Upcoming Events

NOTA Picnic

Saturday, June 24, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
at the Brecksville Reservation
for details – see "Executive Board Meeting" pg. 3

NOTA Annual Meeting

September 30.
Location and times will be announced.

NOTA ELECTION

Our Election Committee,

  Magda Buzniak - translate4you@sbcglobal.net
  Klaudia Schaller - Klaudia_schaller@adelphia.net

did not receive any nominations for officers from our membership for the upcoming election. The present officers have agreed to stay on for one more term. Since we have no nominations for any of the offices, we see no need to send out ballots for an election. If you do not agree and would like to nominate anybody for any of the offices (with the nominee's consent), please do so within the next week.

In this Issue:

Executive Board Meeting
April 27, 2006

Present: Jill Sommer, Amanda Ennis, Reinhold Federmann and Cindy Hazelton.

Certification Exam. Jill announced that the ATA certification exam will be given at Kent State University on May 20, 2006, from 9:30 till 12:30. So far, 8 translators have registered to take the exam.

Internet Seminar. The Internet Seminar presented by Anne Chemali and Jill Sommer has been postponed due to scheduling problems. The new date will be announced.

Membership Directory. Unfortunately, no members submitted any names of businesses to help us send our membership directories to new contacts. Given this lack of contact information, Amanda will send out directories to five hospitals and court systems in Summit or Cuyahoga Counties.

Website. Michael O'Flaherty is redesigning our website. We have a new domain name, and we have obfuscated the board members' email addresses on the site to avoid receiving unsolicited commercial e-mails (spam). The new website will be posted later this summer.

Updating Your Information. There is a link on the current website called UPDATE YOUR INFO. Please use this link to update your own information. It is not necessary to send your changes to the Board Members for updating.

Medical Division Conference. The ATA Medical Division Conference will be held in Cleveland on May 31-June 3, 2007. The location will be the Intercontinental Hotel. This is a joint project of the ATA, NOTA and the Cleveland Clinic. In addition to educational sessions, there will be a constant satellite feed from an operating room in the Cleveland Clinic.

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President's Message

Well, we've made it through another winter. It's the time of year when all things seem possible. The trees are budding, the grass is growing, the birds are chirping, the flowers are blooming – and most importantly, in my opinion, the lilacs are in bloom. Even though fall is my favorite season, I look forward to this time of year. The rebirth of the plants and warm, sunny days are a welcome change from the dreary Cleveland weather. It means no more climbing through snowplow-created snowbanks while walking the dog, no more shoveling, and no more heavy coats. However, it is also really hard to work in front of the computer when the sun is shining and it's a balmy 60 or 70 degrees. It's almost impossible to settle down on a job and finish it when my dog is nipping at my pant leg to go for a walk.

We are also busy planning for the events over the summer. Plans for the summer picnic and the Annual Meeting are underway. Be sure to read the Executive Committee minutes and the blurbs for more details.

I am helping Lee Wright proctor the certification exam on May 20th and wanted to take the time to thank Waltraud Knudsen and Lee Wright for volunteering to proctor the exams this month. We really appreciate them taking time out of their busy schedules to give back to the profession this way.

On a related note, Anne and I decided to postpone the Internet Research seminar again because we simply don't have the time to organize and advertise it. But Anne and I are not the only ones in the group who have special skills we can share. If you have a skill you would like to share with the other members, please contact John Shaklee at events@ohiotranslators.org. Please don't hide your light under a bushel!

I am also currently helping organize ATA's first Medical Division conference, to be held here in Cleveland next May, and could really use some help. This is going to be a fantastic conference. We are hosting it at the Intercontinental Hotel, and the contract is almost negotiated and signed. The Intercontinental is a very impressive venue. We are going to have a dedicated satellite feed with an operating room at the Cleveland Clinic, and specialists from the Cleveland Clinic and other companies will be presenting their skills and tools to medical translators and interpreters. If you are a member of the Medical Division or just want to help out, please contact me. The Medical Division administrators are relying on us, because we are going to be hosting it in Cleveland. This is going to be a great opportunity to show off Cleveland and the skills of our members. I encourage you to save the date next May 31-June 3, 2007.

