification exam this year, be sure to mark June 3rd on your calendar. We will be holding the certification exam on the last day of the mid-year conference. If you haven't yet, the ATA highly recommends taking their practice test ahead of time to see how you might fare in the actual test. You also need to be an ATA member and have your eligibility verified to register to take the test, so I suggest you start the process as soon as possible.

Speaking of starting the process as soon as possible, I hope you all have started working on your taxes. I know many of you walked out of our recent financial seminar enthused and with lots of new ideas.

President's Message – continued

Amanda convinced us that we can do it ourselves instead of hiring a CPA or tax preparer. For those of you who missed the presentation, our job code is 541930. I myself have signed up with Ameriprise Financial for some financial planning, and I'm sure several of you are now considering incorporating after Julie Schafer's talk. The seminar offered something for everyone.

Our next seminar is going to be a continuation of the financial side of things. We haven't decided on the date yet. "The Business Side of Translation" is going to cover software that tracks your income and expenses, jobs, invoices, etc. and the use of Excel in tracking your workload (tracking word counts, open jobs, etc.), among other things. If you use a tool you would like to share with us such as Translation Office 3000 or Quicken, please contact John Shaklee at jshaklee@neo.rr.com. Everyone uses different tools, and you may be able to introduce us to a hidden gem.

I hope to see you at the upcoming Medical Division conference or at the upcoming business seminar and summer picnic.

Jill Sommer

NOTA Workshop on Taxes

Miss a NOTA workshop on taxes and other financial issues, miss a lot! On a sunny Saturday in February, about twenty NOTA members met at the Hudson Library to hear three presentations pertaining to subjects dear to us translators and interpreters: retirement, incorporation, and taxes.

The first presentation, led by Jeff Labowitz and Kamaria Wolf of Ameriprise Financial, stressed the importance of preparation for retirement. Mr. Labowitz and Ms. Wolf used a PowerPoint presentation to sensitize the participants to the urgency of preparing for their retirement, not just financially, but also in terms of setting goals and expectations in order to make the transition as smooth and enriching as possible. The audience members, who covered the whole spectrum of stages in their professional lives, were asked to use the package distributed to follow the interactive presentation.

"To incorporate or to not incorporate, that is the question" was the main theme developed by Julie Schafer, an Akron attorney with her own practice and extensive experience in setting up small businesses. She distributed several handouts explaining each form of business, from "sole proprietorship" to "C corporation," with emphasis on those structures that are most appropriate for translators and interpreters: sole proprietorships, LLCs (Limited Liability Companies) and S Corporations. She shared several professional "secrets," including where to find help to make an

educated decision. Other tools that we could use include the Secretary of State website as a fantastic resource for business forms, as well as the Ohio Bar Association website's section entitled "Legal Basics for Small Businesses."

Who would have believed that taxes could be such a fun subject? Trust Amanda Ennis, ATA-accredited German/English translator and the third presenter of the day, to transform this dreaded subject into an interesting, enjoyable and informative discussion. Laughs abounded as Amanda guided us through all the forms that we should be using with the April 15 tax deadline looming on the horizon. Her energetic and well-informed presentation highlighted several key issues confronting the independent translator/

interpreter filing as a sole proprietor, including business expense deductions, self- employment tax payments, the importance of documenting all receipts and expenses, dealing with subcontractors, etc. She made income tax filing look easy. The icing on the cake was when she blissfully extricated the contents of her own 2005 tax files, explaining each carefully stapled bunch of documents and its purpose. Her apropos discussion, supported by a PowerPoint presentation, raised many positive comments and motivated the more daring among us to try to file our own tax returns. Ms. Ennis included numerous site references, which will be emailed to all participants. She skillfully raised the issue of dealing professionally with an aspect of our lives we cannot escape. Tax preparation is a year-round endeavor, and she demonstrated to us the importance of taking it into our own hands.

The program was introduced by Jill Sommer, NOTA President, and moderated by Cindy Hazelton, NOTA Secretary. Door prizes were awarded to Shannon Hargis and Claudia Mosso.

Finally! - A Good, Affordable Terminology Management Program
By Lee Wright

Last fall I wrote a little article for this newsletter in which I described having purchased Jost Zetzsche's "Translator's Tool Box" and found that it contains a lot of very useful information on computers and computer software. As a bonus for that purchase, I also received a year's free subscription to Jost's biweekly newsletter, the Tool Kit, the 82nd edition of which appeared in my mailbox at the end of February, so I eagerly scanned its contents for new information. Among other noteworthy announcements, Jost gave a brief description of a new (at least, to me) terminology management system, called Logo 4.0, which he touted as being "low cost, robust and easy-to-use dictionary creation software for translators, localizers, and businesses." Since a free 30-day trial version of the program was available for download from the publisher's Web site (Lexicool – www.lexicool.com/soft_lingo2.asp), I decided to see whether it lived up to the description, so I proceeded to download the software and install it on my hard drive. This took me all of about 2 minutes, and the program was ready to use, even including an icon on both my desktop and in the Windows system tray at the bottom of the screen.

