Dear Fellow NOTAnauts*:

Greetings from the corner of Parkview and West Maple. NOTA hosted two events in the past months. Both provided a venue to network; learn more about our field and a chance to socialize away from the confines of a computer screen. We hope to hold an event in the Spring in Columbus, too. Look for details soon.

Deborah Cordeiro presented “Marketing to Direct Clients” at the Hudson Library on September 10th. Participants learned how to win more and better clients and techniques, both virtual and in-person. Contact Deborah at dcordeiro@wowway.com for more information.

NOTA held the 2011 Annual Workshop Series and Annual Dinner in Hudson. The afternoon included workshops: “An LSP Owner Bares All” by Terena Bell of www.ineverylanguage.com and Natasha Curtis, Language Services Coordinator at Akron Children’s Hospital. Mario Chavez expounded on “Translators as Writers” to an attentive group. One lucky person walked away with a copy of Chris Durban’s “The Prosperous Translator” Advice from Fire Ant & Worker Bee‖, a compendium of no-nonsense advice on building a successful translation practice. Visit www.prosperoustranslator.com to add this entrepreneurial guide to your shelf. The group gathered at Noble House later that evening and continued to nosh and network.

We encourage members to visit the NOTA blog at http://notaohio.wordpress.com. There you can post ideas and engage in conversations with colleagues from all of cyberspace.

NOTA thanks Jamie Padula, ATA Chapter & Relations Division Manager, for posting NOTA’s link on ATA’s Facebook page at http://tinyurl.com/38xqgsm. NOTA news is reaching the News Feeds of 1,572 ATA Facebook fans. In addition workshops are posted on the ATA Calendar: http://www.atanet.org/calendar/. Contact Jamie at jamie@atanet.org.

Do you have an idea for a workshop? Would you like to share your expertise in a friendly environment with colleagues? Contact Vitaly Plinto, Program Chair at vvp13ster@gmail.com. How about a paragraph or two on your latest translation or interpreting experience? Please forward all writings to Natalie, Public Relations Chair, at nchubb@insight.rr.com.

I’m hopeful for NOTA’s continued growth. Nearly each week Lee Wright, Membership Chair, send notice of a renewal or new member. With that comes a responsibility to keep our group active. One fellow translator pulled me aside at the Annual Dinner and declared “When can we get together again? Just to talk?” Keep an eye on the blog and Emails to add the next NOTAevent to your agenda. Let us know your ideas and suggestions. This is your organization.

Best,
John, The Interpreter Guy

*NOTAnauts: NOTA members who communicate electronically
History as a source of professional identity

By Mario Chávez, Spanish Localization Specialist, Hyland Software
spanisphere@gmail.com
440-409-9363
800 Brick Mill Run, Suite 223, Westlake, OH 44145

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Abstract

The professional identity of translators is under assault by the commoditizing forces of the global market. It is up to us to draw from our own heroes of history to strengthen our métier and our spirit, that we are not the orphans of language.

Presenter’s Biography

Mario E. Chávez, a professional Spanish technical translator since 1992, served in several positions in the translation industry as editor, reviewer, proofreader, technical writer, translator, software localizer, project manager and column writer for a Florida weekly. He has given presentations at ATA conferences since 1994, published articles in translation journals and taught translations classes in both classroom and online settings. He holds a Master’s in Audiovisual Translation at the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. Mario currently works for a handful of choice customers out of his home office in Westlake, Ohio.

Article

Fellow translator: Who is your hero? Martin Luther, Hunayn ibn Ishaq, St. Jerome, Yan Fu, Jacques Amyot, Gregory Rabassa? Having recently finished reading Translators Through History, by J. Delisle and J. Woodsworth, a sobering fascination with translators past began to grow in me. In a day where translators, freelance and in house alike, are beset by the downside of globalization, they need a strong sense of professional identity more than ever.

But, what do I mean by the downside or the negative effects of globalization?

(Continued on page 4)
“Americans who travel abroad for the first time are often shocked to discover that, despite all the progress that has been made in the last 30 years, many foreign people still speak in foreign languages.”

~Dave Barry

We Oughta Be in Pictures!

Left: NOTA members enjoy an evening of fine dining and networking.

Below: Studious seminar attendees.

Right: Terena and Natasha present to NOTA members.

Below: Vitaliy gives his report to the board.
What is there to complain about? After all, translators can now reliably depend on the Web and the Internet for instant communications with customers and colleagues. The Internet Village has become our marketplace and we can compete with other translators and translation bureaus for the same customers. The benefits of the advance of software tools to help us be more productive and secure complex projects that were otherwise unattainable to us is undeniable. Then, what are the negative effects?

First of all, translation (output) is increasingly seen as a product, a commodity, and priced accordingly. Lawrence Venuti’s lament about the translator’s invisibility has become a stark reality, regardless of our years of experience and networking efforts. The downward pressure on service rates continues with little relief in sight. In the middle of this Great Recession throughout the world, are translators to blame if they resign themselves to their fate as bilingual knowledge workers and nothing more, stripped of their creative role and genius by the forces of the global economy?

A sense of identity, professional identity, needs to be reevaluated, reexamined and, in many cases, restored. It is time that we don’t just look at St. Jerome for inspiration once a year. Hundreds of enterprising, excellent translators have preceded us throughout the dusty roads of history of cultures and nations. Should we not appeal to them for courage, insight and stability?

