

CAPTIONS



Official Newsletter Publication of the Colorado Association of Professional Interpreters
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Page 1 of 8

Don't miss CAPI's Annual Meeting

"The measure of intelligence is the ability to change"

Albert Einstein

The May 10th membership meeting promises to be an interesting and productive meeting. Times are changing in the interpretation and translation world and one of those changes is Video Remote Interpreting, the subject of one of the classes at this year's meeting that is enthusiastically called *"The Future of Interpreting."* A company that markets that service will present and answer our questions. The second class will be a discussion about ways to improve our quoting and billing systems and how to deal with nonpaying customers, one of the inevitable headaches of being an independent contractor. We also have the unusual opportunity to elect 5 new members to the board this year, so make sure you are in good standing in order to cast your ballot. Have you figured out how to use the CAPI website to promote yourself yet? Learn how you and your company can get the most out of this greatly underutilized benefit of membership. Presentations are free and breakfast and lunch are included at no cost to the membership. If you have a colleague who has not renewed or is not a member yet, they can join at the meeting and take advantage of presentations (they will not be able to cast a vote). Finally, it has been a little while since we published an issue of Captions and we have no intention of waiting so long next time. Your contributions and suggestions are welcome. Please write us at captions@coloradointerpreters.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

The CAPI Board of Directors

INDEX

Article	Page
CAPI's Annual Meeting	1
Join the CAPI Board	1
A Withering Market?.....	2
What is the point?	3
Demystifying the CAPI Treasurer....	4
Challenges Faces by LOTS.....	5
Schedule for Court Interpreter Orientations	6
Congrats are in Order!.....	8

CAPI'S ANNUAL MEETING

Date: Saturday, May 10th 2014
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Place: Community College of Aurora
16000 E. Centretch Parkway
Aurora, CO 80011
Cost: \$0.00
Please Login and register for this event in the CAPI webpage:
www.coloradointerpreters.org (Do it at as soon as possible so we can get an accurate head count for the food!)

Join us for continuing education presentations and the election of a new board!

JOIN THE CAPI BOARD

Want to make a contribution to the language services profession at a critical time? Would you like to gain invaluable organizational, administrative and leadership experience at the same time you make a nice addition to your resume? Want to add your name to more than 10 years of proud tradition of service in Colorado? Nominate yourself to the CAPI board.

The CAPI board is comprised of professional members who volunteer their time advancing our mission by organizing continuing education events, an annual conference, and some fun activities. The board formulates policy and objectives for CAPI. Members fulfill two year mandates that are staggered to facilitate the gaining of experience and to maintain the continuity. Contact the Chairperson of the elections committee today at leana22@comcast.net

A WITHERING MARKET?

by Francisco Picado

A good and hardworking colleague described some of the difficulties he's faced recently as an interpreter and translator and told me he had already begun to make a shift downgrading the place our career holds in his arsenal of income generating skills, with an eye towards making further adjustments in the future. Hardly anyone would dispute that interpreters and translators face many challenges as we engage the demanding market of today. Colleagues who work in Federal Court in Colorado describe a withered employment landscape and you can find consonant terrain elsewhere in the language services industry. Some institutions and companies are increasing the number of interpreters on staff, but this reduces the amount of work hours available to independent contractors. I bet we all know at least one colleague that has been forced to make significant career changes because of the shifting sands in this market. But despite the instability and uncertainty we might be encountering, the fact remains that there is a market. And I don't share the views of those who think it is dwindling as opposed to changing.

Job outlook

The US government Bureau of Labor Statistics, projects that employment opportunities for interpreters and translators for the period 2012-22 will grow by 46%, "faster than the average of all occupations". The report states: "employment growth will be driven by increasing globalization and by large increases in the number of non-English-speaking people in the United States. *Job prospects should be best for those who have professional certification*" (emphasis of the last sentence added by me).

