



National

Newsletter

THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS INC.

Volume 13, number 5 - November 2005



This issue:

New National Executive

What can AUSIT do for me?

The interpreter's five other senses

and more



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From the new President

Chris Poole on the new AUSIT National Council and membership category changes

Dear Members,



I am pleased and honoured to report that at the National Annual General

Meeting held in Sydney, a new AUSIT National Executive has been formed. Positions were not contested, though I and two other candidates had enlisted the support of other members in the form of proxies, just in case. Over 100 proxies were sent in our favour (perhaps more than had ever been sent to an AGM), but remained ultimately unused as there were no elections. These proxies also supported the motion to amend the Constitution.

This amendment creates a category of membership for those members willing to declare to AUSIT that T&I is their 'full-time living' (the 'Senior Practitioner' category). The amendment is simply the framework that will support this concept. No decisions were made on the day about the definition of full-time living. This is the more difficult part of the process, and will involve research and discussion, as well as thorough consultation with the members. Clearly it would have been unwise of us to embark on that time-consuming process, without first ensuring that the supporting Constitutional framework was there ready for us when we finish.

The motion passed with an impressive 126 votes for, to 12 against, with one abstention. These are exciting times when the members are so well informed, and so keen to be involved in the process of developing our profession.

The new membership categories are just one of many projects that

have been developed under the guidance of Moreno and Yveline and with the assistance of an increasing number of hard working Branch members.

Other significant projects in which AUSIT is engaged are the development of National Competency standards that will govern all Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses in Australia, and which for the first time are definitions of interpreting and translation, *written by practitioners themselves*.

AUSIT is currently trialling a Board of Professional Conduct which will hear and deal with all matters involving allegations of breaches of the Code of Ethics, or any other problems and grievances specific to our industry and which require expert knowledge of the theory and practice of T&I to resolve.

The current National Council is made up of a group of people who have been working together for at least two years now, some much longer. A clear dynamic is emerging, and ideas that have been debated seemingly without end over the past four years are crystallising into reliable plans to improve and consolidate income generation, strategic alliances, growth, public profile and services to members.

I am very happy and excited to have so many interesting challenges ahead of us, and to be part of such a great team. On behalf of Annamaria (WA), Barbara (NSW), Ita (Qld), Lawson (VicTas), Malcolm (ACT), Natsuko (SANT), Yveline (Immediate Past President), Louis (Treasurer) and Sarina (Vice President) I thank you for your support so far, and for the even greater support we are sure to get while we are in office.

Chris Poole
National President

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Thank you once again to all for the numerous and punctual submissions. I would like to remind members that the deadline for the February issue is 15 January 2006.

Special thanks go out to Yveline, Ita, Chris, Barbara and all others who helped. Your feedback and suggestions are always welcome, as are any images.

Please send any letters, articles or images for forthcoming editions to:

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Front cover photos:

Helen Slatyer, Felicity Mueller and Annick Bouchet at the FIT Congress in Tampere, Finland.

Jim Duncan, Manager, NAATI (Qld) and members of the Qld branch committee: Patricia Avila, Secretary, Nada Validzic, Member, Jadranka Brown, PD Coordinator and Claudia Ait-Touati, Member.

What can AUSIT do for me?

AUSIT Treasurer **Louis Vorstermans** counters a common lament



Anecdotal evidence suggests that the above question is a fairly common response when those not already a

member of AUSIT are encouraged to join. The intuitive response is to try and list the benefits of being a member and the many things that have been achieved by and through the association. It seems this sort of response is not as successful as most people expect it to be.

Firstly, I do not believe that prospective members ask the question to elicit the answer that we usually provide. I sense that it is more a challenge in the form of a rhetorical question analogous to: 'What has the Government ever done for me!' It is perhaps an expression of the frustration borne of a feeling of powerlessness experienced in their daily professional life. Spend some time listening to a group of 'community interpreters' and you will know what I mean.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, I believe the question indicates a fundamental misunderstanding of the purpose of industry associations and professional institutes. Those who *do* understand, ask the exact opposite: '*What can I do to help AUSIT?*' In order to understand why, it is necessary to look at AUSIT's *raison d'être*. Regardless of what it says in our rules and brochures, the fundamental reason for AUSIT's existence is: 'to protect and advance the interests of its members'. Naturally, this can be made to look more palatable to outsiders by talking about 'enhancing the quality of and accessibility of translation and interpreting services in the Australian community', 'improving professional standards', etc. ad

infinitem, but those are strategies for achieving our fundamental aim, rather than the reason for AUSIT's fundamental existence.

Implicit in the question 'How can I help AUSIT?', is the following: 'to make it more successful at protecting and advancing *my* interests as an interpreter or translator'. We all have an instinctive understanding of being able to achieve greater things by acting collectively than we possibly can by acting alone; perhaps a leftover from the days when we chased woolly mammoths for lunch.

So, it is not about what we can extract from AUSIT in return for a measly \$110 in a tax-deductible subscription that barely covers the costs of keeping the AUSIT shingle flapping in the breeze. It is about what we can do in both the short and the long term to make it as powerful as the National Rifle Association (NRA) in the USA, or the Association of Certified Practising Accountants (CPA) for example. I deliberately chose those two examples, because although they both exist to protect and advance the interest of their members, their individual strategies could not possibly be more different.

