

Save the date! The NETA Conference will be held virtually on April 30, 2022. Details coming soon to your email inbox.

Dear NETA Members!



Soleri Sunset by Alan Levine
from commons.wikimedia.org

Thinking of you and sending warmest wishes for a great year, I remember these lines by Tennyson...

*'Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow,
Ring out the false, ring in the true,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.'*

I hope your holiday season was just what you needed at these times: joyful, restful, thoughtful, healthy, and loving, too!

"*¡Al mal tiempo, buena cara!*" is an old saying in Argentina (A nice face to bad weather, or similar) encouraging us to happily gear up, energize and engage, for a hopeful New Year. Even though we are bound up with viruses around, remember that "Hope is the thing with feathers, that perches on the soul and keeps on singing!" as expressed by la belle of Amherst, Emily Dickinson.

The winter newsletter is a "thing with feathers," too. I invite you to a happy flying perusal of a variety of interesting and relevant articles. First, though: A reminder that the [World Day for African and Afro Descendant Culture](#) and the International Day of Education are on January 24. We take this

Remembering Isabel Leonard

by Anne Vincent

January 3, 2022

Darn.

I was going to dash a quick (but thoughtful) paragraph about Isabel's wisdom and uniqueness. Even queried my daughter about her memories of her: "She laughed a lot. Her first visit, she sat down at the piano, played for half an hour and then advised you to get it tuned. Like yesterday, she thought it was so bad! Another time I had mono; she burned sage in our bedroom. I always learned new words with her."

But then I started (re)reading our correspondence. I first met Isabel on Flefo in the mid-90s. We rarely spoke on the phone because my soft voice and foreign accent and her slight hearing problem made for awkward conversations. Instead we exchanged hundreds of emails over 25 years. (Yes, I hoard emails. Why not? It takes less shelf space than dictionaries).

Spent the afternoon reading those, as well as some of her numerous postings on the NETA discussion group (also a hoarder). Beautiful and easy writer. Whimsical and wise mentor. Enthusiastic musician. Adventurous traveler. Surprise visitor. Common-sensed business advisor. So many emails...

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opportunity to salute our colleagues and friends, sending warmest wishes for a super year!

Then on February 21 we celebrate [International Mother Language Day](#). The theme for 2022 is "Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society." UN quote:

International Mother Language Day recognizes that languages and multilingualism can advance inclusion, and the Sustainable Development Goals' focus on leaving no one behind. UNESCO believes education, based on the first language or mother tongue, must begin from the early years as early childhood care and education is the foundation of learning.

This year's observance is a call on policymakers, educators and teachers, parents and families to scale up their commitment

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NETA News

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Membership information

NETA accepts individual members only. A one-year membership is \$50. NETA offers a \$30 membership for students of translation and/or interpreting and individuals aged 65 or older. If you need a membership application or have other membership questions, contact: membership@netaweb.org. Subscription to this newsletter is included with your membership.

Greetings from the Editor

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to multilingual education, and inclusion in education to advance education recovery in the context of COVID-19. This effort also contributes to the United Nations International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032), for which UNESCO is the lead agency, and which places multilingualism at the heart of indigenous peoples' development.

As a last item on our language calendar, on March 20, [French Language Day/UN](#), we celebrate Multilingualism once again.

In this issue of *NETA News*, you will find write-ups of the monthly meetings held in October and November; the NETA Conversations feature with Dr. John Ragosta; some NETA T&I stories submitted by members; and, very importantly, note that NETA's annual conference on April 30 will take place virtually again due to the alarming pandemic situation. As much as we'd love to host an in-person event, we can't possibly yet run that risk.

On a different and sad note, we extend our sincere sympathy again to Isabel Leonard's family at this time. NETAn Anne Vincent has composed a very special heartfelt obituary for Isabel, NETA founder extraordinaire!

Last but not least, alongside the meaningful celebrations mentioned above and the FIT goals for associations (we are members), a few NETAns concerned about the environment are launching the 'Greenwave' initiative so we all become active for the planet as language professionals. Each of you and all, are making the most in your home, and your communities, to help stop the ecocide that is unfolding. Now we can add a layer of action as an association. Please see the Greenwave article on page 11 and contact us to make more waves! Thank you.

One more thing: you won't want to miss the holiday party write-up and photos on page 13.

Cheers!
Laura
From the editor's desk

Calling YOU! Translator & Interpreter for all seasons & reasons! What is T&I for you? T&I is... Send your fav sentence to newsletter@netaweb.org

Remembering Isabel Leonard

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OK; just one, from 2011 when she still lived in Watertown, a few months after she had started to learn Japanese (her 6th language?):

<<...I just HAVE to tell someone:

Yu Hsin, my 25-year-old tenant upstairs, from Taiwan, studying at the Longy Conservatory, said to me yesterday: "Isabel, I hope when I get old I will be like you." (She meant, continuing to study new things – not done by older women in Taiwan, it seems.) It made me want to laugh and cry at the same time.

I don't have daughters but at least I have tenants.>>

After hours of reading and remembering, I spent the last couple of hours trying and failing to condense 20 years of correspondence and friendship. Instead, I thought I would let her speak by sharing with you a document that she sent to several of her friends and family soon after the death of Bill, her partner for 33 years.

In this "diary" Isabel is in turn caring for Bill dying in a nursing home; fighting bureaucracy; entertained by children; awed by poetry; navigating her own doctors' appointments; eating at various ethnic restaurants; receiving meditation support, massages and poetry from various friends, healers and practitioners; trying to sleep; giving up on meditation; making funeral arrangements; and discussing the Phoenician alphabet, all the while keeping her humorous and slightly exasperated outlook on the situation. It's Isabel, her splendid brain and curiosity for the world around her.

Here it is:

.....