According to the Center for Immigration Studies, a non-partisan research organization based in D.C., the population of immigrants in Colorado has increased by 34% as of 2010, higher than the 28% growth experienced nationally in the same period. In addition to the 40 million new immigrants in the US as of 2010, the study estimates that another 11 to 15 million immigrants will migrate to the US in the next 10 years. The study also reveals that 1 in 5 of every public student in Colorado speaks a language other than English at home. This reality persists in the face of the historically unparalleled number of immigrants deported by the government since President Obama took office in 2009.

Challenges

While it's optimistically true that the world is much smaller today, the "increasing globalization" stated above is a double-edged sword, as many of us here at home have to compete with colleagues who work for lower rates elsewhere in the world.

Furthermore, in what has been an economically choppy sea of market conditions, where most interpreters and translators see their colleagues as villainous competitors, the big fish in the language services industry pond have successfully managed to lower rates, or at least hold them back. Setting aside the related issues of quality we all know about, the fact is, this "translates" into a challenge for the mom-and-pop agencies and for most among all those of us who are independent contractors. We have all heard the anecdotes about some myopic colleague who did an assignment for what the organ grinder's monkey happily gets.

Another factor we cannot ignore is that Google Translate translates enough text in one day to fill one million books (as announced in

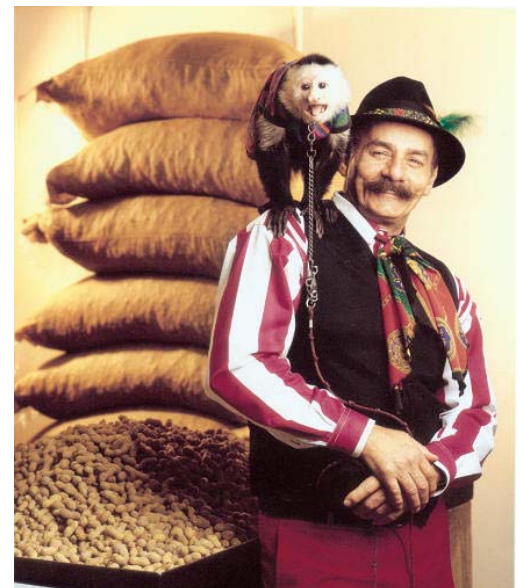


Photo: <http://www.jbec.com/>

(continued on page 7)

WHAT IS THE POINT?

by Cindy Hermosillo

As medical interpreters we may, in most cases, not wear scrubs and a stethoscope while performing our duties. However, we are, in ALL cases, part of the medical team. What does this mean? What does it mean to the patient, the doctor, the nurse, the radiologist, the receptionist and the patient's family?

Medical interpreters become an integral part of the medical team every second of our day. We may be the KEY part of the medical team in most cases!

Picture this: A 14 year old girl presents to a family practice complaining of a very strong, blinding headache which causes nausea and vomiting. The father states all the women in the family have always complained of headaches.

The doctor proceeds to administer medication to relieve the headache and gives a referral to a children's hospital and neurologist. The well intentioned father sees that his daughter is no longer in pain as she was before, goes home and forgets about the other information the doctor has recommended. A few weeks pass and the same situation occurs.



Medical Interpreter on the job

After the 3rd time, the patient is experiencing worse pain and the family practice doctor administers two different medications to relieve the head-ache, however the pain continues. Then the doctor tells the father to take her immediately to the children's hospital emergency room. Upon arrival, the patient is given a third medication and admitted for further evaluation including from social services to evaluate the father's ability to care for the child.

Not just the words

This situation would have been prevented and the child would have perhaps been spared the pain and suffering from a migraine if a professional interpreter had been accessed at the first appointment. Our job is not only to convey the meaning of the spoken words but also the feeling, urgency and importance in another language.

When interpreting, we can be the key to a patient deciding to accept or refuse treatment and on the same account it can be the deciding factor of what testing or medications are ordered and even if a patient needs to be admitted for further observation or outpatient follow-up. It also can be a deciding factor whether a patient follows a treatment plan despite the side effects or not.