The NRA relies almost entirely on large membership numbers and the financial and political clout that generates, whereas the CPAs rely on restricting entry to the profession, mostly on the basis of requisite professional qualifications and certification by their own association/peers. The former does it to protect their members' right to go out and hose Bambi with an AK47, the latter to justify their members' right to charge a reasonable fee for telling you that 2 plus 2 does not necessarily equal 4, but is more than likely 5 less 20% (plus GST of course).

Both organisations are very successful at protecting those

interests and both have a public face that expresses them quite differently. The NRA 'fights for the principles of individual freedoms granted under the constitution' (the right to bear arms), whereas the CPA protects the interest of the consumer (and the tax department presumably), by ensuring that only properly qualified and accredited people (people you can trust) can hang out their shingle and call themselves a CPA.

The result is a wonderful convergence of private and public interest; of selfish aims and lofty ideals. I suggest that neither would survive if it were not for this convergence of self-interest and the public good, because either the Government will not let you do the former (competition policy) or the membership will not support the latter.

So, what are the lessons that we can draw from this long-winded dissertation? First and foremost, that joining AUSIT is about investing in the future of the members of our profession (which includes you), both financially and intellectually. Second, but by no means less important, is the need to clearly articulate and communicate the two converging aims of AUSIT, so that any investment in the organisation can be focused and therefore effective. Just existing is not enough, we need to identify and communicate our aims and put in place the strategies to achieve them. Only then will it be obvious why joining is a good idea.

I am not making policy here, but merely putting forward a personal view for discussion. It seems to me that our public aim is not very different from that of most professional associations. To gain the support of the general public (and their proxies; that is, all levels of government), *we must act to ensure that both accessibility and quality of interpreter and translation*

services in Australia meet and exceed the expectations of our existing and potential clients.

Elementary you would think, but although I have been an active member for a number of years, I have yet to see this articulated in a meaningful way (a manifesto!). I think it is time that we sit down and spell out what our profession should be offering and how AUSIT deserves recognition and support, if not admiration, for working towards achieving that aim. You could argue that a simple way of exceeding the expectations of clients would be to keep studying in between assignments which we offer to do pro bono! Unfortunately, that would have a rather detrimental effect on accessibility, because most of us would opt out of the profession to become brain surgeons, astronauts or stand-up comedians to pay for the groceries.

Clearly therefore, the second and equally important aim must be to raise the quality, professional standing and earning capacity

of interpreters/translators to a level where it attracts the bright, the diligent and the well-qualified. Conversely, it will also be necessary to discourage those who are not able to provide a high standard of services from entering the profession. After all, the public judges a profession by the performance of its worst practitioners; ask any lawyer, banker or real estate agent.

These are the fundamental aims, and they are inextricably linked. Once they have been articulated and accepted, we must develop the strategies to achieve them. Is that difficult? No, it is not difficult, but like most things that are worth having, it takes a fair bit of hard work. That is where the opportunities are to join AUSIT and contribute to the future success of our profession and indirectly to your own success as a practitioner.

You are not buying a service when you join AUSIT — you are investing in your future!

Calculate your own fair pay

How many of the hours in your working day are chargeable? If you are a full-time interpreter, and consider the average number of on-site hours you are paid day in and day out, it is likely to be about four.

The study 'Fair Pay for Interpreters' launched by Immediate Past President Yveline Piller at the 2005 AGM presents an analysis based on a nine-hour working day for interpreters: four hours on site, three hours travel and two hours unbookable time between jobs doubling for marketing and administration. Initiated with the objective of calculating fees from a salary base, the study determines hourly rates applicable to translators as well as interpreters and a minimum call-out fee for interpreters to cover travel costs.

From a set of assumptions conservatively chosen to reflect the

costs of a hypothetical interpreter who works only for agencies, the study calculates tables for hourly rates and 90 minute minimum call-out fees for a range of salaries. To earn a salary of \$45,000 p.a., the resulting hourly rate is \$35.52 and the minimum assignment fee, \$109.35. The study thus shows how to calculate fees in terms of your desired annual salary. It finds that the time-honoured TIS / Centrelink 90-minute fee of \$60 equates to about \$19,970 p.a.

Want to know what it all means for you? If you enter your own cost estimates and times, and even your desired salary, in the 'ready reckoner' spreadsheet that comes with the study it will calculate your own tailored fee structure. Try it on the 'National Office' page from the members' area of the AUSIT website.

John Gare

National Council November 2005

PRESIDENT	Chris Poole
VICE-PRESIDENT	Sarina Phan
SECRETARY	Currently vacant
TREASURER	Louis Vorstermans
IMM. PAST PRES.	Yveline Piller

PRINCIPAL DELEGATES:

ACT	Malcolm Leader
NSW	Barbara McGilvray
QLD	Ita Szymanska
SA/NT	Natsuko Wada
VIC/TAS	Lawson Bayly
WA	Annamaria Arnall



AUSIT Vice-President
Sarina Phan

The following resolutions have been passed by the National Council since the last newsletter:

Resolution #83, dated 25.10.05
- That 2005/2006 allocations to branches be kept at 2004/2005 levels and paid within 30 days of AGM.