GRIEVING ON STEROIDS

Written by Isabel Leonard between November 29 and December 1, 2007

First, a little background for those who don't know or remember it all:

Bill, my thirty-three-year business partner and friend, progressed over the past six years from stroke to another stroke to assisted living facility to AWOL to another stroke to rehab to hospice, got kicked out of hospice, to nursing home; ran out of money; the MassHealth (local authority) benefit procedure was bureaucratized and dragged on. I developed shingles of the right eye on July 4, 2007 and was on intravenous morphine for four days. The eye did not make a good recovery, and every attempt I made to deal with the MassHealth procedures brought on severe post-herpetic pain, intractable to any analgesic I tried.

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Ethics, Conduct, Reputation and Judgment in the Interpreting Profession

NETA's Monthly Meeting, October 23, 2021

Reviewed by Marian Comenetz

Our speaker, Dr. Cesar Muedas, Program Director for interpretation and translation services at the Tennessee Language Center, began the core of his presentation by discussing the “What” of each of the four notions highlighted in the title of NETA's October monthly meeting. For Ethics, the focus is on U.S. systems, non-U.S. systems, and ad-hoc international systems. For Conduct, codes and standards are essential as are guidelines and mandates—the latter particularly in the context of Covid. Reputation relies on testimonials and trustworthiness. Judgment encompasses conflicts of interest, the rigor with which rubrics are applied, and the documentation inherent in reporting and auditing. Those features are neatly presented in the following chart, which constituted the first part of Dr. Muedas's PowerPoint presentation.



Following the “What” of Ethics, Conduct, Reputation and Judgment was the “Whose,” that is, to whom do each of these terms apply? Ethics applies either to the interpreter or to the contracting third party that hires the interpreter; Conduct could be that of the interpreter, the provider, or the LEP; Reputation is that of the interpreter, the provider, or the contracting third party; and Judgment devolves to the contracting third party, to colleagues, or to the interpreter him or herself.

And why is each of the rubrics so important? Dr. Muedas explained that the “Why” of Ethics gets at professionalism, adherence to principles, compliance, and scruples whereas for Conduct it involves standards or practice, the need for continuous improvement, and issues of liability. Underlying Reputation are matters of trust, excellence and achievement, and rewards, including recognition. Meanwhile, sound decision-making, prevention/correction/improvement, and the capacity to manage risk comprise Judgment.

“When” does all of the above come into play? “Ostensibly always,” said Dr. Muedas: in encounters, contracts, marketing, negotiations, coaching, training, teaching, when preparing taxes, and in situations involving conflict resolution.

Here are three further charts that present the above points with particular clarity.



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NETA's October Monthly Meeting

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As the presentation unfolded, Reputation became the central focus, with Ethics, Conduct and Judgment each contributing to it, as shown in this Venn diagram.



Dr. Muedas then shared a video clip including the following quote from *Othello*:

“Reputation! Reputation! Reputation! Oh, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial.” Indeed, reputation insinuates itself into every aspect of our being. At this point, Dr. Muedas recommended a book called *Reputation: What It Is and Why It Matters* (2017), by Gloria Origgi, translated from the Italian by Stephen Holmes and Noga Arkha, which he acknowledged provided at least some of the basis for his talk.

Two interactive activities followed. For each of them handouts were provided, and participants were divided into breakout rooms to consider four questions.

First

With the above points in mind:

1. What are the top-two professional strengths that others acknowledge in me?
2. When faced with an overwhelming obstacle, what are my top-two go-to skills to overcome it?
3. What was the most memorable assignment I tackled in 2002, and what made it memorable?
4. Which line graph [in the PowerPoint] represents the trajectory of my reputation in the last nine months? Why? Provide a simple description.

Samples of comments from one breakout room: *Keep your composure; be respectful; stay calm; take a deep breath; overcome your emotions (and don't let your voice reveal them); maintain impartiality; avoid escalation. Rules/ethics are crucial. And in a different vein, 2020 was an especially difficult and memorable year.*

Then

Having commented that perception often gets in the way of reputation, indeed that misperception is the most common roadblock, Dr. Muedas asked attendees to consider ways to counterbalance misperception by coming up with

1. one principle in the area of Ethics;
2. one standard in the area of Conduct;
3. one value in the area of Reputation; and
4. one decision in the area of Judgment.

Samples of principles, standards, values from three or four breakout rooms: *reliability; fidelity; dependability; competence; trust; respect; honesty; empathy; accountability; transparency; impartiality; punctuality; professionalism; experience; resourcefulness; resilience. In general, everything is tied into everything else.*

Lastly

Dr. Muedas presented a brief second video clip with an angle on the causes and consequences of reputation in the corporate world, where stakeholders' expectations are shifting. Who you say you are may or may not be how people perceive you. A quote from Warren Buffett stood out: “It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently.”

Immediately following Dr. Muedas's structured presentation, attendees jumped in with questions, comments, reactions, and opinions. Dr. Muedas stayed on to respond to questions on a number of topics. As things wound down, several attendees referred to his topic as being very important. One person opined that this monthly meeting was productive as it made people reflect on their practices. Another said this was “an amazing session.” Over ninety attendees were present to enjoy it.

Ethics, Conduct, Reputation and Judgment

A NETA Conversation with John A. Ragosta

On Thomas Jefferson's legacy for liberty and multilingualism

NETA Conversations is a feature developed by *NETA News* editor Laura Rojo MacLeod. This conversation features John A. Ragosta, PhD/JD, Historian, Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello

John Ragosta (@johnragosta), a historian at the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello, has taught law and history at the University of Virginia, George Washington University, as well as Oberlin, Hamilton, and Randolph Colleges. A fellow at Virginia Humanities, Dr. Ragosta has also held fellowships at Colonial Williamsburg (through the Jack Miller Center) and at Monticello. He is the author of *Religious Freedom: Jefferson's Legacy, America's Creed* (UVA Press, 2013), *Wellspring of Liberty: How Virginia's Religious Dissenters Helped to Win the American Revolution & Secured Religious Liberty* (Oxford University Press, 2010), and *Patrick Henry: Proclaiming a Revolution* (Routledge 2016). He is co-editor of *The Founding of Thomas Jefferson's University* (UVA, 2019). Before returning to academia, Dr. Ragosta was a partner at Dewey Ballantine LLP. Ragosta holds both a PhD and a JD from the University of Virginia.

