



NOTA BENE

Vol. XXV, No. 2

September 2002

Annual NOTA Dinner – Installation of Officers

**Friday, Sept. 27
7:00 p.m.**

Pipers III Restaurant
8158 Broadview Rd.
Broadview Heights

**For reservations please call
Manfred Mondt by Sept. 19, 2002**

Directions: Take I-77 to Wallings Rd. (third exit south of junction 480 west), go about one mile west to Broadview Rd., turn left and almost immediately turn right into the driveway of Pipers III.

See Map on Pg. 8

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New NOTA Officers:

President:	Jill Sommer
Treasurer:	Dr. Leland Wright
Public Relations:	Karin Debelius
Programs:	Margaret Nevits
Secretary:	Amanda Ennis

56 ballots were returned, with one member abstaining from all votes and two members checking off only some candidates.

NOTA Election With Mystery Candidates

by Dr. Heidi Stull

The months of July/August traditionally and in accordance with NOTA's Bylaws have been election time for our organization. The nomination committees had been busy (and often frustrated) for several months trying to find a suitable slate of qualified candidates among the membership for any open or soon to be vacated position(s) on the executive board. Traditionally the candidates were members in good standing who had previously served on one or more NOTA committee(s), had attended regular meetings, and were more or less familiar with the demands each position entailed as well as the challenges it presented. Final nominations were then taken from the floor during the last spring meeting. The election results were "communicated promptly to the membership" and the installation of the new officers took place during our annual meeting in September. The preparations for the nominations and the following elections were time-consuming and required a considerable amount of commitment and familiarity with the member-

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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

Dear Members,

Here is my final statement as the president of NOTA, providing our members accept the new slate of officers. A few weeks from now, we will see several new faces, and I am confident that we will experience some new driving power in our organization.

For me personally, being president has been a great experience. It's true that being president will get you a few extra jobs, for there is always a customer or two who believes that you simply must be a better translator. But there are so many other things you otherwise would miss out on. Just as an example, you get to attend every NOTA meeting and look at every issue of NOTA BENE. Actually writing an article every now and then and seeing it published is rewarding, and it is even more rewarding when other people compliment me on it. It was typically a difference of opinion with a customer that got me started on my most popular articles. Several of them made it into other Chapter publications, and one of them was even reprinted in the ATA Chronicle. Within the NOTA organization, I got to meet a lot of wonderful people and develop many lifelong friendships.

As president, you also get to spend another \$95 each year and join the ATA, which I personally would not do otherwise. Then you decide to spend an additional \$1000 or so each year and attend the ATA conference, which meets at a different location in the country each year. In this way I got to see Nashville, St. Louis, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Hilton Head, while living in a real luxury hotel. This beats spending a night at Motel 6 and seeing the city only from the freeway. As far as the various presentations go, it is difficult to convey how much you learn from the various sessions. But even more importantly, you get to meet the various speakers. In addition, there is always the opportunity to be a presenter at some future conference, assuming there is something you may consider of value to others. All in all, out of more than 1600 translators attending a conference, you are bound to meet many people and even recognize quite a few of them from the year before. You will get to talk to colleagues face to face, people you have only known via the phone or via e-mail. And you will get to rub elbows with all the important people in the ATA.

During my eight years as NOTA President, I have had many wonderful experiences with many colleagues in the translation business worldwide, people I will always remember.

This fall we will have an entirely new Executive Board, with the exception of Leland Wright, who will continue as treasurer and membership chair. Otherwise it goes as president-elect Jill Sommer pointed out, "es weht ein frischer Wind." I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the new board members and wish them success for the coming years.

Manfred Mondt

How to Write a Better Résumé

or

How to maximize the probability that your résumé will be taken seriously by prospective contractors!

by Anne Chemali

Project managers and agency recruiters are busy people. They don't have time to look over all the résumés they receive. In order to give yours the best possible chance, try to make it short and remember what really matters to a potential contractor:

Your...

Language skills
Background and professional competence
Specific areas of expertise with relevant experience
Communication ability
Availability and dedication
Computer equipment (hardware/software)
Prices and daily output

This article will show you to put the right type of information in your résumé, section by section. The layout is another important aspect that will not be discussed here.

Résumé Heading

At the very top, put your name in sufficiently large print, followed by your address, phone and fax numbers, e-mail address as well as your language combination(s). Try to limit yourself to two language combinations, let's say English to French and French to English. This way your résumé has a better chance of winding up in a folder labeled French. Knowing more than two languages does not make you a better translator; your résumé will end up under Miscellaneous or in the trash can. If you really want to sell yourself in other language combinations, create separate résumés and be specific about which subject areas you are able to tackle in each language pair.

