

neta news

September 1976 issue. The NETA News is the newsletter of the New England Translators Association.

This issue was prepared by Alice Berglund, Peabody, Mass.

AUGUST MEETING

The Translation Roundtable discussion this month centered around a German patent on "nuts and bolts". Bob Abilock produced a model of the new-fangled nail, certainly of help in figuring out "180° configurations" and what goes where when translating the description of the nail. A picture may be better than 1000 words, but a 3-dimensional scale model is even better!

Our meeting proper was very sparsely attended this month due to summer vacations and all. Bill Grimes and Isabel Leonard spoke of the ATA Convention in Stanford that they had just returned from. (A full report on the Convention will be given in next month's ATA Chronicle.) Of interest to our group was the proposal that an ATA Business Meeting be held in Boston in late October. This suggestion was shelved, however, as not enough members were present to help set up this "miniconvention" and we felt that waiting until September would not allow us enough time for proper planning.

One of the highlights of the Convention that we as a group might like to get involved in is the forming of a regional Translation Workshop. The ATA workshops have not been attracting enough participants of late and when this matter was discussed in California, the main points brought up were that working translators could not take 5 working days to fly off to Cleveland or Dallas to a workshop—but that they could and would attend a weekend workshop that was not too far from home. Since much effort is required in setting up such a workshop, we would like to get views from our members and also their active participation. Some of the ideas advanced at our meeting were: setting up the workshop at a local college; inviting a local guest lecturer from industry—perhaps with models, slides, and such-like AV aids; concentrating on translation clinics in fairly specific fields with preparation made beforehand (similar to our Roundtables); and perhaps a social event.
—A.B.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Our September Meeting will be held at Harvard Science Center, Room 121 (Note change of room) and will begin at 8 p.m. Tuesday September 7th. Charles Parson of the Guild of Professional Translators who will speak on the Guild: Origins, Accomplishments and Goals will be our guest speaker this evening.

Ever hear of the "so-called American Translators Association?"

Members of the Guild of Professional Translators will immediately recognize the epithet as coming from the pen of Guild director Charles Parsons, who will be our guest speaker Sept. 7th.

Mr. Parsons used to belong to the ATA. In fact, his name can often be seen on the masthead of 1972 and 1973 Chronicles (why it kept appearing and disappearing is not clear to me, but the issues to which he contributed were the ones I found the most valuable). Then came the Great Schism of which I have heard rumors from people who knew people who knew people who had been there, after which ATA went one way and Parsons led the Guild another way.

Just why the schism was necessary is one of the things I shall be coming to our September meeting to find out. I am more than curious to meet this man who has a dedication to the advancement of translating as a profession, a genius for collecting and disseminating information, and a merciless way of dealing with incompetence and flummery wherever he finds it. I shall be coming to the meeting with quite a few questions in my quiver. If Mr. Parson's tongue is as withering as his pen, I may leave all quivers and no questions.

Hope to see you all there—Isabel Leonard

Welcome to the following new NETA members:

Henry Haczas

55 Revere St., Apt. 6, Boston, Ma. 02114

Jun U. Smith

272 Laws Brook Road, Concord, MA 01742

Ilse Goesmann

27-8 Middx Circle, Waltham MA 02154

Fannin King

Clark University, Worcester, MA 01610

PROBLEM IN RUSSIAN GEOGRAPHY—Answer to last month's question:

Norra Karolina is not a funny Russian transliteration for North Carolina—Norra Karolina is a city in Finland.

ATA and DECENTRALIZATION

The following are some ideas presented by ATA member and translator Ben Teague of Austin, Texas:

"ATA has had many successes, provided many benefits to its members, grown through the efforts of extraordinary leaders and builders. My own gains from membership are considerable: contacts with people who have helped me translate better; contacts with people who have helped me and also paid me; the feeling that I'm not alone in my work (or rather don't have to be); the idea that definable goals and standards exist and it is to my advantage to work toward them; and the knowledge that I like translators and wish I knew more of them. "

Ben goes on to discuss ATA's many successes and then:

"And like any organization that human beings have a hand in, ATA is apt to fail at some things. Some translators say the Association isn't close to them, or it seems impersonal. There have been failures in the delivery of services; the recent history of the workshop program bears this out. Too, many translators can't participate in much of ATA's business, for reason of time and expense."