When I finished my translation work for the special bicentennial edition of Thomas Jefferson's Selected Writings, I again realized that the art of translation is one of the richest areas of human knowledge. Worlds and words unite in a translation piece of this caliber. It is a meeting of worlds for a new world. The 'sage of Monticello' is a beacon of light today for many reasons. He was a rebellious, curious Renaissance man who inspired the cause of liberty, based on an old Spanish thesis, for the world. - Editor

Laura: A special welcome to Dr. Ragosta for agreeing to join NETA Conversations despite his busy schedule. Thanks, John. I promise it will be a brief, low-key time!

Netans would certainly appreciate learning about your historical viewpoint on TJ's legacy on language, liberty, and translation.

John: It is very difficult to assess the historic impact of Jefferson's interest. Generally, his ability to speak and read several languages would not have been unusual among educated men of his era, although it has undoubtedly

encouraged some students through the years. Still, his interest in ethnography led him to collect information on Native languages, but extensive notes on this subject, including some notes from the Lewis & Clark expedition, were lost in a boat accident. Still, today, the American Philosophical Society has pursued an important effort to preserve Native languages based, in part, on Jefferson's interests.

Laura: We know how Thomas Jefferson, the Renaissance man and Sage of Monticello, valued languages and their historical connotations. Is his worldview applied today?

John: Jefferson, of course, greatly valued the ability to speak and read in other languages; he spoke four languages (English, French, Italian, Latin) and read six (add Spanish and Greek). This opened up a world of learning (in print) and a world of communication with other peoples. As the United States has become more globalized, Americans have also become more multilingual, with more than 1/6 Americans now speaking several languages (up from 1/10 forty years ago). Nonetheless, the ability of Americans to speak and read foreign languages still lags dramatically behind that of other developed nations. So, from a Jeffersonian perspective, there is progress and still a long way to go (certainly leaving an important part for translators).

Laura: What is your perspective on the power of translation to construct cultural identities, communities?

John: Understanding each other is, of course, a fundamental building block of diplomacy, cooperation, and broader communities. At the same time,

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Consecutive Skills-Building Training for Court (and other) Interpreters

NETA's Monthly Meeting, November 20, 2022

Reviewed by Marian Comenetz

NETA's November monthly meeting was a veritable tour de force. From start to finish, our speaker, Athena Matilsky, proceeded at a rapid, energetic pace, skillfully presenting large amounts of material while actively integrating participants' responses to her questions within the Zoom Chat function. Given that this meeting drew 100 attendees, that was decidedly the right way to encourage and manage participation.

Athena began with ice-breakers. She asked where participants were from, where they were in real time, what languages they work with (a huge number!), and what one magic wish they might have for effective consecutive interpreting. All of her questions prompted much response, reflecting the variety of backgrounds represented at this meeting. Athena contended that several of the magic wishes that emerged constituted "people management"—something that might conceivably prompt a separate, future meeting but would not realistically be addressed on this occasion. Rather, Athena picked up on wishes for skills that can be considered, practiced, and improved—areas like memory, delivery, and note-taking, including good symbol usage.

- Omissions and additions are directly related to memory, for example, one might think one grasps the content, but then distraction kicks in. Athena also referred to a "gremlin" on one's shoulder who says you'll forget things, and then you do.
- The manner of delivery should ideally reflect confidence. One reminder: Like other key players, the interpreter has the option to politely and professionally request a moment to look up a term. There's no need to apologize for making such a request. The goal is to avoid backtracking or fillers (um...ah).
- Consecutive interpreting is about storing information in your brain. Notes are taken to help you retrieve it.

Underlying all of the above is the need to listen to oneself. One needs to be precise about what is working well and what needs to improve. To do so, Athena highly recommends logging practice sessions and looking for patterns.

As the session unfolded, Athena elaborated on the above. If at first, one notices mistakes and attempts to fix significant omissions, sometimes things get "mushed" together, in which case information can get changed inadvertently. As one starts to fix that weakness, one's delivery can be affected such that one sounds hesitant. Notes, a great tool when used effectively, can lead to distraction. The key to improvement is "practice, practice, practice." And in the course of that process, it's important not to get discouraged. Athena herself failed her first state court interpreting exam, but she stuck with it and eventually passed that exam, became federally certified, and earned certification as a medical interpreter as well. So far success with the UN interpreting exam has been elusive, but Athena fully plans to pursue that credential as well. There can be setbacks, she says, but don't give up!

Next Athena asked participants to record their interpretation of an English<->English dialogue she read to them. She gave them the option to interpret fully in English or to do so from English into their other language. They should do what they normally do, including taking notes. She then had participants listen carefully to their recordings, focusing on details to see whether they discovered inaccuracies. Lists, names, and numbers are known to be hard because for those things, context doesn't help.

Athena returned to the need to practice a lot: "Focus, brace yourself, get ready!" To that end, she provided a handout consisting of a progress log. Categories were Date, Exercise, Modality, Objective (be realistic—pick only one!), Omissions, Distortions, Delivery, Syntax/Grammar, Vocabulary, Focus, Language interference, Main challenge (going forward) and Take-aways. Using an example of her own interpreting, Athena filled in the practice log herself to illustrate how it should be used. The log makes you be specific rather than generalizing your own assessment as "good" or "bad." Experiment, take notes, and practice. Think about what makes you make a particular mistake and how you can fix it. Athena then gave time for participants to listen to their own recordings, compare them to the transcript, and fill in an entry on the practice log. If anyone had extra time, she suggested that they listen to their recording with their eyes closed and focus solely on delivery: how would others receive it? Once everyone had finished, she asked participants what had surprised them about their own recordings, the goal being to increase one's awareness of where problems exist. Sometimes you get worse before you get better, she said, but structured practice is the key to improvement.