Education and Qualifications:

- University education.
- Courses completed.
- Membership in professional associations. If the association is well known in the small world of the translation industry, you can use the acronym for it. Otherwise, you need to specify the full name.
- Only put your highest or most recent achievements.

Employment:

- State any relevant periods of employment that could be useful for getting some translation work.
- If you've been freelancing for a couple of years part-time, make the most of this because you're selling yourself. You don't have to specify that it's part-time.
- If you've worked for a few years in a professional occupation or even in another country, put this in here. This will give you a credible background for a specialized subject area.
- If you are a recent graduate, try to dig up something from your college projects or experience that you can make relevant.
- If you have absolutely nothing to put down, you could offer your services to charitable organizations or even to a busy, well-established colleague to gain some experience.

Key Skills:

- Put down anything related to your language abilities.
- Any specialized subject areas. Be very specific and straightforward in this section.
- Any relevant achievements. Don't give too much detailed information about your previous jobs! A word count and the subject of the project are enough; you may also want to add the final client's name.
- Anything relating to your computer literacy or IT skills. Put down all the software packages you know how to use in a few lines. It will give you more credibility.

Publications:

Don't give too many details about each publication. They won't be read anyway!

References:

They can be "Available upon request." Experience has shown me that this section needs constant updating. No contractor will ever take the time to contact your references unless he/she wants to offer you a job.

Hobbies:

Clients are not interested in your hobbies unless they are useful for translation work. If you have a hobby such as doing voiceover recording or digital photography, or even reading in your specific areas of expertise, it might

be worth it to put it down as a possible specialized subject area. Otherwise, leave it out!

Good luck... a good résumé along with a good business letter will make you translator #1 for your language pair for an ever-increasing number of contractors!

P.S. There are several good books with great advice on creating a professional résumé.

For more information on promoting your translation business, visit this Web site:

<http://www.translatortips.net/>

Our Picnic in June

For those who had to miss our annual picnic, it was held again at Huili Shi's house. It was warm and sunny and the food was, as always, great. Lively conversations were going on in different groups. It

was nice to see some new faces as well. NOTA's social events seem to be a lot more popular than our professional meetings!



Ludmila & Valentin Razin, Huili Shi, Manfred Mondt



David Parker, Karin Debelius and a friend

The Tower of Babel

by Berta Pasquel Kirchhoff

I was at my Bible class the other day when a verse in the Bible reading got me thinking. It was an idea that had nothing to do with the subject at hand, but it had a lot to do with translators and interpreters. The verse is from Genesis 11:6-7 and reads as follows: "The Lord said: If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them." "Come let us go down and confuse their language so they won't understand each other."

I had read this passage before and remembered the language confusion. But not until that moment did it hit me that I could forget all about the historical grammar studies I had done in college. This was the

Bible, after all, and as a good Catholic I believed this to be the word of God. And yet, it was just too much that God had so coldly punished humanity by confusing its language! What happened to the different roots and influences that are part of every modern language? What about the fact that Latin was to be found one way or another in every modern European language? What about the many other influences from Arabic, Germanic and Nordic languages? Those were facts, and I was finding it difficult to believe them anymore because of a verse in Genesis? But then I thought, well, that's how the need for translators arose in the first place, and now many of us have jobs thanks to God's decision to confuse people in their language.

How Am I Doing?

My Year as a Mentee

(With apologies to the Honorable Ed Koch)

by John P. Shaklee

Spearheaded by Courtney Searles-Ridge, head of the ATA's Mentoring Task Force, the Pilot Program kicked off in November 2001 at the Annual Conference in Los Angeles with 31 ATA members who were interested in becoming mentors and mentees. Prospective candidates had filled out a lengthy application form listing their language pairs, focus of work, reasons for wishing to be part of the program and knowledge or skills area. They had also been asked to indicate in which areas they could mentor others and in which areas they needed guidance. Categories included changing careers, marketing freelance services and running a business.

I was lucky enough to be one of those 31 people, and I can say without hesitation that this mentee experience has been a success. I am not the same person I was at the beginning of the process. My original reason for applying was to bring about a change in my career path and develop new goals. After over two years of telephone interpreting, I wanted to see people in the emergency room face-to-face instead of visualizing what was happening. A second goal was to secure a client base in order to spread my wings and freelance. My third goal was to become more active in the profession. These actions would inevitably lead to more job contacts. What actually came out of this year was greater appreciation for the gift of the work we do. Like most gifts, they have to be given away. My mentor Rudy Heller has done just that.