As you can probably tell, I'm a happy woman, but I'm also a frazzled woman – and I suspect many of you share that. I am thrilled that the semester is almost over at Kent State, so I can concentrate on translating and helping plan the conference. Several of my clients promise to keep me very busy through the summer, so I have decided to hire one of my grad students as an intern, which is a really weird prospect for me. I'll keep her busy running PDFs and TIFs through my new OCR program, proofreading, and translating, but I find myself debating how many hours to work her and what to pay her.

Did I mention how frazzled I have been? I actually celebrated the weekend between April and May by turning off my computer and staying away all weekend. I have been so overworked lately that I found I didn't know what to do with myself. It was really hard to concentrate on relaxing. I found I couldn't sit still. I eventually devoured several good mysteries, but

it was a tough adjustment. Let's try not to let that happen to you. Remember to take that ten minutes a day, just ten minutes, to sit and stare at something wonderful – a book, a flower, a dog, a sleeping child -- even the inside of your own eyelids. Meditate or take a walk in the sunshine. You owe yourself that downtime.

Summer Picnic. The Annual NOTA summer picnic will be held on Saturday, June 24, at the Brecksville Reservation from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. Please bring a dish to share with others. NOTA will provide the beverages, paper plates, plastic cups, and silverware; however, if you want to be environmentally friendly, feel free to bring your own plates, cups, and silverware.

Annual Meeting. The NOTA Annual Meeting will take place on September 30. Location and times will be announced.

The next meeting of the Executive Board will be on Thursday, August 3, 2006 at Reinhold Federmann's home.

Glossary Mining
By Lee Wright

While preparing for several online courses in translation that I have taught or will be teaching for New York University over the past year or so, I have surfed the Internet extensively and intensively for appropriate monolingual (both English and Spanish) and bilingual glossaries, primarily related to legal and technical fields. Yet another source of inspiration for this project was the fact that I plan to attend the seminar on Internet research that Jill Sommer and Anne Chémali are going to offer soon. In the process of my own Web browsing, I have stumbled across numerous items containing terminology in other subject areas.

In addition to everything from astronomy to zoology, I found glossaries for economics, cooking and wine, real estate, various medical fields (including dentistry, psychiatry and psychology), international finance and banking, investment, statistics, geography, various sports (baseball, soccer, golf, basketball, archery), bullfighting, mountain climbing and hiking, abbreviations and acronyms in numerous subjects, slang words and dialects of various countries and regions, poker, Internet games and gambling, history, art and architecture, music and dance, cinematography and theater, genealogy, diplomatic language, typography and graphic arts, photography, sewing and textiles (including one produced by the Celanese company that is well over 100 pages long and profusely illustrated), religion (both conventional and occult), education, taxes, insurance, occupational safety, agriculture, patents and intellectual property, language usage and linguistics (in both English and Spanish), literature (including poetry), library science, Web/Internet

jargon, Internet search engine terminology, stand-up comedy, sociology, parliamentary procedure – and the list goes on from there.

It's hard to say which of the several "oddball" glossaries was the most interesting, but the one that I definitely found to be the most unusual is a glossary of knighthood, chivalry and tournaments. If anybody is interested in checking it out, here's the URL: http://www.chronique.com/Library/ Glossaries/glossary-KCT/glssindx.htm. In addition to extensive definitions for many of the terms, this particular glossary contains lots of cross-references, although some of these are "dead ends" (i.e., if you click on a word, it doesn't take you anywhere or the referent is "empty"). Another unusual resource was a complete glossary in English of Underwriters Laboratories terms. And the second runner-up in the off-the-beaten-track category is a glossary of "hard boiled slang" as used in detective novels by Dashiell Hammett, Mickey Spillane, Raymond Chandler, and others, called "Twists, Slugs and Roscoes." Here's the URL in case you're curious: http://www.miskatonic.org/ slang.html. If you're into things of a nautical nature, why not take a look at yet another really amusing site that contains pirate terminology: http://homepage.mac.com/ crabola/PirateGlossary/ Menu22.html.