Lastly, Athena had people focus on one utterance within the dialogue they had recorded with the idea of learning to maximize listening skills. Some hints included: take care of yourself physically; be relaxed, rested; focus; block out surroundings; avoid vicarious trauma; treat the material as a story

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Instructions on How to Increase Your NETA Online Privacy

by Diana Rhudick

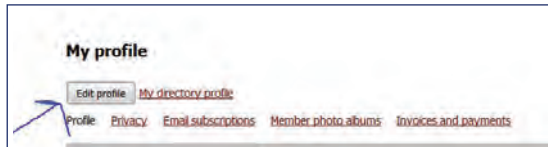
If your name and contact information are included in NETA's online directory, be aware that these may be harvested by anyone using the web. The instructions below explain how to hide specific fields in your profile, which will of course also become hidden to potential clients.



Click on your name to show the menu.
Click on "View profile."



Click on the gray box to left, "Edit profile."



Click on "Privacy," in the middle.

This page lists each field of your profile, and gives you the option to make each field visible to anybody, members only, or nobody, (No access).

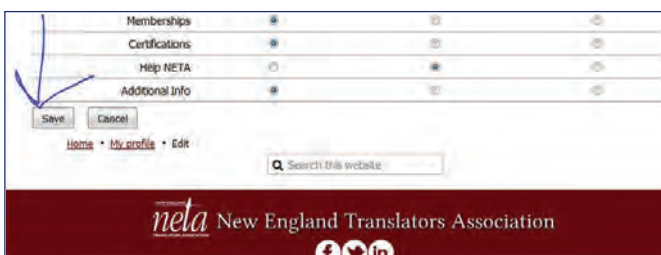


You can also click or unclick "Show profile to others" near the top.

The email field is about 9 down on the list. You can select "No access" for it.



To save changes and exit, click "Save" at the bottom.



NETA's November Monthly Meeting

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by visualizing it and making it personal; and generally, engage in active listening. Athena shared her own three brain theories: 1) listening; 2) interpreting; and 3) analyzing/critiquing. She emphasized that the three are not to be mixed. They are "not allowed in the same room." They are to be undertaken one at a time, with analysis and critique not to occur during any interpreting encounter.

Athena somehow managed to include a number of hints about note-taking in this presentation as well. Some examples:

- Drawings often can be good (rather than words in either the source or the target language); draw the story as you listen;
- Develop symbols that work for you (ex. a circle with a dot in it can represent an eye, with the meaning "I see"; a squiggly line can indicate lack of certainty);
- You don't need to be a good artist; the main thing is efficiency;
- Make a map on a page to restore information initially stored in your brain;
- Use abbreviations and symbols;
- Verticality and indentation make for effective notes.

Bear in mind, too, that everyone's notes are different.

In rounding out her prodigious presentation, Athena provided a list of resources for further interpreter training:

- Intepretrain
- ACEBO (Edge 21 and The Interpreter's Edge)
- The Confident Interpreter
- De la Mora Interpreter Training
- Transperfect

Athena herself offers a solid number of training programs on a variety of topics, too. For information, visit [her website](#).

Hailing from over 20 countries ranging from Spain to Nepal, from Brazil to Djibouti, from Poland to Turkey, and more, attendees at this meeting were treated to a plethora of suggestions, concrete advice, and helpful encouragement in fully engaging and spirited fashion. Judging from the enthusiastic comments in the Chat, this presentation was very well received.

My NETA Translator / Interpreter Story

Below are two more in a series of T/I stories that NETA Editor Laura Rojo MacLeod launched. In the initial articles that appeared in the Fall 2020 issue of NETA News, members gave us some memorable professional vignettes. In this issue, members offer critiques of what is required for their particular jobs. Peter Wilner describes what is involved in his work as a Community Liaison with MetroWest Mediation Services, based in Natick, Massachusetts. Vanessa Rendeiro offers us what she has found to be key elements for a successful career as an interpreter.

Peter Wilner

Translator and Interpreter.

English <> Spanish, Portuguese

In mediation, a neutral third-party helps disputing parties define their own interests and, ideally, come to an agreement incorporating those interests. When the parties' and the mediator's linguistic backgrounds are different, translation and interpretation are essential to the mediation process.

Mediator as Interpreter

During intake, the mediator helps the parties clarify their goals and understand mediation's objectives:

- to give the parties an opportunity to:
 - discuss disputed issues and come to an agreement
 - avoid the time and expense that going to court requires

When the parties' and the mediator's linguistic backgrounds are different, the mediator must utilize interpretation to help the parties understand, and participate in, the process for achieving those objectives.

The mediator first helps the parties to sign the agreement to participate, by which the parties acknowledge their understanding that participation is voluntary and the process is confidential. As this document is most often written in English, the mediator needs to be able to interpret it so that all parties understand what they are signing.

Next, when the parties and the mediator begin to discuss the disputed issues, the mediator must interpret so that all involved can engage effectively in the process. This is important both when parties on either side of a dispute do not speak the same language or when one party speaks English and a native language and the other party, while understanding that native language, does not speak it. In my work as a mediator, I have repeatedly seen interpretation be key to an effective mediation, whether the dispute is between (e.g.) a landlord and a tenant, or divorcing spouses.

To take two examples, in a dispute between an English-speaking building manager (who worked for

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Vanessa Rendeiro

Translator and Interpreter.

English <> Portuguese

Getting Started as an Interpreter

The underlying premise of an interpreter is that you bridge communication by conveying everything said by both parties. You must be at least 18 years old, hold at a minimum a high school diploma or equivalent, and speak at least two languages fluently. Learning about a particular field and having people skills are extremely important, as well as furthering your knowledge and skills.

Specialize

There are several possible specializations within the field of interpreting. For example, you could be a legal interpreter, a community interpreter, a medical interpreter, an immigration interpreter, a business interpreter, or a conference interpreter. Earning a certificate in professional interpreter training will give you valuable credentials. After you have gained some experience, you would do well to train for, and pass a certification exam in your chosen area.

Accuracy is key

In general, the primary goal for a professional interpreter is to be the conduit for communication by conveying everything said by both parties with accuracy and transparency as if no language barriers existed. However, it is human to make mistakes. The key is not to dwell on the mistakes but to own up to them and set things straight. It is crucial to understand the code of ethics and the standards of practice of the profession. With these tools you will be able to navigate the complex field of interpreting.