Ben's solution (and one which we NETA members have found viable):

"My central idea is decentralization. Some activities ATA can carry on only because it is a large national group; let ATA continue these. But there may be other activities where the national scale of ATA works to the disadvantage of the members. Let some of these activities be carried out at the local or regional level.

Activities that should remain national in scope include representation of American translators in professional and ethical matters; setting of standards for translator training in America; accreditation of translators; nationwide communication among translators; liaison with translators in other countries; and so on. Activities where smaller-scale organization might be effective include the execution of some training programs, such as workshops; publication of some translation aids; communication on matters of local interest; and many of the social functions that translators find pleasant and helpful."

Ben goes on to discuss the workshop idea, with ATA's backing and regional sponsors. Good idea—We know that local meetings are a good sounding ground for translator programs.

PROBLEMS

(1) A short while ago, I had to translate a purchase order from Morocco. The dates were given not only in the Gregorian Calendar, but also in the Arabic system. There was no real problem as all I had to do was convert the French spelling of the Arabic months (Ramadan and so forth) to the English spelling. But suppose the dates had been given according to the Arabic calendar only? Would it have been my responsibility as a translator to convert them to the system understood here?

(2) Another recent translation was a telex from Venezuela which contained the character string MU#ON. The word "muñon" made sense in context, and that was how I translated it with footnote. Has anyone else come across the symbol for ñ? By the way, before I came to the United States, all # meant to me was a "natural" in music notation and a proofreader's mark for "leave space". Is it used to mean number anywhere else?

—Isabel Leonard

Ed. Note: In answer to No. 1 above. I should venture that a French translator would not be responsible for learning to convert the Arabic system—which is extremely difficult and varies even from one Arabic country to another, as I understand it; but an Arabic translator should perhaps be responsible for such conversion.

As for No. 2, the # symbol is probably the "American English" keyboard element placed in a position of the keyboard where a Spanish person would normally find the ñ. The telex is probably of American manufacture—I came across something similar in a French telex, but can't recall offhand what it was.

ON BEING A TRANSLATOR—ANOTHER POSITIVE VIEWPOINT

After all the complaints one reads about translation as a job (for instance, Fred Bamberger's letter in the July-August 1976 issue of Professional Translator) it was heart-warming to read Alice Berglund's piece in the August issue of NETA News. One of the most consistent complaints one hears is that translators are "unappreciated". It is true that those of us who work at home usually receive no feedback; the work comes in and goes out again, and the only indication that a client is pleased is when he sends the next job. I certainly have never had anyone call me to say "that was an awfully elegant construction you had there on page 37" or "I just flipped over your syntax in Appendix B."

La présente invention a pour objet un dispositif de liaison entre une pièce lisse de forme conique et une douille de forme correspondante.

Le dispositif selon l'invention est plus spécialement destiné à réaliser les jonctions mécaniques et électriques entre deux conducteurs, tels qu'une cosse et une borne d'une batterie d'accumulateurs électriques. Les batteries d'accumulateurs des véhicules automobiles possèdent deux bornes sur lesquelles les connexions sont le plus souvent réalisées par l'intermédiaire de colliers fixés par des dispositifs à vis et écrous.

Le principal inconvénient de tels dispositifs est qu'ils nécessitent l'emploi d'outils lorsque l'on veut changer une batterie, ou bien plus simplement lorsque l'on veut recharger une batterie. En effet, dans ce dernier, il est vivement conseillé de retirer la batterie du circuit électrique du véhicule, en déconnectant au moins l'une des bornes.