Most of these were easily identified simply by typing "allintitle: glosario" or "allintitle: glossary" in my Web browser. In both cases I normally got between a million and two million "hits" on just these searches. With each new discovery I was continually amazed at how much information is now available right at my fingertips, but it

was also somewhat disappointing to see some of the really poor efforts made in compiling a glossary of specialized terms. The relative quality of the items found varied widely, from abysmally poor to extremely thorough and useful. In addition, it was obvious that some of these glossaries are obsolete (i.e., they were posted on the Internet well over 5 years ago), while many of them are quite current, a few with updates as recent as the day that I accessed the file. A search using just "allintitle: dictionary of" produced nearly 9 million hits (!!) and similar results to those obtained with "allintitle: glossary of" (i.e., an extremely varied ranges of different subject fields and relative qualities/usefulness).

Among the different oddities discovered were a Latvian-English/Latvian-Russian dictionary of office work terms and an English-language dictionary of the "vulgar tongue" originally published in 1811. This Web site (http://www.blackmask.com/books82c/dcvgr.htm) provided definitions for terms like: "ACADEMY, or PUSHING SCHOOL. A brothel. The Floating Academy; the lighters on board of which those persons are confined, who by a late regulation are condemned to hard labour, instead of transportation.—Campbell's Academy; the same, from a gentleman of that name, who had the contract for victualling the hulks or lighters." Or how about this other jewel? – FAM LAY. Going into a goldsmith's shop, under pretence of buying a wedding ring, and palming one or two, by daubing the hand with some viscous matter." And how about a dictionary for custom license plates (http://www.baac.net/michael/plates/)? Some of them are good for a chuckle, like the dictionary of bureaucratese that includes definitions of terms such as **abbrevate;** v., To shorten text or reduce font size such that reader comprehension is reduced as an unintended consequence. *(contracted form: abbreviate)* or, even better, **barshamana;** n., An innocuous nonsense reply used to gently dismiss the statement or opinion of someone that does not realize the meaningless nature of the reply. "James routinely countered the impossible requests from his ignorant manager with eloquent barshamana, which was always accepted simply as technical jargon." *(Yid. barshamana: sheep manure).* Check this goodie out at: (http://home.earthlink.net/~skilton/dictionary.html).

Then, of course, there's one that everybody interested in music (like me) should have, the 200-page Pronouncing Dictionary of Music and Musicians, courtesy of radio station WOI (Iowa Public Radio - http://iowapublicradio.org/dictionary/). And, as a linguist, I like the one from the International House of Logorrhea (http://phrontistery.info/ihlstart.html), where you can find definitions for terms like "fanion – cloth worn on priest's arm and used for handling holy vessels." Then, just to prove that I'm not exclusively interested in things Hispanic, here's one for English-to-Japanese medical terms (http://www.pmcguam.com/resource/japandic.htm)

in case you might have a need for it some day. And for the Francophiles in the audience needing terminology in the finance and stock market fields, you should check this one out because it's bilingual: http://financelex.com/. But if you're not into things monetary, you can always learn about French culinary terminology at http://www.patriciawells.com/glossary/atoz/a.htm. Makes me hungry just reading it! But there's no dearth of leading-edge scientific information either, such as the Web site on nanotechnology: http://www.nanogloss.com/.

Although some of the dictionaries are bilingual or multi-lingual, most of them are monolingual. Nevertheless, I did find a few of the bilingual specialized nature, such as the one with English-to-Russian slang words (http://www.ets.ru/udict-e-r-slang1-e.htm). This particular site also includes a link to a dictionary of Russian "foul language" that certainly sounded interesting. (The information provided says that this dictionary is available on CD for the paltry sum of $7!!) How about learning "naughty" words in over five dozen different languages (from Acadian to Zulu)? You can have them right at your fingertips with the *Alternative Dictionaries* Web site (http://www.notam02.no/~hcholm/altlang/), and you can even download any part or the whole shebang as a PDF file.