The main ethical key involved in this profession is accuracy. Interpreters cannot render an accurate message if they do not understand the content of the messaging and have the skills to render it properly. Accuracy in any interpreting field is crucial and critical for effectiveness in the service delivered and for the intended outcome of the communication process.

Interpreting encompasses a broad field of human needs. If you are bilingual and flexible, understand cultural differences, love serving the community, and have compassion, this profession is awaiting you. Certainly, you will excel.

Peter Wilner's T/I Story

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the landlord) and a Portuguese-speaking tenant over an issue with the tenant's apartment, I helped the parties to draft an agreement that clearly defined both the tenant's, and the building manager's next steps. And in a divorce mediation in which one party spoke English and Spanish, and the other only spoke Spanish, the English-speaking party, my co-mediator, and I would discuss topics in English, and I needed to ensure the other party's full participation by interpreting our discussion into Spanish.

Mediator as translator

Finally, if the parties reach agreement, all parties must understand that agreement's contents. This usually requires that the written agreement be translated into each party's primary language. For a divorce mediation in which I co-mediated, I needed to translate the English-language agreement into Portuguese so that both the English-speaking spouse and the Portuguese-speaking spouse understood what they were signing.

Conclusion

As discussed above, mediators working with parties from different linguistic backgrounds perform multiple functions. Translation and interpretation are key to all of these functions and in situations such as those briefly described above, indispensable to a successful mediation.



Artwork courtesy of
Council of Europe via Wikimedia Commons

NETA Greenwave for the planet, for our members and local and global community

Submitted by NETAns Laura Rojo MacLeod, Montserrat Zuckerman, Peter Wilner, Maiyim Baron, Eduardo Berenstein, and Helen Eby

Today our connection with Nature is closer than ever in many ways. Translators and interpreters can certainly draw environmental parallels with their own art and task. The original and target text, as a rich language compound, mirrors the planet rich in planetary biodiversity; and language professionals, as every living organism in Nature, are key players in their own ecosystems.

Here is one professional point to ponder. The overarching, unparalleled, receptive skills of comprehensive reading, listening, and understanding, can indeed be used to finesse how we "read" Nature. The expert word worker can put to use a host of comprehensive skills when tackling the material to be transformed. This enhanced, insightful capacity also opens our ability to take in nature's lively dimensionality in full.

Indeed, it is urgent to consider the environmental situation due to the ecocide happening worldwide. We, professional language workers, can certainly comprehend and help in this global crisis in many ways. Our colleagues are involved in the trenches working to provide effective interpretation and translation services in the most dangerous countries. They face constant risks in a variety of hostile environments.

Here is NETA's urgent call to reaffirm our commitments to protect Mother Earth, from our dedicated role as engaged language professionals. Along with other concerned colleagues, we would like to invite NETAns to engage and energize to encourage intensive green practices in the profession. We also would like to spread the green wave to other language associations. Together we are an ocean!

We all do as much as we can for the planet and our communities. The following are some of the NETA "greenway" tips that all language organizations can adopt. Please feel free to add more.

- Stay informed, locally, and globally, and share. Check the FIT archived committee objectives below and the UN/SDG for 2030
- Create a green pool database, calendar, flyer, topics, for news, events etc.
- Speak up as a concerted group on selected issues
- Reduce carbon footprint by less travel, avoid fast fashion
- Organize a No Impact week at work or in your association
- Promote green awards for members and sponsors
- More quality, not quantity, use of virtual platforms
- Develop the "green T&I" language

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NETA Greenwave

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- Go zero waste. Rev up the Rs! Terminate plastics
- Divest from fossil fuels
- Encourage your associates to work with civil society to effect change
- Mentor new professionals
- Update best practices into green practices

This is also a call to decision makers at all levels. The UN SDG 2030 Agenda calls on us to “ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.”

Together, all language professionals can go the extra mile to add some environmental and transcendent action working with civil society, the private sector, academia, and the media. We truly can help restore our Earth, for us and the next generations.

For those vital reasons, the NETA greenwave would also like to forward our initiative to the FIT magazine *Translatio* as per an invitation last year. Our goal is also to ask FIT to consider the creation of a Translation & Environment committee. The T&E committee would include the following objectives taken from the FIT archived committees, with the added environmental subject:

- To organize regional meetings/seminars/workshops as a platform for scholars and practitioners in translation and environmental/cultural studies to meet and exchange ideas and experiences in research, teaching and activism
- To participate in international conferences, forums and projects concerning environmental issues
- To assist national associations in environmental-related translation/interpretation projects and tasks
- To advocate for a safe, healthy environment for colleagues alongside partner associations, NGOs
- To promote interdisciplinary studies in translation, culture, indigenous nations, environment, communication etc.
- Etc.

[The U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals](#)

Building on FIT's reputation, the committee will also work toward a stronger presence for the profession and our membership in international forums, as well as cooperating with other committees of FIT to build a wider environmental presence as a systemic whole and maintain the brand and reputation of FIT.

Please contact us at amherstbilingual@gmail.com to continue the environmental conversation to benefit our associations, locally and globally.

Respectfully submitted,

NETAns LauraRM, Montserrat Zuckerman, Peter Wilner, Maiyim Baron, Eduardo Berenstein, Helen Eby.

Message from FIT on the environment

‘The goal of *Translatio* [FIT's newsletter] is to publish ‘lively’ articles about the activities of member associations and issues relevant to the language services industry’. Today climate change, the environment, and our changing world are of critical importance to translators and interpreters (and, indeed, to everyone). Look no further than the recent hurricanes in the southern United States and the critical need to get information to key stakeholders in a language that they understand, especially information about health and safety. Translators and interpreters play a critical role in transmitting this information.

We would enthusiastically encourage you to resubmit for the next issue reporting on ways NETA is working to combat the climate crisis, coordinating with other associations to ensure key information is being shared with the right people, tips associations can implement to reduce their carbon footprints and encourage green practices, perhaps the role of Zoom and other virtual platforms on reducing GHG emissions from traveling to conferences by plane, or any number of other topics that relate to the activities of member associations and issues relevant to the language services industry.’