If we look back at how some translators in History faced challenges similar to ours, we can take comfort and gain strength in knowing that translation quality is not a new concept or that the only difference between writers and translators is in name only. We can let our imagination soar when hearing that science is the offspring of translation and use Yan Fu’s maxim of “faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance” as the foundation of our personal standard of excellence.

The search for our history hero may begin by asking ourselves the question Why did I become a translator? Certainly, many of us arrived in this industry from another profession via a very personal journey. A sizable portion of our numbers comes from translation or language schools all over the world, where we study grammar, language, phonetics, terminology, text analysis and some translation theory. Some schools even include CAT and TEnT tools in their curricula. But where do we learn to be, to become a translator, truly?

To master the craft, the art and science of translation, being competent in languages and tools and cultures is not enough. Belonging to professional associations helps us establish a sense of community. To be part of such a community, we first have to be professionals in our own right, not merely as economic agents of a large market to churn out texts on demand but also view ourselves as creators, authors, terminologists, language shapers and wordsmiths. For that, we are well advised to contemplate the extraordinary achievements executed by our professional forebears.

How well you use Trados or consult a dictionary does not make you an excellent translator. What drives you? Love of languages? Please! Any bilingual worker can say that. What really drives you to straddle two or more cultures? What fuels your desire to find the right word, term, or expression? What makes you excel in elegance when you write your translations? How do you represent your desire, your passion to translate, to endeavor to make your mark? Why aren’t you making history as a translator?

It is true that translation organizations such as ATA and ATA chapters have been bringing translators out of obscurity. But the fact that we realize the importance of a colleague’s efforts and contributions mostly through the plaudits in an obituary leaves a taste of sadness, not just due to the human loss but because we arrived too late to that happy conclusion. How we escape anonymity, celebrate achievements from colleagues that are inspiring to us and why, and make our mark in history become a topic of sensible and focused meditation and action.

An elegantly translated text looks to us like a beautiful painting, regardless of the domain or specialization. Comparing translation as art to painting is a powerful analogy to me. It brings color, definition, variety of style, form and character to the otherwise empty and lifeless canvas of our computer monitors. Then our collective history could become a mosaic of fruitful panoramas, ponderings and plausible renderings of language enough to instill a renewed sense of identity, of destiny.
NOTA Letter to the Kentucky General Assembly Regarding Independent Contractor Reform

Vitaliy V. Plinto  
Programs & Events Chair  
Northeast Ohio Translators Association  
6811 Mayfield Road, #1079  
Mayfield Heights, OH 44124

The Kentucky General Assembly  
Capital Annex  
100 Capital Avenue  
Frankfort, KY 40601

October 20, 2011

Dear Assembly Members,

We are writing to you concerning the independent contractor reform that has been brought to our attention recently. On behalf of all of us here at the Northeast Ohio Translators Association (NOTA) we strongly believe that the independent contractor reform should be approved.

NOTA is a not-for-profit corporation established in Ohio that supports and promotes interests of professional translators, interpreters and other language specialists since 1978. The vast majority of our translators, interpreters and other language specialists work as independent contractors and enjoy the freedom and other benefits of this operational structure. As a regional chapter of the American Translators Association (ATA), we are aware that ATA and many other local and regional chapters also apply the independent contractor model. In addition to professional translator and interpreter associations, most translation agencies use the independent contractor model as their standard operational procedure.

Despite a few controversies about the independent contractor model that have recently arisen, it is evident that the independent contractor model has many more advantages than disadvantages, and that translators, interpreters and other language specialists want to continue working as independent contractors because of these advantages. As professional language specialists, we always value the opportunities that accompany working as independent contractors: the opportunity to choose our work schedule, the opportunity to choose the projects that we like, the opportunity to earn more income by being able to work for several different clients at the same time, and the opportunity to manage and run our businesses the way we prefer instead of doing what our boss tells us to do. These opportunities would not be possible if we were to work as part-time or full-time company employees. The independent contractor model is the only structure that affords us these unique opportunities.

We sincerely hope that you will consider all of the arguments that we have presented herein and vote in favor of independent contractor reform for the sake of all language professionals who work hard to earn more income and enjoy a flexible lifestyle. Thank you in advance for your kind consideration!

Sincerely,

Vitaliy Plinto  
Programs & Events Chair  
Northeast Ohio Translators Association
ATA Careers Webinar Information

The increasing diversity of the U.S. population, the growth in international trade, and even the booming Internet have created a strong demand for professional translators and interpreters. In fact, a 2010 report from the U.S. Department of Labor states that employment of linguists is projected to increase 24 percent over the 2006-16 decade—much faster than the average for other occupations. There has never been a better time to explore your options as a translator or interpreter. Make plans to attend this free 60-minute webinar on November 16 to learn more.

About the Presenters
Geoffrey S. Koby is an associate professor of German and translation studies at Kent State University. He is the chair of ATA's Certification Committee. He is an ATA-certified German - English and Dutch - English translator and serves as a grader in ATA's Certification Program. His most recent publications include articles on translation grading and keystroke research.

John Shaklee has over fourteen years of experience as an onsite legal, medical and community interpreter. John's legal assignments have included trials, depositions, and criminal investigations. His medical interpreting experience includes workers compensation and disability hearings, independent medical examinations along with emergency room, and doctor's appointments. John is currently serving as President of the Northeast Ohio Translators Association, a long-time ATA chapter.

Registration is now open for the ATA Careers Webinar. See www.atanet.org/webinars/ataWebinar100_careers.php.

Editor's note: we welcome submissions for the newsletter. Please send all submission requests to Natalie Chubb at nchubb@insight.rr.com