Then there's a huge 6-language dictionary (English, Spanish, French, Italian, Dutch, German) of underwater diving terminology that really could be useful if you're planning a trip to the Caribbean Islands some day. Since I am of mostly Scottish ancestry, I was also interested to discover a neat dictionary of Ullans Scots-Irish (the dialect used in Ulster, Ireland) with English equivalents (http://www.ullans.com/ScotsDictionary.html). And, finally, if you want to brush up on your Australian slang, there are several Web sites on the subject, including this one: http://www.australiatravelsearch.com.au/trc/slang.html.

Although I'm truly not of the "kinky" sort, I discovered several dictionaries of bizarre sexual practices and one that features corporate bullshit (actually, a printed book that you can order - http://corporatebs.com/). Another oddity that I found particularly amusing was the dictionary of voodoo terms (http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/43a/125.html), even though it was created over 10 years ago. Last but certainly not least is the dictionary of ancient occupations, which can be found at http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~dav4is/Sources/Occupations.html, where you will also find a link to a site about colonial occupations.

The search using "allintitle: dictionary of" also produced a substantial number of hits pertaining to printed dictionaries of all kinds, most of which were not of interest to me, although I did find a couple of bilingual technical dictionaries that I didn't know about previously, so the exercise wasn't a total waste of time.

Whenever I spotted a title for something that looked like it could be useful, I brought it up on the computer screen and

took a close look at its contents. If it proved to be worthwhile, I either saved a copy for future reference or put the URL into my browser's "Favorites" list so that I could access it again. In a few cases, I even printed out the glossary, especially if it was relatively short (i.e., 10-20 pages) and filed the printed copy away. At this point I must have collected well over 100 different glossaries – and the search continues daily.

I started going through the process using other search criteria, such as "allintitle: diccionario de" for Spanish-language or bilingual dictionaries, which yielded 2.5 million hits, but most of them proved to be quite worthless. Among the "exotic" items discovered were a dictionary of Cuban salsa music terminology, a guide to playing the 4-string *cuatro* guitar (very popular in South America, especially Colombia and Venezuela), a glossary of Spanish cigar terminology, and a dictionary of Spanish gestures, complete with examples.

I also expanded the search string to "allintitle: diccionario de términos" and got around 200,000 hits. Here again, there wasn't a great deal of any value to be found, with one significant exception, a detailed 200-page Spanish-English dictionary of petroleum refining terminology produced by PEMEX, the Mexican government-controlled oil company. The vast majority of the hits in this particular search involved printed reference works, with a substantial number in the medical and legal fields.

I'm sure that you could have similar results for your own language combination, so go ahead and try it; you won't break it.

Closing P.S.: Do you know how many hits you'll get by Googling the phrase "technical translation"? Answer: over 9 million! That will give you a rough idea of the magnitude of the global translation market.

Fonts: Choosing Wisely

By Tim North

Choosing a font is something that most of us give little thought to. After all, most fonts are more or less the same, right? Let's face it, most writing is presented in a stock-standard font like Times New Roman or Arial.

Why is the choice of font important?

There are many differences between fonts: some obvious, some subtle. As well as setting the mood of what we write, these differences can have significant effects on legibility.

In this article, we'll classify fonts in several different ways and compare the effects that these have on legibility. Let's start by comparing serif and sans-serif fonts.

Serif versus sans-serif fonts

Start up a word processor and type a letter "h". Change it to a large size (say 72 points) and use Times New Roman as your font. Notice the three small cross strokes at the ends of the strokes. These are called serif. Fonts that provide these are said to be serif fonts. Fonts that do not are sans-serif fonts. ("Sans" is the French word for without.)

Here's a picture that explains the difference: http://www.BetterWritingSkills.com/tip-w017.html

Now change the font to Arial, Helvetica or Verdana. These are all sans-serif fonts. Notice that the three small cross strokes have disappeared.