NETA's 2021 Holiday Party

by Marian Comenetz

Covid being Covid, the number of NETAns who gathered for our annual holiday party was decidedly smaller than usual. Still, having sent proof of vaccination to our host, Tapani Ronni, and sporting masks throughout (except while eating and drinking, of course), a grand total of 12 of us engaged in spirited conversation and togetherness in a festive setting. Especially after last year, when we were unable to meet in person, we certainly wanted to keep NETA traditions alive. People arrived with generous potluck offerings along with contributions of non-perishables for the local food bank.

Of course, the Yankee swap is integral to this event. When it was time to indulge in that activity, small-group chatting yielded to a circle of all

present around the table bearing wrapped items. One by one, the contents were revealed. They ranged from an unusual decorative item to a book or two, from a ceramic napkin holder to a hand-knitted scarf, from bottles of wine to two very different candle offerings, and from a small plush throw to a kazoo! Then on top of it all there was a full-sized balsam wreath. Camaraderie reigned, and a good time was had by all.

NETA extends thanks to Tapani and his wife, Monica for offering to host this year's holiday gathering and for doing so with such warmth—not to mention the active presence of their remarkable dog, Saga! If you missed this year's party, do consider coming next year. We all want to believe that Covid will be a thing of the past by then. For now, happy holidays and a healthy, T & I-filled 2022!



Photo courtesy of Tapani Ronni

Grieving on Steroids

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Thursday, November 29

My post-herpetic (after-shingles) eye inflammation has dragged on, progressing from the front to the retina, and they put me on oral steroids last week to ward off blindness. Me, the alternative medicine freak, who hasn't even had caffeine in her system for over two years. But man, these things are great! It feels like chug-a-lugging six cups of coffee in a row. I solved computer problems that had baffled me, got through huge volumes of translation work, cut my time power-walking round the Weston Reservoir, and sang a very fast patter aria at a party on Sunday night. Tuesday (Nov. 27) I waltzed through the last MassHealth procedures which included a visit to Bill's nursing home. Now, steroid-powered, I bravely enter the living room where he is normally to be found sitting in his wheelchair, and demanding that I get him out of there (he had asked repeatedly to come back and live in the basement, now that his unit is tenanted). But he's not there. He's in his room in bed, and almost speechless.

So here lies my tormentor of the last six years, helpless at last, and no longer a threat.

It was then that the transcendent thing happened: In an instant, every particle of anger, rage, guilt, and frustration was lifted. I felt nothing but total compassion for my beloved friend and partner of thirty years. The cruel simulacrum that had taken his place was gone. I sat and held his hand. He was able to repeat his own name, but mine was too long for him. Finally I asked him whether he was mad at me for staying away so long. I got a spasmodic squeeze of the hand and an emphatic "yes!" It now seems that "yes" will be the last word he spoke. Yeah, Bill!

That was Tuesday. Wednesday, I talked to friends and relatives on the phone then went to my friend Kathy who lives in a lovely house overlooking Gloucester Harbor to try to integrate the whole thing. How do I divide my attention between taking care of myself and being with Bill, which I feel drawn to do, for as many of his last moments as possible? Kathy is a highly skilled professional facilitator, and I talked her into doing some grief counseling. The session was dynamic and transforming. I came out with a new perspective and a plan. I drove to Rocky Neck and watched the sun go down into the sea behind the rocks. Thence to the house of Laura, a woman with whom I barter piano accompanying to her flute for shiatsu. Laura decided we needed to talk instead of play; then she gave me a full shiatsu treatment, after which we read Zen death poetry together. Enlightened Japanese Zen monks are supposed to compose a poem just before they die, then die sitting or standing up. The poems range from beautiful to quirky to outrageous, depending on the monk.

I'm still sleeping only four hours a night (steroids) so Wednesday night I'm reading Laura's Japanese monks in bed, then listening to Kathy's CD. Kathy (the Gloucester friend) has just come back from Machu Picchu and done a very inspirational book and CD about it. I notice the photographer is a London psychologist whom I had lunch with once after a workshop here; nice man.

Thursday: up at 5:00 am, swimming at 6:00 am watching the dawn break through the glass-sided pool. More translation work, more phone calls. I remember that part of my plan after Kathy's session is to make my eye a valuable ally, not a "problem" – and to consult it before anything I do. Work? Talk? Meditate? Rest? Went for my Alexander lesson in tears, but still learned a lot. Kitty, my teacher, who used to be way up in the corporate world, gave me the name of the acupuncturist in Chicago who all the CEO's go to. Maybe I'll go; I have three free air trips due me after playing games with credit cards. Ate a late lunch at a new ethnic restaurant on Mass Ave. where had a long conversation with the cook. Went for a massage in the Japanese building (taking really good care of myself so that I can take care of Bill is the plan), then a Japanese dinner reading my Japanese death poems and watching a young Japanese couple teaching their mini-child to eat with chopsticks and feeding their micro-child from a jar. Death and birth...

Went on to the nursing home. Bill is much worse. It was thought that the end would come from uremia brought on by the kidney failure, but this doesn't look like uremia to me. I think he's had another stroke. This could last for weeks, months.

Thursday night, or rather, 1:30 am Friday. I go for a brisk walk around the neighborhood, hoping it will help me sleep. Must be up early tomorrow for ophthalmologist appointment. I meet Adam, the ADD-dyslexic kid who had livened up the street when we moved in ten years ago. Tall now, with straggly adolescent beard and acne. He's walking back from reshelving at the Star Market; studies at the local community college days. He asks after Bill and offers to accompany me to the nursing home if I need it. This is very touching. When would he have time?

Friday, November 30

Bill is going to die at 1:30 pm but I don't know it yet.

7:45 am Pull out of the driveway for an early ophthalmologist appointment. Michelle next door is pulling out at the same time; she

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Grieving on Steroids

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waves. This is the first time she has waved at me in the ten years since we cut down the tree between us that threatened our basement and provided her shade. A tiny miracle?