Since the last newsletter the following people were admitted to AUSIT as ordinary members:

Stephanie Bauche, NSW; Jason Teng Fang, VIC; Alex-Chantha Khun, VIC; Mariella Laurenzano, NSW; Queenie Lai-Fong Liu, NSW; Guo-Qiang Liu, VIC; Tania Pettinato, VIC; Minh-Bang Pham, NSW; Lei Yu, WA; Xun Zhou, NSW.

Associate members:

Maria Helena (Marleen) Blake, NSW; Yolanda Cuda, QLD; Matalena Fofoa Schuster, QLD; Odile Tchi-Wei Hui-Bon-Hoa Williams, QLD.

Associate affiliate subscribers:

Danièle Heinen, QLD; Simona Irde, NSW; Marina Klabukova, NSW; Ian D McArthur, NSW.

Congratulations and welcome to all new members!

Health care interpreters: A physiotherapy perspective

Researchers from the School of Physiotherapy at the University of Sydney recently published an article examining the attitudes of physiotherapists towards health care interpreters. The qualitative study, titled 'Health Care Interpreters: A Physiotherapy Perspective', aimed to identify and evaluate the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of physiotherapists towards interpreters and was part of a larger project examining how physiotherapists interact with clients of diverse ethnic origins. Physiotherapists were observed in three public hospitals and semi-structured interviews were conducted with six experienced physiotherapists from those hospitals.

The physiotherapists interviewed generally worked with interpreters in the hospital setting for initial treatments and subsequent major reassessments. Most of the interview responses regarding interpreters and their services were negative, with some physiotherapists regarding them as a last resort to be used only if family members or bilingual staff were not available, or if non-verbal communication had not been successful. Reasons given for physiotherapists' reluctance were distrust in and suspicion of interpreters, time constraints and the perceived cost of the interpreter service. The physiotherapists were generally most suspicious about the ability of interpreters to accurately transmit their intended messages. Their suspicion was based on the assumption that interpreters appeared to be lengthening or shortening the original message. The idea was put forward that physiotherapists' suspicion of interpreters may arise from the appearance of collusion between the interpreter and client through their shared language and culture. Physiotherapists may also have

difficulty developing a rapport with clients and interpreters, as different interpreters are usually allocated for each session with the same client. One physiotherapist made reference to interpreters 'taking over'. This dislike may be due to physiotherapists' perceived loss of independence and autonomy resulting from the necessary collaboration with interpreters.

The need to complete consultations on time when working with interpreters was a constant source of stress for some physiotherapists. Some physiotherapists allocated an extra fifteen minutes in outpatients appointments for clients requiring interpreters. This led to concerns that other patients could be disadvantaged. Some physiotherapists felt health care interpreters were an interruption to their normal routine and work schedule. This led to the formation of negative attitudes and reduced collaboration.

A major concern found in the study was the perceived cost of the interpreter service, with one physiotherapist saying: 'It's a waste of money' and another seeing it as a 'luxury' which the health system could not afford. The authors commented that the physiotherapists were possibly misinformed about the comparative cost of the service (which was minimal) and speculated that negative attitudes could arise from the perception that physiotherapy departments were competing with the health care interpreter service for money.

One of the physiotherapists interviewed did comment positively on the interpreter service, emphasising that interpreters could save the health care system money by ensuring the accurate transmission of messages, leading to effective and quality care. The authors of the study recognised that interpreters were sometimes

unavailable or there might be a waiting time for some languages, and recommended these events be documented and addressed within hospital quality improvement programs. Recommendations were also made to improve education of physiotherapists as to the value of professional interpreters and the risks of using non-professionals. It is hoped that better education will lead to increased trust and collaboration between physiotherapists and interpreters. The study was, however, realistic in its recommendations and emphasised that education alone would not change some of the negative attitudes. The conclusion was that physiotherapists needed a change in their ideas, and to become aware of and undo some of their ingrained cultural biases.

Teresa S. Lee, one of the study's authors, is currently a PhD student in the School of Physiotherapy at the University of Sydney. Her diverse experience with clients of different cultures comes from her work as a physiotherapist in Australia, UK, Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong. She refers to herself as 'Australian-Chinese', has straddled both eastern and western cultures and is thus able to provide analysis from both cultural viewpoints as a health professional and a client. She attributes a lot of her work to her supervisors, Gwenda Lansbury from the University of Sydney's School of Physiotherapy, and Associate Professor Gerard Sullivan from the Faculty of Education and Social Work. Teresa can be contacted via email at: <tlee8503@mail.usyd.edu.au>. She has kindly emailed me a PDF version of the original article from the *Australian Journal of Physiotherapy* (Vol.51 No.3 2005) for distribution to interested AUSIT members. Please email me if you would like a copy.

*Belinda Hercus
bdello@chariot.net.au*

Translators for kids

*Press release, Brisbane,
19 October 2005*

The international translation community is proud to announce the foundation of a new association 'Translators for Kids'. The association, which is the brainchild of German copywriter and translator, Marion Schimmelpfennig, has been set up as a non-profit organisation based in France.