Serif fonts, all things being equal, are easier to read.

This is because the serif makes the individual letters more distinctive and thus easier for our brains to recognize quickly. Without the serif, the brain has to spend longer identifying a letter because its shape is less distinct.

An important proviso must be made, however. On the low resolution of a computer screen, very small serif text (say 10 points or less) might actually be harder to read than corresponding sans serif because the more complex shapes of serif characters cannot be accurately drawn in sizes this small.

Deciding whether to use a serif or sans-serif font is still a personal choice, however, and no hard-and-fast rules apply. Even though serif fonts are usually easier to read, you might prefer a sans-serif font for a particular document if you feel that it sets an appropriate mood. Sans-serif fonts are often thought to look more modern.

A commonly followed convention, though, is to use a serif font for the body text of your document and a sans-serif font for the headings. My recommended fonts for general work are Georgia (a very lovely serif font) and Verdana, a very legible sans-serif. Verdana is probably already installed on your computer.

Fixed-width and variable-width fonts

In some fonts, every character is the same width; in others, the characters are of different widths. Not surprisingly, these fonts are termed fixed width and variable width, respectively.

Start up you word processor. Type half a dozen lower-case "l"s and then on the next line type half a dozen lower-case "w"s. In most fonts the "w"s will be much wider. (Such fonts are variable width.)

Now select the two lines of characters and set the font to Courier or Courier New. Notice that both lines are now the same length. Courier is a fixed-width font.

It should be no surprise that variable-width fonts look more natural and are thus easier to read. Fixed-width fonts such as Courier have quite limited application:

* Computer programmers use fixed-width fonts in order to neatly align their code.

- The other main use of fixed-width fonts is to produce tables that need to be neatly tabulated into fixed-width columns.

Conclusion

As an exercise, go through the fonts on your computer and find five variable-width, serif fonts that you like the look of. Choose among these for the body copy of your documents.

Now find five variable-width, sans-serif fonts. Use these for your headings, captions, headers and footers. Armed with these simple ways of classifying fonts, you should now have an easy time of choosing suitable fonts for all occasions.

You'll find many more helpful tips like these in Tim North's much applauded range of e-books. More information is available on his web site, and all books come with a money-back guarantee. http://www.BetterWritingSkills.com

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Using Google for Language-related Research

English translation/adaptation by Lee Wright of an article written by Ricardo Soca

Internet search engines played a major role in transforming the World Wide Web into the gigantic and revolutionary mine of information and knowledge that we have at our fingertips now at the beginning of the 21st century. Without those tools the Web would either not exist or it would be a garbage dump of lost information so vast that we couldn't even move around in it.

Around 1995 there was Lycos, Yahoo, Webcrawler and one or two other search engines, followed shortly by Excite and Hotbot. Meanwhile in Spain and elsewhere, tools of this kind were multiplying. However, the technological advantages and economic clout of the United States made its search engines increasingly more powerful until AltaVista's appearance made them essential tools.

But the real miracle happened with the creation of Google, a veritable digital "Big Brother" whose eyes encompassed the entire Internet with a newer search technology, services in various languages, including Spanish of course, and the appearance of an unimaginable range of functions, with mathematical calculations, conversion of measurement units, and translation into several languages.

The only thing needed to make maximum use of that marvel of technology was to know a few simple rules that made it possible to fine-tune the searches so that they would be more efficient.

For users of Microsoft Explorer, the first step must be to install the Google tool bar, which provides the capability of doing searches directly from the navigator without having to open the search engine's initial page.

In order to move around within the huge database that Google puts at our disposal, the golden rule is to pinpoint the search so that the number of hits is the smallest and, at the same time, will yield results that are closer to what we're looking for.

Although several of the examples used in this brief tutorial involve Spanish, the same basic principles will also apply to just about any language.