Here is a breakdown of mentee languages in the Mentor Program: Danish 1; German 4; Portuguese 1; Russian 1; Spanish 8; Other 1. The "Other" was a Spanish-speaking mentee, but the nature of his needs did not require a Spanish-speaking mentor. Many of the eighty-some people who were turned down were seeking Spanish-speaking mentors. There simply were not enough of them. Also, several people were matched with mentors who decided not to attend the conference at the last minute.

As luck would have it, Rudy agreed to be my mentor. He didn't have to. When the pilot group met in Los Angeles, my original mentor had to withdraw from the program. At the time, Rudy had already been assigned a mentee, but when he heard about my situation, he said he could take on another one. Wow. Here's a

fellow who agrees to help out a fledgling colleague even though he has a full plate as it is. Color me impressed.

The thrust of the mentor program was to set goals and ask for assistance to achieve them. I eagerly read "The Mentee's Guide: How to Have a Successful Relationship with a Mentor"¹ on the flight home. This helped me develop a strategy for my long-distance mentor relationship with Rudy. The ATA also provided a way to develop goals through a workbook called "Creating Your Personal Vision and Writing a Plan: Three Tools for Achieving Your Goals".² Once I finished reading the background material, I started forming a personal development plan. As Rudy and I settled back into our daily routines, he outside of Boston and I in the Midwest, e-mail and the telephone got our relationship off to a good start.

Right off the bat, Rudy had ideas. Over the past year he churned out over fifty suggestions for help along my career path. He asked, "Why not write a review of an ATA session for *Intercambios*?" Luckily I had taken notes during a workshop, and these notes became the article "A Slice of Life: The Pathology Report," about a presentation by Michael Blumenthal. (Tell me it's not a thrill to see your name in print in *Intercambios*.) What I learned was that Rudy just did the work in order to give back to the profession. He told me it would help build a portfolio to show future employers. He also taught me to have one or two editors who could provide feedback. I learned to accept feedback and criticism without feeling offended.

Mind you, some suggestions I didn't follow. For example, we discussed voice-over work. It takes effort to break into that field. Rudy presented an honest picture of how to achieve success with performance work. He suggested strategies to follow if I chose to pursue this option. I haven't done so yet, but I may come back to it down the line.

¹ Philips-Jones, Linda. *The Mentee's Guide: How to Have a Successful Relationship with a Mentor*. Grass Valley, CA: Coalition of Counseling Centers/The Mentoring Group, 2000.

² Philips-Jones, Linda. *Creating Your Personal Vision and Writing a Plan: Three Tools for Achieving Your Goals*. Grass Valley, CA: Coalition of Counseling Centers/The Mentoring Group, 2000.

Another way he taught me to give back is to present at a conference. I offered to help Courtney to develop a Yahoo group for mentees. The plan consists of collating data from mentee surveys, which will then be presented at the 2002 conference in Atlanta. I now have a second mentor: Courtney and I are developing the workshop together. She'll help me with any PowerPoint questions and edit the abstract for the ATA Proceedings. Courtney is an ATA veteran (check out how many divisions SHE belongs to). She is walking me through the process from start to finish. I didn't expect that to happen.

My second goal was to develop a freelance client base. Rudy advised me to contact local places in person first. This gives the client a face to put with the name. I decided to visit local health care facilities where interpretation services are needed. I've contacted the director of interpreter services at a major hospital who will help make the case for qualified interpreters in a hospital setting. The point is to have the client think of me immediately when they have a need. I also discussed the need for qualified interpreters with my ophthalmologist. Guess what? My eye doctor, Frank J. Weinstock, M.D., is a professor of ophthalmology at the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine. Frank agreed to help me approach the hospital boards for work. Since then we've shared ideas and articles. There's another mentor who surfaced along the way.

Another way to expand your client base is to remember that not all work requires remuneration. The local police and fire departments have my name on their emergency interpreter list. Twice so far, I've been roused out of bed in the middle of the night to interpret for a Hispanic fellow who had been arrested. I would rather have continued my blissful slumber and it's Friday night and why wouldn't they pay me and didn't they appreciate how hard this work was? But on came the jeans, and off into the night I went with pens, yellow legal pad, and dictionary. You know what? It was an honor to be there for someone who couldn't speak for himself. I was able to read a detailed legal document about advisement of rights for blood alcohol testing. Does this mean I'll get work? Who knows? The bottom line is I made myself available and let go of the results.