Official notification of the creation of the association was published in the 137th (2005) issue of France's *Journal Officiel* (Official Gazette). The association's declared aims are to:

- Ease the plight of disadvantaged children all over the world;
- Use the unique skills and worldwide coverage of volunteer translators as linguists and intercultural ambassadors;
- Communicate to the world the experiences and aspirations of its children;

- Promote initiatives with the potential to enhance their lives.

The association plans not only to assist children financially but also to organise public awareness projects. Each project will be especially created to highlight the translation profession's unique worldwide position and its willingness to play a role in activities that raise social, economic and political awareness.

Membership fees have been kept deliberately low to allow access for a maximum of participants in the various countries of the world. For its first project, a book, the association is hoping to attract the interest of literary circles and the publishing community in providing sponsorship and/or assisting it in compiling, translating and publishing the writings of children, especially those in poorer countries, about their everyday reality, hopes and dreams.

For further information contact Claudia at: <rat4cat@iprimus.com.au> or go to <www.translators4kids.com>.

Professions Australia Alert No.332:

DIMIA outreach program addressing skills shortages, 4 October 2005

Industry groups have been benefiting from hosting dedicated Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) outreach officers to help tackle skill shortages. The task of the outreach officers is to give expert support to employers who want the option to employ skilled migrants where they cannot fill skilled jobs locally.

The outreach officers promote visa options and procedures and can also visit businesses to discuss the best DIMIA visas for their situation. This government-funded industry outreach initiative currently supports 19 industry groups and associations with 16 industry outreach officers located in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Tasmania, Canberra, Sydney and Brisbane. Examples of associations currently hosting outreach officers include the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA and a group comprising the Australian Mines and Metals Association, the Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA, and the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association.

ACEA, a Professions Australia member association, successfully applied for an outreach officer under the program. ACEA has access to a state-based DIMIA employee for three days a week to work with their member firms. For further information on how to access this program you should contact the Assistant Director, Sue Pegg, Business Employment Section in DIMIA's Canberra office.

Professions Australia

New US visa arrangements for professionals

The Trade Minister has announced that a new E-3 visa would be available as from 5 September 2005 to 10,500 Australian professionals and business people wanting to live and work in the US. This arrangement has been negotiated under the AUSFTA.

Only 900 Australians succeeded in gaining the US H-1B business visa in 2004. By comparison, there will be 10,500 E-3 visas reserved exclusively for Australian nationals each year.

The dedicated business visa would be easier to obtain and less costly than the traditional H-1B business visa. And unlike the H-1B visa,

spouses of E-3 visa holders will also be able to work in the United States — thus eliminating a barrier that in practice has stopped many Australians from applying for temporary residence in the United States in order to pursue business or professional opportunities.

E-3 visa holders will be able to apply for extensions and the application fee for an E-3 visa will be significantly lower than that for the H-1B visa.

Those interested in applying for an E-3 visa should contact their nearest US consulate in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Perth, or consult the US State Department or Department of Homeland Security (Citizenship and Immigration Services) websites.



ASLIA Winterschool conference

Or how **Chris Poole** learned about sign language karaoke

In May I attended the National Council meeting in Cairns, combined with a half day seminar for local members and students at which I presented a talk covering a range of topics all cleverly concealed by the highly misleading title 'Small business practice for interpreters'.

It was well enough received, however, for me to be invited to give the same talk to the SANT Branch of AUSIT, and then again at the ASLIA Winterschool/Conference held in Cairns at the end of July, which I report here.

The T&I industry is needlessly fragmented. We all rely on the same core skills, but the natural tendency is to form smaller groups based on some 'other thing' we have in common; sign language interpreters are a good example. From their perspective the world is divided into 'sign language', and 'spoken language', interpreters. Two groups. Not that the expression is so unusual, but the frequency over two days with which it was used to bundle all except sign language interpreters together and to which was added some generalised predicate was amusing to me. I was actually told by one person that he'd 'seen spoken language interpreters at work. They'd been very unprofessional; chatting away with people; unable to distinguish between social

meeting and work', and he then concluded that 'the low standards of spoken language interpreters were to blame for the mistrust with which all interpreters are regarded'!

Though extreme, this tendency is normal. I've heard similarly simplistic things from indigenous and Japanese speaking interpreters before. These are the symptoms of people working in isolation, often self-imposed. The cure for this is 'association', and that's why we have associations like AUSIT and ASLIA (although for the purposes of this article I use this system of categorisation below).

Like any group of people, sign language interpreters have a distinctive culture. One measure of a culture is the degree to which people are able to connect and interact with others within that group, and it is a very happy spectacle to measure this group in such a way. Their second (and for many their first) language is one that involves far more bodily movement and their social behaviour is vastly more tactile. This is a group of people who wave and smile and touch and hug much more than any other; this is the steady structure on which all their more complicated communication takes place.

I tried to keep up, and managed to learn a few signs, but was more interested in just learning about

the various conventions governing this mode of communication. For example, two hearing people in a conversation will still sign what they are saying to each other if they know deaf people are present, because to do otherwise would be rude. More discreet communication is accomplished less visibly by forming a cubby-like conversational stance, and with miniature or one-handed signs (also very important when drinking!).