Certains dispositifs permettent la déconnexion de l'une des bornes sans nécessiter d'outils. De tels dispositifs utilisent fréquemment la propriété que possèdent les bornes d'accumulateurs d'être malléables, puisqu'elles sont couramment réalisées en plomb, et de pouvoir ainsi subir certaines déformations de matière. C'est ainsi que l'un des dispositifs les plus connus comprend une jupe fendue déterminant des griffes qui viennent s'ancrer dans la borne sous l'effet du serrage annulaire réalisé par l'intermédiaire d'une bague. Un écrou associé à la jupe et à la bague permet de mettre en contact par vissage la cosse et la borne.

Le principal inconvénient de ce dispositif est

d'être d'un prix de revient et d'une mise en oeuvre onéreuse, du fait de la multiplicité des opérations de montage. En outre, la jupe fendue présente l'inconvénient d'une détérioration rapide des bornes par pénétration des griffes dans la matière de celles-ci. En conséquence, après un certain nombre de manipulations, la borne est usée, et le serrage réalisé sur elle n'est plus efficace.

La présente invention vise à pallier les lacunes des dispositifs connus, en fournissant un dispositif de liaison mécanique et électrique entre deux conducteurs, extrêmement simple à fabriquer, d'un montage rapide et possédant une bonne fiabilité.....

REVENDICATIONS

1. Dispositif de liaison entre une pièce lisse de forme conique et une douille de forme correspondant réalisée en un matériau plus dur que celle-ci, caractérisé en ce que la douille présente, sur sa face externe, un filetage permettant la fixation d'un organe muni d'un perçage taraudé correspondant, et sur sa face interne, des parties en saillie disposées selon au moins une hélice circulaire.
2. Dispositif selon la revendication 1, caractérisé en ce que la douille est de faible épaisseur et en ce que les parties saillantes sont ménagées dans le fond de filet du filetage selon plusieurs hélices circulaires de même pas.
3. Dispositif selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 et 2, caractérisé en ce que chaque partie saillante a une forme acérée, la partie la plus étroite étant située en avant dans le sens du vissage.

There have been moments in my translating life, however, when I have felt very appreciated. There was the time I was interpreting in court for a Frenchman charged with importing heroin (he got 20 years), and at lunchtime the entire jury plus two federal marshals and a Globe reporter crowded round me asking how I "knew all those hard words". and how I could "do it so quickly". We have probably all had similar experiences when working in clients' offices on "rush" or "scanning" assignments. Almost invariably, people I have met, professionally or otherwise, have thought of translating (more so, interpreting) as being a glamorous and exciting line of work. The translator who complains of being unappreciated has probably never stayed up all night to do a rush job, or studied a technical glossary on the plane on the way to a conference.

—Isabel Leonard

From the Department of Defense,
Washington, D.C.—A BOOK REVIEW

Guide to Russian Technical Translation
November 1974 193 pp. DOD
Available as AD-A024 228/9GA
Paper cover: \$7.50, Microfiche \$2.25.

The author has prepared this guide for translators to help them recognize their own and other people's pitfalls, so that perhaps they will be able, from this beginning, to gain greater proficiency in their work and to look for other distinctions in both the material they are translating and in their own language, but most of all to beware of one-for-one translations. The various translation problems are discussed in the body of the text, which is arranged in alphabetical order of the words used as a spring-board for discussion. There is often no logical reason for the choice of a particular Russian word for discussing a translation problem. Most often the choice was made because an actual translation boner or ingenious treatment was connected with the particular word. In order to compensate for any illogicalities in placement, an index of the Russian words discussed in the book is provided which provides the number of the entry or entries in which they occur.

CHEMICAL and PHARMACEUTICAL REFERENCES—A Partial Victory

For several years now I have dragged myself over to MIT Science Library when in doubt over the correct translations of new chemical compounds—and searched through Chem Abstracts and several other volumes that I had detected

over the years, as well as those pointed out by the librarians. Net research time = 1 hour or more plus travel time and net results were 2-3 words found of 8-10 researched (looking over referenced studies in the translation, etc., etc.) The rest ended up with footnotes in my translations.