The installed program occupies just a very small amount of disk space (a little over 20 megabytes), which is miniscule compared to most software on the market these days. Nor does it appear to be "memory hungry" or cause any interference with other software running at the same time. It can be used together with any Windows program. Once installed and loaded, the program remains available until you decide to exit it altogether or when you turn off your computer, just like any other software.

Although there is no "user manual" per se, the program includes a good help file that describes and illustrates all of the basic functions. The help file contents can be printed out if desired. However, even before consulting this help file, I quickly discovered that the program's operation is both straight-forward and intuitive. I easily set up a new dictionary for a test run and added a sizeable number of term pairs to it within just a short time. Of course, all of the source-language terms are automatically alphabetized as they should be. There is only one requirement for setting up a dictionary: it must specify the language(s) to be included in it (one or more). In addition, you can provide a language code for each language, typically using the appropriate ISO two-character codes (e.g., en for English, es for Spanish, de for German, etc.), but these are not obligatory unless you plan to export the data in standard TMX (XML) format. The program includes Unicode compatibility and can handle all character sets, including non-Roman alphabets and right-to-left languages like Arabic.

Although I only entered terms in Spanish and English, the program allows for any number of language combinations, even multilingual glossaries. In addition to space for the source-language term and the target-language equivalent(s), there are also two windows for entering other data, such as definitions, notes, and subject areas for the term pair. Each of these windows will hold a reasonable amount of data – a maximum three lines (ca. 225 characters, including spaces).

I also experimented with several of the other features, such as the ability to export a dictionary (terminology database) to any one of three different formats (XML, text or RTF), which can then be read into a text editor/word processor and printed. The diminutive (1" x 1¾") pop-up interface ("tool bar"), which, unless minimized, stays visible on top of whatever other application happens to be running, contains just 6 icons, activated either by left clicking on them or by pressing a function key. This small tool bar can also be displayed in a slightly larger size (1" x 2½") if desired. In either format, the tool bar can be easily moved around to any location on your computer screen, just like any other window.

Once a dictionary has been set up and data have been entered into it, the next essential feature is the ability to find the entry containing a given SL term and its TL equivalent(s) and then copy and paste the equivalent into the text being prepared in the word processor. There are actually two ways to do a term lookup. One of them displays a window that lists the currently available dictionaries and a space for entering the source term to be found, while the other one is a "quick lookup" window that appears as a single line at the bottom of the tool bar ("quick search"). In this latter instance, if the SL term that you look up is found in the current dictionary, then you can display the entire entry (or entries if the

term happens to appear in more than one record). In short, from my standpoint this is a very slick, time-saving feature.

Although it is unlikely that I would ever have a need to use it, the program also allows for encrypting the data contained in a dictionary and for requiring a password in order to access a data file.

In addition, Lingo 4.0 includes a means for importing data into an existing dictionary, but the data to be imported needs to be in either TMX format or a straight text file. At this time I have not experimented with this feature, but I have several small term files created as MS Word tables that I am going to convert to straight text and see how Lingo's import function works.

Finally – and I left what I think is the best part for last, the program only costs €89 (approximately $115 at the time of this writing)! Even better (at least for me) is that subscribers to Jost Zetzsche's Tool Kit can purchase the program for 15% less as a special promotional offer until the end of March. That brings the price down to less than $100. In short, I highly recommend this excellent, affordable and well-designed software for any translator who wants to have quick and easy access to specialized terminology.

Rebates – Do You Always Get Them?

by Waltraud Knudsen

Any time I need a new computer, monitor or even just another spindle of CDs or a larger flash drive I check the advertisements in the Sunday papers because some store is bound to have that particular item on sale, as long as I am not in a hurry. However, after finding a really good deal I usually cannot just waltz into the store and actually buy the item for the advertised price, because a rebate is more often than not part of the deal, and the store and/or the manufacturer hope I will never pursue it. Listening to other people I believe that the stores/manufacturers are correct in assuming that most customers will just give up after they receive a postcard saying that they are not eligible for the rebate because of some little error or omission. I have received a few of these postcards myself, especially if the rebate is a large amount, but I still have always gotten the check, even if in one case it took almost a whole year. The key is good

documentation. The first thing I do before I send away for a rebate:

1) Keep a copy of everything I am sending – with the mailing date written on it

2) Keep the box/container of the item until I have the rebate check

3) Read the entire rebate form to make sure that I do not miss anything hidden somewhere in small print that I need to do to be eligible for the rebate.