In my talk I hoped to encourage those present to consider their income in a more business-like manner: this represents a challenge because, much more than spoken language interpreters, sign language interpreters have come from a history of community support and government funding that is predicated on disability arguments more than the broader arguments of immigration and social integration (lesser, though similarly debilitating historical arguments for us). The brokering of gainful employment has been far more centralised in community and not-for-profit organisations, with external funding based on social policy rather than self-funding based on commercial viability. Like spoken language interpreters, they struggle to break free of the expectation that there is an overarching and 'official' justification for our existence, a father-like 'power' which has more

governing and benign influence over our incomes than the market. This is further closely associated with a reverence for credentials, especially NAATI ones, that is markedly higher than that of relatively cynical spoken language interpreters.

But there are ways in which I think sign language interpreters are streets ahead of spoken language ones. Clearly the commitment of the former to improvement both of the self and of the profession through academic study is much higher than for the latter. And their skills in negotiating with bureaucracies are also superior for those same historical reasons.

This expectation of ethical dimensions far in excess of the requirements of purely commercial behaviour has led to some strange results. Whereas I often hear spoken language interpreters complaining about others who 'undercut', at this conference people were criticising those who charge a lot! Apparently this is 'doing the wrong thing by the deaf community'. I ventured to suggest that the deaf community was itself a market, and that by paying more for some people they were sending a very valuable and constructive message about which interpreters, or what standards of quality and practice it preferred, and that these ought to prosper and proliferate as a result. In the subsequent discussion someone said (in support of my comments) that 'there are no friends in business', but surely the friendliest outcome occurs for those who find the most favour amongst their clients to reap the greatest rewards, otherwise they will take their talents elsewhere and everyone loses.

The tactile, friendly and enthusiastic nature of sign language interpreters extended to their conference organising skills. The first day had an ingenious 'get to know you' session which successfully made every person at the conference speak or sign to every other person, if not make eye or bodily contact with one another! A professional group photo was arranged which

AUSIT should definitely have done at our Conference last year.

The program was very interesting, in particular Karen Bontempo's talk on working in teams, which, retitled as 'mentorship', I would like to see become the basis of an industry policy (she seemed a little surprised when I suggested this – perhaps the consequence of another form of isolation called 'coming from Perth'). She described the very inspiring existing work practices amongst sign language interpreters, which in AUSIT are still regarded dubiously as something that *might* happen in the future. But the most outstanding moment was the karaoke evening.

Karaoke for deaf people? Why yes! Sign language interpreters are truly amazing dancers because they've solved the biggest problem for all people who want to dance — what to do with your hands. And the rest follows very naturally. Even

though I was unaware of the way in which the lyrics to 'Fame' had been satirically reworked by three signers into a bitchy triologue about who has level two accreditation and who is a has-been, I still found it very entertaining. There is enormous dramatic, choreographic and comic potential (which was very well exploited) in a rhythmical blending of actual Auslan signs, iconic signs and dance moves. The overall effect was both moving and hysterical, with a number of dry, academic presenters from the day revealing their steamy underbelly (literally) once the music started.

From the exposition of Nida's theories to the fake (?) orgasms and hilarity of the karaoke, I had a great time. I hope that clarifies it for the several people who asked me: 'Why are you here?'. I really think AUSIT and ASLIA should work more closely for the sake of both our associations.

Book review

Translating for Television: A Handbook in Screen Translation.

Author Jan Emil Tveit. Published by the Norli Group Norwegian publishers.

From the foreword:

'The present undertaking is an attempt at coming up with a handbook that not only focuses on theory and research; an equally strong emphasis is on the practice of screen translators and translation students alike.'

Whereas a large number of books and articles have been written on general translation, surprisingly little has been done on screen translation. There are obviously several reasons for this, one of the most important probably being that writing such books requires both theoretical knowledge and practical experience. This combination seems to be in short supply.'

Author Jan Emil Tveit is Associate Professor at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH) in Bergen, Norway. He specialises in screen translation, which is among the disciplines offered by the Department of Languages at NHH.

He has ten years' experience as a news subtitler and was the first Director of Translation and Subtitling at TV 2, Norway's biggest commercial television company. Jan Emil has trained translators for the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation and does consultancy work within screen translation nationally and internationally.

From the Norli Group online bookshop at <<http://www.norli.no/>>.

*Language plus food, language plus fun
Language plus salsa, language plus sun
Put them all together and what have you got?
AUSIT in Queensland feeling hot, hot, hot!*



AUSIT

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS INC.

AUSIT Qld at the Brisbane Multicultural Festival

In the first week of October, Brisbane wore its best multicoloured coat and showed it proudly to a delighted audience at the Brisbane Multicultural Festival in Roma Street Parklands. Here was a feast of culture, food, dance, colour where around 40,000 people from over 200 different cultures gathered to share and learn about what makes different cultures tick.

The quality of the stands, food and shows and facilities at the Parklands was on par with the best festivals around the world, except with better weather, as Brisbane put on the best spring day ever.

AUSIT was there, and from the grooviest stall in the festival, a group of dynamic members disseminated AUSIT's happy message: 'Translators and Interpreters are professionals who will help

you spread the word (the "right" word) about your business!'