However, on my latest trip over to MIT I discovered something new, hitherto unconsidered—Chem Sources, published each year by Directories Publishing Co. (Fleming, N.J.). Its rather ambiguous title never impressed me in the past, but the necessity of determining whether an abstractor's translation of "tin octanoate" in the title of (and hence all of) a 20-page paper was indeed correct led me to search new fields. Chem Sources, a listing of all chemicals and their availability according to trade and generic names produced in the US gave me the answer to my question (the abstractor was wrong) but also confirmed 9 of the 11 other compounds I researched.

A letter to the publisher confirmed the availability of this volume, but unfortunately, its price tag is \$100. (Maybe one of my customers has last year's copy?)

But just knowing that it is there in the Science Library contributes to peace of mind.

Another item on the same subject:

The new Merck Index should be available by the end of September (price—about \$15.00). If you do not have your own source for this, you might want to order through Brown and Connolly Medical Books in Boston—they'll send it out.

A TRANSLATOR'S CONTINUING EDUCATION—cont.

Sue Brownsberger contributes the following:

Wellesley College offers classes open to the public for audit. Classes begin Sept. 9. Information may be obtained from the Information Bureau on the 2nd floor of Green Hall, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (except the noon hour.)

Radcliffe Seminars, sponsored by Radcliffe College are also open to the public. These are day courses and are somewhat more expensive (\$160 per seminar or so), but are intensive upper level courses.

Our own Bodo Reichenbach is teaching a seminar entitled "Christian Mystics in the Middle Ages"; other courses include Creative Writing, Finding Your Style, Russian Literature, etc. Deadline for registration is Sept. 22 and classes start Oct. 4. Contact: The Radcliffe Institute, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.

Salem State College offers courses for audit also to the

general public through its Division of Continuing Education: cost \$69.00 per 3-credit course. Items of interest to translators might be Chemistry of Life Processes, Minerology (elements of crystallography), various math and science courses as well as business administration courses. Call 745-0556, ext. 232.

Note on Membership Lists:

Since our new Secretary, Rudy Heller has not yet returned from Colombia, we will move membership list makeup up one month and distribute them at the October meeting. If anyone else has not given one of the officers a biographical sketch, please do so by the end of September.

OCTOBER TRANSLATION ROUNDTABLE

We will schedule our October Roundtable discussion as usual at 7:15 p.m. Subject will be a patent on French electronics which is included as an insert in this month's NETA News so that those who are going to participate may get a head start. Send your version, when completed, either to me: Alice Berglund, 35 Catherine Dr., Peabody, MA 01960 or Jean Stilson, 8 Garrison St., No. 702, Boston 02116. Please mail it in by Sept. 30 so we will have time to Xerox.

BEWARE (BE AWARE OF) ANACRONYMS

Not long ago, the Montreal Star published the following:

In the streets of Buenos Aires, "cojo" is a no-no. To Canadians, the acronym COJO and ORTO are harmless letters identifying two committees set up to organize the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games: Comité organisateur des jeux olympiques and Olympic Radio-Television Organization. Red-faced Olympics officials have discovered that in the proper Spanish slang of Argentina and Uruguay. "cojo" is a 4-letter word denoting sexual intercourse. The meaning of "orto" the Star refuses to report. An external spokesman stated that it meant "emasculated man with no guts" in Spain, but no protests were forthcoming from Spain.

Which brings to mind Chevy's NOVA—If advertised in Spanish-speaking countries, the car would be well known as "no va" or "no go"—hardly an appropriate epithet.

An Italian translator at one time had a hard time explaining to her bosses at the Fabbrica di A...R...T that their trademark FART would never survive export to the USA.

—Isabel Leonard

Arthur Berglund
35 Catherine Dr.
W. Peabody, Mass. 01960



Isabel LEONARD
P O Box 55
Hingham, MA 02043