After I have filled out the rebate form, cut out the correct proof of purchase and made sure that I have attached everything that is required, I send it off. I keep all the rebate copies in a separate folder so I can check from time to time. In approximately 70% of the cases I will get my rebate without a hitch in 4 to 8 weeks and I can throw away the copy. But a few

times I have received a postcard after several weeks informing me that I am not eligible because I sent the wrong bar code or I did not buy the item during the specified time or some other real or phony reason. In the case of the bar code the card also informed me that I had 10 days to reply. I checked the box and found that there was indeed a second bar code, so I cut it out and sent it immediately with a copy of everything I had previously submitted plus a copy of the postcard to the address specified on the card. This particular case was a $50 rebate for a $50 printer that came "free" (after rebate) with the purchase of a new computer. I waited about 10 weeks before I sent another copy of all the items I had previously submitted and a short note asking why I had not received the rebate. Again – I got the silent treatment. Finally I went to the manufacturer's Website, clicked on "Customer Service" and "Contact us" and stated my case, offering to send copies of everything I had already submitted twice. This time I actually received an email from a customer service representative, and within a short time I had my rebate check.

Another time I purchased a CD/DVD burner to replace my broken one. Because the store was out of the advertised brand, they substituted it with a better brand for the same price. I was assured the rebate would be good for the substituted item as well, and the store-printed rebate form showed the brand I was actually buying. After submitting the required items, I got a postcard with the message that I had not purchased the item during the specified rebate period. But I had a copy, and so I was able to prove that my rebate request was timely and correct and I wrote a short letter to that effect, attaching a copy of the rebate form which showed that my request was within the correct time period. I got no reply. I believe I sent two more letters and got no answer. Finally, I contacted "Customer Service" on their Website and finally got results. It had taken close to a year, but I got the rebate.

Recently I bought a copier for an organization I belong to. The regular cost of the copier was $300,

now it was offered with a $150 rebate. We bought it. This was the same manufacturer as the above printer, and the previous experience had taught me to be extra careful. I double-checked the long rebate printout for any trap and found it. Buried in the text was a little empty space where I had to write the serial number. The text emphasized that without the serial number written in this particular space the rebate request would be invalid. After making sure that I was complying with all the requirements I sent the letter to the address provided. Of course, I also kept the big box as well as copies of all the submitted items. When I had not received my check after 10 weeks, I checked the state of my rebate on the company's Website but it was not there. So I found the "Contact Us" on their Website again and stated all the facts including that I could not find my rebate request on their Website. It took about a week until I got an email saying they had indeed received my VALID rebate request, that it was presently being processed and that I should receive the check shortly. A few days later it was in my mailbox. Would it have come without my reminder? I will never know but I was glad I got the check.

These and similar experiences have not made me reluctant to purchase an item that requires sending away for a rebate, they have just made me more cautious. I always assume that I will have to prove my eligibility and therefore I keep everything well documented and dated. I know I don't have to worry much about small rebates, they usually come after 6-8 weeks, but big amounts will often be challenged and may require some additional persuasion.

If this all sounds like too much trouble then you probably should figure out beforehand if the price is acceptable even without the rebate. I personally find sales with rebates usually good deals and I see getting the rebate as a challenge. Writing a note or email and sending another copy takes only a few minutes and finally getting that $50, $100 or $150 check always feels pretty good, especially after a long debate about it.

Do you have an interesting story that you would like to share with the rest of us or do you want to tell us what you like or don't like about NOTA or this newsletter? Contributions are always welcome.
Any newsletter is only as good as its members want it to be. Participation is the key!
Please send your contributions to:

Waltraud Knudsen at w.knudsen@juno.com

Get organized!

by Klaudia Schaller

I have been translating in the freelance world for a number of years now, and it seems that what is expected of us (especially from translation agencies) is becoming more demanding, if not at times unreasonable, by the minute. In order to compete, we are expected to be educated, experienced, talented, reliable, techno-savvy, fast, cheap, …the list goes on, and I do agree – with the exception of the last item of course!

To attract clients we also have to know how to sell ourselves. One very effective way is to make personal contacts and distribute resumes at conferences and meetings or contact potential clients through their websites. When we do hear back from those interested in our services, it is often with requests for additional information. Fair enough. A resume or short online application is, after all, only a superficial glimpse at our professional knowledge, skills and activities.