If, for example, we do a search on "**siglo de oro**" without enclosing the phrase in quotation marks, Google gives us over 5 million hits. The use of quotation marks to enclose the search string, whether a single word or a multi-word phrase, is important in this kind of search. If we just wrote **siglo de oro** without the quotation marks, Google would look for all and display pages containing the word **siglo** plus those containing the word **de** plus the ones with the word **oro**, thus making our search quite useless.

If the phrase is enclosed in quotation marks, however, the number of hits decreases to just 850,000. Is this too much material for our search to be accurate? Well, let's assume that we're only interested in any pages that mention Fray Luis de León. Then our search string will be "**siglo de oro**" +"**Fray Luis de León**". Our search results have now dropped to just 30,000 hits.

But now let's narrow the search to find just those items that do not refer to the city of Salamanca. Our Google

command string would then be "**siglo de oro" +"Fray Luis de León" –Salamanca**. Remember, of course, that you have to put a space <u>before</u> the + and – signs but <u>not</u> between them and the following word. This narrower search will yield about 13,000 hits.

To take another example, let's say that we're interested in knowing in which Spanish-speaking countries "voseo" is used. Here we could enter the search string "**vos sabés" +"vos tenés**". Most of the hits will, of course, be from Argentina, with a few pages from Spain (Argentine texts) and Uruguay, but by making a more careful examination of the 25,000 hits from this search, we will probably find references to other countries as well.

From time to time we all have difficulty remembering some phrase or another – perhaps the verse from a poem, but we can't recall what it says or who wrote it. Take, for instance, the phrase '*e iban frases vagas y tenues suspiros'*. What does Google tell us? The search engine will inform us that it's a line from the poem by Rubén Darío, "Era un aire suave" in his collection *Prosas profanas*.

Google can also tell us how many links it found to a given site and were indexed during its search of the Internet. To do this, you could type the string **site: www.elcastellano.org** or **site: cervantes.es**.

To take yet another example, let's say that you can't remember the name of a movie that you saw a few years ago, but you know that the actors in it were Clint Eastwood and Meryl Streep and that the title had something to do with bridges. Then you could just type in the Google search bar **bridges +Eastwood**, and within less than a second after hitting ENTER Google will yield almost 4 million (!!) hits.

Checks your spelling, too

In case you don't know how to spell some word in any language, the search engine can help you here as well. Let's assume that you don't know or aren't sure how to spell the word *necesito*. You can ask Google to search for *nesesito* and find that there are almost half a million hits, but Google also asks you "Did you mean *necesito*?" By clicking on this question, you end up with 4½ million hits, which is pretty good evidence that this is the correct spelling of the word.

Or perhaps you would like to know which is the preferred spelling of a word, e.g., *psicólogo* or *sicólogo*. The first one yields over 5 million hits, while the second one comes in a poor loser, with only 156,000. It's clearly a no-brainer.

As an on-line translator

Like AltaVista, Google also provides the capability of

translating short texts in dozens of different languages, opening pages in English that have already been translated into Spanish, or making searches in specific languages or countries, e.g., "**translate languages:** *language text*", where the *language* parameter is replaced by the 2-character names of each language separated by the vertical bar (e.g., es | en). Even more useful for translators, however, is the feature that allows you to find definitions of individual words in on-line dictionaries by typing "**define** *word*" without the quotation marks.

As a calculator

One feature of this search engine is that it also knows how to count, so all we need to do is type in the numbers and appropriate mathematical symbols in the search bar to get the answers to your math problems.

At this particular point, then, a lot of people might be asking, given all of these marvelous capabilities, how is that any of the other search engines can still survive if everything under the sun is stored in Google. This happens because the algorithm that Google works with doesn't allow the use of wild cards or logical operators that are permitted with, for example, Altavista.

In Altavista it is possible to do a search on ***tribuir** to find all words that end in *tribuir*, but which Google merely ignores. Altavista and other search engines also allow you to use logical operators like AND, OR, AND NOT and NEAR. However, as Google's help page will explain, you can replace the last two with the + and – signs.