The goal was to educate the general public about our profession, to convince consumers to use professional interpreters and translators, to engage new members and to show the quality of our association and our work. It promised to be a big success with all the creativity and enthusiasm contributed by the committee. In the weeks leading to the event Sam Berner provided us with a brainstorming sheet and within a jiffy everyone had filled hers (yep, we had to depend on female creativity only) with fantastic ideas. On the day, though, Derek Dixon did provide some male brawn (!!!) and of course, his ready cheeky smile and sense of humour.

Despite plenty of other commitments, everyone managed

to do their share for the festival. Readers may not believe that the sole face-to-face meeting we had for planning this event as a committee lasted only ONE hour, with the rest of the planning done through e-meetings and virtual means. Aren't we clever? We aimed for success...

And a success it was!! Not only did we achieve our goals as described above, but the team spirit generated was fantastic. Besides that, AUSIT Queensland once again proved that translators and interpreters are NOT a boring and dusty bunch of intellectuals, but energetic and passionate professionals; a great attraction for the potential young colleagues and members.

After we spent several nights creating, editing, assembling, printing and deliberating about our display materials, the first

group to set up the stand at dawn amongst the lush greenery of the famous Brisbane park were greeted by a hot and harsh day. Yet to the swinging sounds of African, Indian, Bengalese music, the visitors poured in. Within no time, our freebies, such as the English dictionaries and pocket spellers that were kindly donated to us by Dynamic Supplies, were all gone! Nonetheless, people kept coming in to have a look at our colourful display (and maybe to do a little jig with Patricia Avila who swears that anyone who can march, can dance Latin...!). The tongue-in-cheek approach of showing the public what can happen when non-professional or machine translators are engaged was well appreciated, and most people recognised displayed examples of mistranslations and miscommunication from manuals or food packages. We believe this approach made our visitors realise the importance of our job. Another positive was the great interest shown from young people who declared their interest in considering translating or interpreting as a future profession. There were quite a few people who



Patricia Avila and Jadranka Brown staff the AUSIT stall

were interested in linguistics and T&I. We hope to see some of them back as new AUSIT team members, perhaps ready to provide an extra hand and fresh ideas for next year's event.

Thank you to all who helped with

also donated some of her time to NAATI (who had a stall next to AUSIT's) and kept the T&I flag going at both ends.

*Queensland Branch
Committee*

and visited the AUSIT stall. Special thanks to the tireless branch committee Sam Berner, Jadranka Brown, Claudia Ait-Touati, Patricia Avila, Maurite Foher, Nada Validzic, Mira Chapman, Ita Szymanska and Derek Dixon for your endless enthusiasm and passion for AUSIT! Our colleague, Patricia Avila



AUSIT promotional material on display at the Qld festival to educate the masses

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The interpreter's other five senses

Somsak Patradoon highlights the need for heightened practitioner awareness

Not everyone has the basic five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. For a person to be alive, as compared to simply existing, is to be fully aware of the senses we have. We rely on them to receive messages external to ourselves.

More than one half of the task in interpreting is done in receiving messages, and as interpreters we must also be acutely conscious of the senses we have. But my experience tells me that it is important for interpreters to have another set of five senses other than just the physical ones.

ACCOMPLISHMENT

A sense of accomplishment is achieved when you have done something well, or succeeded in having done what is of value or importance to you. Every interpreting assignment can give an interpreter this feeling.

In almost every triangular liaison interpreting situation, the interpreter is the only person of the three who knows what both other people are talking about. Even in a conference interpreting situation, the interpreter who sits in a booth situated in a dark corner at the back of the audience gets to read all the speeches before the speaker delivers. The interpreter holds the secret to the speaker's success with the audience.

In many interpreting situations the service of an interpreter is necessary to give assistance to the underprivileged in the administration of justice, welfare,



or law and order. Without the interpreter, refugees, the innocently accused, non-English speaking elderly people, the bullied, or the weaker members of our society may never have a voice. That is not democracy.

Interpreting is never a simple task; language competence is not enough. It is difficult to interpret for a lawyer if you know nothing about law. You need to know a thing or two about the legal system you work in, not necessarily as well as the legal practitioner, but a lot better than the non-English speaking clients. The interpreter needs to have *subject competence*.

Many terms, such as 'bridging visa' are not easy to interpret in some languages. You need to interpret it differently for your client to understand, perhaps choosing to explain the meaning of the term instead in order to rise above the semantic level. The interpreter

needs to have *context competence*.

Many translators cannot handle the stressful nature of interpreting, because even though they know how to translate most elegantly given enough time, they cannot handle the pace of having to do the same on the spot. They need to have *transfer competence*. Skills required for interpreting are very different to those required for translation.

In other words, interpreting is not a task that can be performed by any Tom, Dick, or Harry. Interpreting is a highly specialised, valuable skill only some select few people are able to perform.

You are in a particular and unique situation: no one else knows as much as you do; no one can do what you do. Every interpreting assignment can give you this sense of accomplishment — be aware of this. Use all your physical senses to feel this sense of accomplishment every time you interpret.