More often than not, though, these requests can be quite time-consuming – and usually arrive at a time when time is the one thing not on hand. Every company seems to have their own system to gather information, be it through online applications that continue screen after screen, multi-paged faxed questionnaires, or simply a request to send a more detailed e-mail about ourselves.

When I first started out, the euphoria of hearing back at all from potential future clients was short-lived when it quickly became apparent how much information gathering was involved in this task and how time-consuming it would be.

Here is a specific, and not at all untypical, example from a couple of months ago: I was contacted by a reputable agency expressing an interest to work with me, asking me to submit my resume, a multi-page application, two sample translations, a detailed description of the last three projects I had worked on, a price list, and three references.

It is somewhat beside the point – but telling of our jobs nonetheless – that after gathering these items and sending everything off with a nice, but brief, e-mail, there has been absolute silence. No "Thanks, we got your submission, we'll get back to you." No "Wow, your qualifications are just what we were looking for. Please name your price and you can start working for us right away!" Not even an "Umm, you really don't seem to be very experienced at all, but thanks all the same for spending a couple of hours bowing to our detailed demands."

At first, these silences made me very insecure but also offended me to my core (I mean, how hard is it to hit that Reply button, and type a five word sentence even for a busy project manager, who surely wants to present a professional image?), and while I still don't think it's right (I'm serious, how hard is it?) I have learned to get used to such insensitivity.

What I have also learned is to be prepared. It is not only irritating to be asked to submit all kinds of information at the drop of a hat, but also disruptive to any schedule. In my effort to minimize stress and maximize time usage, I have set up a simple folder structure in Microsoft Explorer where I collect anything that could possibly be asked for in an application, adding to it as new items come up. Here are some of my folders:

Resume

It's of course a no-brainer to have an up-to-date resume. I keep a copy in each of my languages in Word and PDF format. I have one that is just one page long, and one that contains more detailed information.

Sample translations

I set up several subfolders, organized by subject. I keep the source texts alongside each translation and make sure that I only send out texts I am allowed to use, those that are not confidential, for example.

Past projects

This is my most recently added folder prompted by the experience I just described above. If past project descriptions ever come up again, I can take if from there. I will continue adding to this folder when noteworthy jobs come along. Nice to include here are also descriptions of long-term projects or ongoing assignments, or jobs where you were part of a team. It shows commitment and team spirit. Time to shine!

References

Here I keep my references' phone numbers, contact addresses, etc. I make sure the people that are on my list are aware of and on board with the fact that I may make their names available on applications! Ask yours periodically if they can still support you in this capacity. Also, keep them updated if you have acquired significant new skills and/or areas of expertise.

Rates

I only submit those when asked to do so, and I keep them short and general. Specifics should be discussed depending on many factors of a given project.

Bits

This is what I call those pesky things included in some online forms, such as "about you," "what makes you uniquely qualified," "what are your strengths/weaknesses?", "if you could be a pencil, a pen or a sheet of paper, which would you choose and why?" etc. Ok, the last one was a question my son recently had to answer as part of an 8th grade assessment – but, who knows, it could come up! I know no one has time or is so proactive as to sit down and write answers to those questions ahead of time. But, the next time you fill out an application and jump through one of those hoops, save your answer as a little text file and toss it in that folder. It might come in handy again later.

As much as I want to be considered a living, breathing person by agencies and not a "resource," I do want the reputable ones among them to have my best information on hand. I do not, however, want to madly scramble around trying to put together the pieces they may ask for. Like all of us, I have far better things to do with my time!

We Welcome The Following New Members:

Patricia Andrés-Sanmartín
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Ralph R. Reese
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NOTA Financial Statement

As of September 7, 2006

Beginning Balance:	**$3,015.67**	**Expenses:**	
Revenues:		Meeting expense,	
Membership dues	$ 3290.00	including deposit for 2006 dinner	$ 150.00
(includes dues received as of 9/7/2006)		Membership directory	$ 537.87
Bank interest	$ 11.13	Newsletter printing & postage	$ 422.43
Blue Canyon refund	$ 250.00	Other postage	$ 55.79
		Expense reimbursement for officers	$ 277.51
TOTAL REVENUES:	**$ 3,551.13**	Web site maintenance	$ 763.29
		TOTAL EXPENSES:	**$ 2,206.89**
Balance as of 7 September 2006:	**$ 4,859.62**		
NOTE: Income exceeded expenses by: $1,344.24			