It's also important to have someone you can call for a quick consult. Rudy asked me to search for someone who would complement my skill sets. Another mentee and I met over coffee after a session in LA. After exchanging e-mail addresses, we agreed to contact one another. At Rudy's suggestion, I contacted her to ask if she would proof some English>Spanish work (as I mentioned before, I am a native English speaker). Sandra encouraged me to continue writing in Spanish for practice and she polished up the work. There's another fear I got over: I thought I couldn't write well in Spanish. And the practice paid off; a client at the drug treatment center was impressed that her Hispanic client had all the handouts for each session in a language he could understand. She later contacted me for future assignments.

What else have I learned? It's imperative to be as diversified as possible. As a newcomer, I don't have the luxury of saying, "I only do legal/medical/banking jobs." Also, people who give it away will always get more work. People remember that "Shaklee gave this handout/term list to me." Be familiar with the subject matter—your heart and nerves will thank you. Show the client you are prepared. Look professional, including a tie. Do the work and be grateful. Give back to the community. Contribute to *Espalista*, *Intercambios* or your language divisions or other discussion groups. Write an article. Share terminology. Offer to volunteer as an interpreter in the community. There is plenty of work available for those who are good.

Through this relationship, I am honing my sense of what work I can and cannot perform with confidence and accuracy. Although I haven't left my current job yet, the time for change is nigh. There is now a growing contingency fund to fall back on when times are slim. To sum this experience up, Rudy can't do this work for me. I'm the one who has to take the initiative. He merely said "yes" back in November so that another language person could be guided along. Thanks, Rudy.

For more information about the ATA mentor/mentee program, contact Courtney Searles-Ridge, Head of the ATA Mentoring Task Force, at courtney@germanlanguageservices.com. Thanks to my editors, Amanda Ennis ("I was brutally honest, or maybe just brutal") and Jill Sommer.

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Mystery Candidates – continued from pg. 1

ship on the part of the nominating committee. Judicious nominations and their election results made NOTA for many years one of the most active and successful ATA chapters. It was actually exciting and stimulating to be part of the organization and to grow with it. As a founding member and active board member for some 15 years (six of them as president), I know. We then thoroughly enjoyed the organization and the personal and professional growth it offered to everyone interested in growing with it.

Now I am fully aware that organizations, like individuals or society in general, are subject to change. This year's nomination/election procedures certainly are a poignant example of just how much NOTA too has changed over the years. On Aug. 22, 2002, I received a ballot with five names, one for each of the executive positions, with a stamped return envelope. Although I (along with at least 90% of our other members) have been woefully remiss in attending recent meetings, I felt that **if** I was going to validate the committee's selection, I should at least know the persons and their qualifications. I know I am not the only one to feel that way. In fact, in our February issue of NOTA BENE, Dr. Leland Wright, Treasurer/Membership Chair and newly appointed Chair of ATA's Active Membership Review Committee deplores the fact "that so few voting members actually exercise their rights." He goes on to say that he believes "that all ATA members who are eligible to vote should make a concerted effort to become familiar with the candidates' qualifications and with other issues that might require a vote of the membership... and to cast their ballots accordingly." Though Dr. Wright referred to ATA voting rights and

privileges, shouldn't the same principles apply to NOTA's elections? Yet, when and where did NOTA members have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the candidates? How many members had the opportunity to meet with one or all candidates in person and discuss with them their goals and visions for the future of the organization? I personally know only two of the five individuals. How many do you know? Traditionally, a candidate for any office submits an abbreviated vitae along with a mission statement. Did I miss these in NOTA BENE, or was it an oversight that these were not included with the five-name slate? Can we really expect the membership to take an interest in their professional organization and validate a nomination committee's slate for an unknown board with unknown goals? Or does the nominated board assume that NOTA's members don't expect anything else from the organization than to have their names listed in the Membership Directory-- a quasi-validation of their status as a translator or interpreter? This would indeed be a sad day for a professional organization whose stated mission was to promote and further the translation/interpretation profession and who has worked so hard for years to generate a better understanding for it among our clients and the business community in general. The membership deserves better than what the nomination committee has presented. It deserves a choice of qualified candidates it can vote for, not a list with five names to validate. NOTA has so much to offer, but like everything else that is important to us, it also requires commitment and active (not half-hearted) involvement. The more you put in – the more you will get out of it. However, to have an effective and vibrant organization, all of its members have to feel that they are in fact an integral part of it, not just a name on the membership list.

NOTA Cookbook

At our potluck parties, we usually have a wonderful spread of international dishes. Several members expressed the wish to have some of these recipes combined into a little NOTA cookbook. Berta Kirchhoff volunteered to collect the recipes.

If you would like to share a recipe, please email it to Berta at BebaEPas@aol.com.