TIMING

Interpreters also use another sense, a sense of timing, when carrying out their interpreting tasks.

They rely on this sense to arrive at an assignment on time. Five to ten minutes before the appointment is a good goal to set, if not fifteen. You need that space to prepare yourself physically, emotionally, and most importantly, mentally. Take a few deep breaths. Go to the toilet if you have to. Settle down.

Be ready. Let your client know you are ready. Show the world you are ready. Use your sense of timing.

Long sentences in a language may need to be interpreted into shorter sentences to express the meaning better. Use your sense of timing to decide when to end your sentences in the target language.

Use your sense of timing to decide when to start interpreting. If you are interpreting consecutively, is it at

'Being able to dissolve an awkward situation using humour also differentiates an expert from a novice. Your ability to laugh at yourself shows your generosity and graciousness. It shows you are more experienced in handling life situations.'

the end of every three sentences? If you are interpreting simultaneously, is it after the speaker's fifth word into his/her sentence? You rely on your sense of timing.

Be alert. Be aware. Don't wait as long as one interpreter I saw in court who sat next to the accused quietly until the hearing finished before beginning his interpreting; or another interpreter who did the same thing so quietly that the defending barrister had to ask the judge to order him to interpret every single word!

If you are a conference interpreter, just because you have translated the entire speech of a speaker the night before and no audience sees you because you are sitting behind them tucked in the interpreter's booths, it does not mean that you can finish reading the speech before the speaker.

You need your sense of timing.

But you don't have to cultivate so marvellously precise a sense of timing that you start accepting six interpreting bookings in a day; it is not unusual that a two-hour booking often turns out to be six. Besides, you may need to travel between venues. Don't forget to take care of yourself.

You need to take a break after every one to two hours in liaison interpreting. You need to recharge every 20 to 30 minutes when you are working in a conference booth. Only inexperienced conference interpreters are so eager to interpret continuously that their partner does not get to interpret for hours! Don't forget you still have to live after the conference!

Use your sense of timing well not just to maximise output, but also to balance this with your ability to provide the best quality interpreting performance.

HUMOUR

Everyone needs to have a sense of humour, interpreters included. I don't want to spend any more time on what other people have written volumes about. Suffice it to say that in a lot of awkward situations

involving ethical dilemmas (giving gifts is a typical one in interpreting practice), the only sensible way to dissolve the issues at hand may be to rely on your sense of humour.

Being able to dissolve an awkward situation using humour also differentiates an expert from a novice. Your ability to laugh at yourself shows your generosity and graciousness. It shows you are more experienced in handling life situations. What better weapons can an interpreter use to command the trust and confidence of his/her clients!

Besides, having a sense of humour requires that one understands humour. Understanding humour helps the interpreter to interpret jokes better in humorous or entertaining speeches. Although many interpreters do not laugh when the speaker telling a funny joke holds a straight face, a sense of humour makes the interpreter more affable, more approachable, and certainly more easy to work with.

HUMILITY

Interpreting is a growing profession. No matter how diligently an interpreter works, there will be times when we will have to realise the limit of our knowledge or capability. That's when we need to use our sense of humility.

When we tell a prospective client a certain interpreting task is beyond our capability, we are acknowledging that we can't know everything under the sun. We need a sense of humility to accept that.

If we use our sense of humility when we interpret we will have the courage to acknowledge when we have mistakenly interpreted something. When interpreters realise they have made a mistake, they acknowledge and apologise for it. Apologising for the mistakes you make can only add to, not diminish, your professionalism as an interpreter.

How many interpreters are game enough to approach the judge saying: 'The interpreter would like

to approach the bench on a matter of translation', or, 'The interpreter accepts the translation suggested by the defence barrister', or, 'The interpreter would like to amend a translation mistake s/he made on the previous day'?

Only a professional interpreter with a sense of humility has this courage.

DIRECTION

If interpreters make use of the above four senses when carrying out their interpreting, they will naturally have a sense of direction. Being conscious of our senses gives us a sense of direction. We know exactly where we are when we choose to interpret something the way we do because we have done the preparation for the task.

You may have noticed that good interpreters do not interpret verbatim from source language to target. Effective interpreters set goals and objectives in delivering their interpreting and use different interpreting methods and strategies to transfer meanings when they interpret. This sense of direction acquaints good interpreters with the meaning of the word 'accuracy' better than professionals in many other professions.

CONCLUSION

As an interpreter it is important to be fully aware and use your five physical senses, but it is equally important to cultivate and nurture a second set of five senses to become a professional interpreter.

Your sense of accomplishment will give you the pride of workmanship as an interpreter. Your sense of timing will maximise your interpreting capacity. Your sense of humour will make you an expert communicator. Your sense of humility will ensure continual improvement in your life-long learning experience. Your sense of direction will ensure that you will achieve your goals, to become the best interpreter you can be.