Downtown, seen by Carmina, a young Puerto Rican doctor learning from the Great Ophthalmologist, Dr. Foster. She talks with real enthusiasm about Dr. Foster's work. He observes, gathers info (huge database), invents treatments, gets them manufactured off-label [= drugs existing for other diseases so don't require lengthy FDA approval], uses them on his patients, and tracks the results. Carmina says when she goes to international conferences, people see her badge and rush up to ask her what Dr. Foster is up to now. I get examined, and they decide to do an angiogram. Two-hour wait for that. I sit reading the printouts of my previous test results. Understand about 9/10 of them; the rest I'll look up in the office, or Alice will explain to me when we go to California. I think about Bill and read my Japanese death poems, keeping the cover carefully shielded from the other patients. Some of them are recently blind. "Take small steps, Dad. Let's put your cane here." I think about blindness. I look out at the roof garden below. It's a beautiful, sunny day. The flowers that were there two weeks ago are gone, but the shrubs and grass are green. Here in town, some trees are still in autumn dress; leaves have dropped in the suburbs. A fellow patient is pacing and twitching. I ask her if she's seen the roof garden. She hasn't and looks. She sits down and tells me about her garden in Vermont. She gets called.

I get twitchy and wander over to the children's room. Playthings on floor. A cardboard notice printed in childish handwriting says:

Dear Patience,

*Don't be scared. The doctor will
make you better.*

I burst into tears. A toddler looks up at me and beams. I brighten. I talk to another patient who is studying a Hebrew primer. He's in from Burlington, Vermont, he says. His wife is Jewish. As he was thinking about his eye problems, he saw a sign written in Hebrew followed by the words: If you can't read this, you need classes, so he's taking them. I told him about the evolution of the Phoenician

alphabet to Hebrew, which Han— harpist and Hebrew teacher — was telling me about in my car three weeks ago. The Phoenician character that evolved into Aleph is a bull's head; Beit is "house" (as in Bethlehem), so "alphabet" means "bull's house."

Vermont man gets called in. I get twitchy again; tired of death poems. I get a clipboard and paper from the nurse, and write this.

I get called in for the angiogram gets done and an OCT (optical coherence tomography — an optic nerve scan). More waiting. More Zen poems. Finally get to see Dr. Foster, the great man with the CV five pages long and the two-shelf twenty-foot-wide display case of his certificates, plaques, and textbooks authored and co-authored. He tells me there's a spot on the retina (I can see it on the photograph; it looks pretty trivial to me, but I'm not an ophthalmologist) for which he wishes me to see a retinologist. So the Great Man does only the front of the eye? I'm given the information to call Dr. Lucy Young.

I drive back along the river. Some words are going through my mind in what feels a familiar rhythm: 5-7-5 syllables:

From the Eye Palace

On my left the Charles River

The water is blue.

Ah, all those haiku I've been reading. It was precisely 1:15 because the clock I glanced at when I reached the traffic light four minutes later said 1:19.

A phone call from London from a treasured cousin. We talk for an hour. When I go back to the office (about 3:00 pm, I think) I see the light is blinking on my phone. Message from nursing home time-dated 2:34 pm. "Isabel: Just to let you know that Mr. Grimes passed away at 1:15. Please call xxx."

"1:15," huh. I remember my little haiku. I race over to the nursing home to get there before the funeral director does. They haven't laid him out yet. He's still warm and flexible. I wait to see if his spirit is hanging around, but if it is, it's not being communicative. I drive to Marion's; fortunately she's at home. She had written a prayer that morning for Hebrew class and gives it to me to read. It's beautiful. I suddenly remember that when I made my co-pay at the ophthalmologist's my credit card was missing. Marion asks me where I last saw it. I remember it was at the Japanese restaurant. Well, it's nearly dinnertime, so we both go off, pick up the credit card, and eat at the ChoCho restaurant next door, the one with the large tropical fish tank. I've eaten there at least thirty times, but this is the first time I've got the prized fish tank table. We talk about our lives, about sitting shiva (Jewish tradition), and watch the faces of the Japanese children gawping into the fish tank.

I drive home. Bill is still dead, I suppose. I write some e-mails; make some phone calls. 11:00 pm: I still can't go to sleep, but Sally from California calls. We talk for an hour. I make another west coast call. Still can't sleep. I sit cross-legged in the dark and see if Bill wants to make a visit. Jeff, who visited him on Friday when

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he was a little more lucid than at the time I saw him, says Bill was reaching for the phone and saying “Isab...” Now’s your chance, Bill! But he doesn’t show up. At 3 am I call Rosalie in London. I give thanks to the Cosmic Planner who created time zones. Sleep from 5 to 8 am.

8:30 am: Start writing. Call Ross, a retired (and voluble) college professor whom we knew in Hingham. I’m suddenly curious about the train (restoration of rail service from Boston to Hingham and beyond) to which Bill devoted ten years of his life, and I helped for five (I ran out of steam, but he didn’t). The train actually ran with passengers for the first time on October 30, a month ago. Big ceremony. [\[Video on youtube\]](#) I really wanted to know what contribution Bill had made to its restoration, bitterly opposed by many of our neighbors. Ross had run into Mike Dukakis, former governor of Massachusetts and Democratic Candidate for President in 1988; Dukakis lost to George Bush (not Dubya, the current genius; his dad). Dukakis’ regimen had ushered the train project in the mid-eighties. Dukakis opined, so sayeth Ross, that “Back on Track” (Bill’s group) was instrumental if not crucial in bringing back the train. So there we have the verdict. I feel satisfied. Jeff was actually going to take Bill for a ride on the train (logistics: wheelchair transfer; incontinence; Jeff is 6’4” and I’m not); but the nursing home nixed outings two days before the train came. Shame on them!

11 am – went for my shiatsu appointment. Henry, the practitioner, has been a psychic from childhood so I tell him some of the story, especially the part about sitting in the dark. Henry sees an image of me with a shadow behind me that he thinks is Bill. I try to get some specifics. Henry says “He [meaning Bill] worked in some kind of service in his life, didn’t he?” Me: “Well, he was a translator, and he taught ESL as a volunteer.” Henry: “Maybe that’s it. I think that’s going to be his work on the other side.”