That's just the tip of the iceberg, of course. If you are interested in getting more information about Google's capabilities and features, here are some good on-line resources (but you could find them yourself just by typing "Google guide" on the command line):

http://www.googleguide.com/pdf/googleguide.pdf
(This is an exhaustive 149-page manual on Google.)
http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Google.html
http://www.tipmonkies.com/2005/11/17/the-penultimate-guide-to-google-services
http://www.googletutor.com/google-manual/
http://www.googleguide.com/advanced_operators_reference.html
http://hcl.harvard.edu/research/guides/google/
http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/handouts/google.PDF
http://bluemicro.digibase.ca/modules.php?name=Google_Guide-MM
http://googlesearchengine.tripod.com/intro.html
http://projects.felipc.com/gcl/

Some Words are Painful to Translate

by Crocker Stephenson

A doctor must tell a man and woman that their 3-year-old son has brain cancer. The doctor does not speak Spanish. The parents do not speak English. And so Diana Macias tells them. The doctor looks at the parents and says the words in English: "Your son has brain cancer." And Macias repeats what he has said, word for word, but in Spanish. She does not say, "The doctor says, 'Your son has brain cancer.' " Her job, as a translator, is to simply repeat, exactly, what the doctor has said, nothing more and nothing less. Even an attribution is too much interference.

His words go into her ears, pass through her brain and come out of her mouth, transformed into another tongue. But she doesn't own the words, not even a little. They are not hers. She does not expound, interpret or explain. What is said is said, and it passes through her. Her obligation is to be precise and clear. And if the words, in passing through her, break her heart, well, that is her business. Nothing is to be lost in the translation, but her. She is a window. What is said is said, and it passes through her. Her obligation is to be precise and clear.

Perhaps the parents are dumbfounded. They might stutter and ask, "¿Qué?" Macias does not repeat the doctor's words, even if the question is directed at her. She can only say to the doctor what they have said. She can only turn to the doctor and say, "What?"

Macias was born in Michoacán, a state in central Mexico. Growing up, she spent her summers with her father in Chicago. She moved to Chicago when she was 18, then moved to Milwaukee a few months later. She is 34 and has worked as an interpreter for about a decade. Her work takes her into hospitals, courtrooms and people's homes. Her services are required in critical moments, and these moments are frequently dark. A child witnesses a murder. A woman loses custody. The chemotherapy didn't work.

Macias has an 11-year-old son. The suffering of the people she speaks to and for is not an abstraction. The words pass through her, and sometimes no matter how hard she tries, they catch in her throat. She has been invited to the parties of those who have gotten well, and to the funerals of those who have not. She can never go. No matter how deeply she wishes to celebrate, no matter how deeply she wishes to mourn, she can never become anything more to her clients than a voice.

The parents of the boy with cancer: Their faces may haunt her for months. She may worry about the fate of their son. But she can never ask, not even the doctor, what ultimately happened. It is none of her business. She wishes the words didn't cling to her, but they do. Often, she finds a bathroom and weeps, and that helps. But words cling. Words never quite vanish.

Macias says she thinks in English, but when she dreams, she dreams in Spanish.

This article was printed with the permission of the author, Crocker Stephenson, who is a columnist for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. His award-winning column, "Snapshots," focuses on ordinary people and everyday life.

Contact Crocker Stephenson at (414) 224-2539 or by e-mail at cstephenson@journalsentinel

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Welcome to the Following New Members:

Tracy Kozikowski
107 Farrar Drive
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Tel./Fax: 812-926-2878
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Native language: English

Hélène Viglieno
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Tel: 216-233-8807
htranslation4u@yahoo.fr
Native language: French

Cecilia Quiroga-Clare
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Tel.: 412-782-9921
Fax: 412-253-4840
cecilia89@comcast.net
Native language: Spanish

Change of Address:

DeOnna Reliford-Gray
2410 Bellemeade St., #1A
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Tel.: 336-431-9401
dreliford2000@yahoo.com

Proofreaders will find helpful hints on this Web site:
http://www.translationdirectory.com/article904.htm

New Email Address:

Myriam Gilson – mkgilson@peoplepc.com