Translators without borders

This Paris-based humanitarian NGO needs volunteers

Translators Without Borders, or *Traducteurs Sans Frontières* (TSF) was first formed in 1993 when the Paris-based company Eurotexte was offered paid translation work by Doctors Without Borders (*Médecins Sans Frontières*, or MSF). TSF's first response was: 'If we don't charge you anything, will you put the money to good use?' MSF immediately reassured that the money would go into other important Doctors Without Borders activities, and Translators Without Borders was born. Since that day, Translators Without Borders has provided thousands of pages of pro bono translations to document and assist virtually every major humanitarian intervention by Doctors Without Borders and other organisations such as *Médecins du Monde*, AIDES, UNICEF, Handicap International etc., who are then able to use the funds saved to extend their humanitarian works.

Some of the important subjects which have been tackled by translators who volunteer their time include: food security and armed conflict in the Sudan; mother-to-child transmission of HIV; disaster relief in Southern Peru; sleeping sickness in Burundi; tuberculosis in the Ukraine; displaced people in Liberia; torture in Chechnya and Armenian street children.

If you have ever wanted to combine your translating skills with lending a hand to a worthy cause, then perhaps you'd like to volunteer for Translators Without Borders. Translators Without Borders urgently needs French to English and English to French translators and editors to take on short documents pro bono for humanitarian organisations such as those mentioned above. They also have a pressing need for medical translators.

You could find yourself translating a witness report from Afghanistan or Chechnya, or describing the

latest research into preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Documents usually range from one to ten pages (though educational institutions occasionally take on lengthy documents as group projects). Even a couple of pages per year is helpful.

According to TSF volunteer Karen Tucker:

'You're getting the word out on some important issues that a lot of people don't know about, and you feel you're contributing to an extremely important organisation in some small way.'

'I like doing this because it is interesting. I believe in what they're doing, and I feel good that I'm volunteering in some way. It's also standard language — there's not a lot of jargon. They write very natural language, so it's easier to translate than a lot of business translations.'

TSF has approximately 150 translators who have been accepted and entered in its database, of whom around 30 volunteer their time quite regularly. Over 95% of TSF work undertaken is done free of charge. If an NGO does have a budget for a particular project, that money is naturally used to pay the translator(s).

All the translators who work for Translators Without Borders are experienced professionals. When a translator volunteers to join, he or she is sent a test. This is then corrected and graded by a professional translator and, according to the grade, the application is accepted or refused.

Members actively contribute by translating a whole range of documents: press releases, web sites, annual reports, mission reports, medical guides, guidelines, etc.

TSF has requests for interpreting services as well, but not very often.

AIDES recently requested Russian and Romanian interpreters, as visitors from those countries were going to be taken on a tour of the French AIDES offices.

But TSF (which receives no financial assistance for its work) does limit free translation services to humanitarian organisations because their volunteers are giving up their personal time for pro bono translations and prefer to translate for a cause they support.

The organisation recently translated Handicap International's guidelines for aid workers in the field on what to do in the event of further earthquakes in Southern Asia, press releases on the medical and logistical aid being provided by *Médecins du Monde*, and an interview with MSF's Managing Director regarding the donations they've received.

Translators Without Borders supports the idea of the international translation community setting up a fund so that certified medical interpreters could be sent on humanitarian missions in the developing world. The missions might involve interpreting from a widely-spoken language like English or French to a local dialect, and would necessarily involve local interpreters, thus providing the additional benefit of bringing money into the community. This could also be extended to hospitals in poorer areas of countries which do not already provide interpreting services.

Material for this article was sourced loosely from many websites on the Internet.

Alberto Corboz 1938-2005

A 'gentle giant' of the T/I industry is remembered

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to Albert Rodolphe Corboz Albrechtsen, a dedicated AUSIT member for many years, who passed away earlier this year in his beloved Montevideo, Uruguay.

Alberto was committed to the advancement of the interpreting and translating profession and was a flamboyant supporter of multiculturalism in the ACT. We remember him as the Deputy Chair of the ACT Branch of AUSIT during

the 1990s and as a Lecturer at the Interpreting and Translating Course offered by the Canberra College of Advanced Education in the mid 1970s. Alberto was the voice behind many of the interpreting tests recorded by NAATI in Canberra. He was a good and caring professional who did a great deal of community interpreting, especially in the legal field.

Alberto was a good friend. Larger than life, he was the best example

of a gentle giant. An unforgettable character who exuded joie de vivre; a mixture between showman and gourmet. He loved a good movie, a book and cooking for his friends, but most of all he loved sharing a meal, a conversation and a glass of wine with them.

We shall miss him.

*Rafael Pintos-López
Amalia Milman*

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RMIT University, centrally located in Melbourne, Victoria, currently offers two programs for local and international students interested in training as interpreters and translators:

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*(NB: * Non-Sudanese Arabic speakers should apply for Arabic in the Advanced Diploma of Translating and Interpreting)*

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NB: P = Part-time mode only F = Full-time mode only

Our professional training programs are accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd (NAATI). RMIT is the only University in Melbourne whose programs have NAATI approval. The Diploma of Interpreting trains students in dialogue interpreting to Paraprofessional Level. The Advanced Diploma of Translating and Interpreting trains students in dialogue and consecutive interpreting, translating from English into LOTE and translating from LOTE into English to Professional Level.

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Scholarships cover course fees, materials and other associated study costs.

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For more information, visit the VOMA website at: <www.voma.vic.gov.au/scholarships> or telephone VOMA on 9208 3157.

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