I’m not sure about all this. It’s cold outside. I go to the Brazilian restaurant next store, drink a spicy Amazonian latte, and eat lunch. I seem to be spending lots of money, but I did a ton of work last week and sent a large bill to Switzerland. Michel will be cycling down to the Bureau des Postes (he’s gearing up for a ski trip) and wiring me a check. I come back and write this. Which brings us to the present.

Here’s the sad-funny story I promised in the e-mail:

The Funeral Director and the Two Swedish Sisters

Prelude. Back to March, 2007 when I return from a week in the Turks and Caicos visiting an old college buddy. First on the task list is to find a nursing home for Bill because they’re kicking him out of hospice – he’s doing too well. Phone calls ⇨ Internet ⇨ spreadsheet ⇨ short list ⇨ site visits. Only one place passes my screens, and they don’t have a vacancy. I wheedle the admissions lady. She calls at 9:00 am the next day and says she can squeeze him in if I get him over there and signed in within the hour,

otherwise she is forced to take someone from the acute floor. I call the hospice, tell them to have the discharge forms ready, brush the snow off the car, grab a suitcase, zip over there, sign things, drive him to the nursing home through the snow, unload him, sign another stack of forms... and look at the clock. It’s 9:59 am. Whew.

Back at the office I read what I’ve signed. Among other things, I’ve promised to make burial arrangements within the week so they don’t get stuck with a cadaver. This is the thing I’ve most dreaded doing. I’ve vaguely imagined that funeral directors come into two types: smarmy/saccharine, and high-pressure. Ugh. Where do you start?

I get a referral from my handyman’s father, an ancient Italian stonemason who rebuilt my steps out back last summer and taught me some Abruzzese dialect. I make an appointment with his friend Carmine Nardone, the selected funeral director, and get a friend to come with me. Friend has to cancel at the last moment and asks me to reschedule. I decide to go it alone.

Carmine Nardone turns out to be a prince of a man. He’s a pathologist by day, runs the family business by night, and looks after his family. We sail through the paperwork, then get to chatting. He tells me.

Carmine’s story: The two Swedish sisters

In the early 70s, there lived near Watertown square two Swedish sisters, both over six feet tall. As adventurous spirits were wont to do in those carefree days, elder sister took off for California on a motorcycle. She was rarely heard from. Years passed. Their widowed mother became sick, and younger sister gave up her job (and imperiled her marriage) to move in with mother. Mother died seven years later. Guess who showed up at Carmine’s funeral parlor? Elder sister of course, off a plane, not a motorcycle, demanding half the estate which had been willed in toto to the caregiving sister. Younger sister’s response: she hauled back and decked her. Out cold.

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“Is That the Train I take to Hingham?”

by Bill Grimes,
written some time in the late eighties

Sung by Jeannie Scamell and Rich Jensen to the tune “[Chattanooga Choo Choo](#)” at a Unicorn Singers performance, Hingham, MA

[She:] Pardon me sir, is that the train I take to Hingham?

[He:] Yes, yes, track number nine,
It’s the same one as mine.

[She:] Isn’t it nice to have a train that runs to Hingham?
Though I usually sail, I’ll be going by rail.

[He:] We’ll be boarding at South Station where you’ll hand in your fare;
Then before you know it we’ll be past Jackson Square.

Everyone we came with is getting off at Weymouth,
But you and I’ll be riding with the rich and famous.

When you hear that whistle going eight to the bar,
Then you know that Hingham cannot be very far.

Watch out: if you pass it
You’ll end up in Cohasset.
Whoo-who Hingham, here we are.

[She, “rubbing window”:] There seems to be some commotion at the station.

[He:] Protesters perhaps; I think they’re blocking the tracks.

[Both:] If they succeed in keeping all the rush-hour trains at bay
It will be “Goodbye Old Colony, we’ll be back on 3A.”

Notes: (1) The proposed railroad line was highly controversial and bitterly opposed by neighborhood groups, including some people who were our friends; (2) “Old Colony” is the to-be-restored Old Colony Railroad; (3) 3A is Route 3A which you have to drive from Boston off the Expressway to get to Hingham in the absence of a train.

As of October 30, 2007, a month before Bill’s death, the train is finally running.

Well-Aged Insults

Ms. Anon Y Mous found these. They come from an era before the English language got boiled down to 4-letter words.

1. “He had delusions of adequacy” — Walter Kerr
2. “He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire.” — Winston Churchill
3. “I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure. — Clarence Darrow
4. “He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary.”
— William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway)
“Poor Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words?” — Ernest Hemingway (about William Faulkner)
5. “Thank you for sending me a copy of your book; I’ll waste no time reading it.” — Moses Hadas
6. “I didn’t attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it.” — Mark Twain
7. “He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends.” — Oscar Wilde
8. “I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; bring a friend, if you have one.”
— George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill
“Cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second... if there is one.” — Winston Churchill, in response
9. “I feel so miserable without you; it’s almost like having you here.” — Stephen Bishop
10. “He is a self-made man and worships his creator.” — John Bright
11. “I’ve just learned about his illness. Let’s hope it’s nothing trivial.” — Irvin S. Cobb
12. “He is not only dull himself; he is the cause of dullness in others.” — Samuel Johnson
13. “He is simply a shiver looking for a spine to run up.” — Paul Keating
14. “He loves nature in spite of what it did to him.” — Forrest Tucker
15. “Why do you sit there looking like an envelope without any address on it?” — Mark Twain
16. “Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go.” — Oscar Wilde
17. “He uses statistics as a drunken man uses lamp-posts... for support rather than illumination.” — Andrew Lang
18. “He has Van Gogh’s ear for music.” — Billy Wilder
19. “I’ve had a perfectly wonderful evening. But I’m afraid this wasn’t it.” — Groucho Marx
20. “He can compress the most words into the smallest idea of any man I know.” — Abraham Lincoln