So back to our initial question: What's the point?

The point is that we are a part of the medical team, our contribution in each encounter makes a world of difference in the quality of life for the patient and their family as well as all providers involved. Remember, knowledge is power! As medical interpreters we are the key that may empower people to make life changing decisions based on their medical treatment knowledge.

Therefore, keep up the good work colleagues! Let's continue to facilitate high medical treatment standards and thus the best quality and quantity of life possible. Stay tuned for more news via the CAPI website events calendar and future newsletters for educational sessions which will enhance your professional development and knowledge in medical interpreting.

DEMYSTIFYING THE TASKS OF THE CAPI TREASURER

by Ron Olson

As the person who has been your treasurer for the past four years, I'd like to describe this job to our membership. Being treasurer is a rewarding task for a person who enjoys playing with numbers, and who would like a concrete and sometimes routine job to do within CAPI.

We keep our books in the Quickbooks program, and as treasurer, I have learned how to use this program, and have also used Excel and learned a number of webbased functions with regard to our banking operations and our web site.

Not too complicated

The job is not too complicated, but does require the use of certain organizational skills and attention to detail to keep from feeling overwhelmed by it and to be able to enjoy doing it. The amount of work one does as treasurer varies with the amount of activity that CAPI is involved in at any given point during the year.

The basic tasks assigned to CAPI treasurer, are as follows:

1. Account for all money received and spent by CAPI to its board and its membership. This involves keeping records and then giving a report to the board at each board meeting, and to the membership at our annual meeting. The board as a whole decides how and where to earn or spend money, but the treasurer writes the checks and collects the funds. CAPI has a checking account, a savings account, and Paypal accounts for both membership and events.
2. Work on specific events with the board in order to establish prices for activities and then collects and records all payments made. Much of the payment activity is done through Paypal and our website system, so knowing how these work and keeping good records is partially a function of these programs.
3. Account for membership payment and membership list. Our new website does much more of this for us now automatically, so it is no longer necessary to send out emails after each payment has been received. However, the treasurer does need to work in coordination with our webmaster on the details of membership.
4. Be responsible for making sure CAPI maintains its legal organizational status and she/he prepares and submits the necessary reports and any other information required by the Colorado Secretary of State, the Colorado Department of Revenue and the IRS. These things are done primarily on the internet, and we use an independent company to review our books and to do the work with the IRS.

Higher Standard

CAPI has had a number of treasurers during its history. Each one is unique, and brings his or her personal strengths to the position, so the job depends on the person who does it. As treasurer, I have done some things that are not a treasurer's role necessarily, such as keeping the supplies that CAPI owns in my house or running the raffles at our events. What I have noticed, however, during my time on the CAPI board, is that each group of board members (each year at the election this group changes) has a unique dynamic, and that as we work together we are rewarded because we are able to see our profession moving toward a higher standard.



CHALLENGES FACED BY LOTS INTERPRETERS IN COURT

by Yuliya Fedasenko-Cloud

The question of professionalism of interpreters with languages other than Spanish (further called LOTS), who offer their services to the courts, is frequently raised in meetings and interpreter offices. The topic of conversation is, at times, praise, but often it is criticism of the LOTS interpreters.

I would like to examine this situation and bring to light some unique challenges that the LOTS interpreters face to clarify the understanding of the situation.

Experience does matter

A Russian interpreter myself, I fall into the LOTS category. My average month contains a good measure of court interpreting assignments as part of my schedule. While performing my duties as a contract interpreter for the courts, I often work alongside other LOTS interpreters. Another way I meet practicing LOTS interpreters is when I teach. I am including both the experience teaching formal classes for the Community College of Aurora and any private trainings, where I may be listening to the practicing LOTS interpreters.

Just by being present in interpreter offices it is easy to notice the difference in the number of hours of interpreting practiced by the Spanish languages interpreters and by the interpreters in languages other than Spanish. Some LOTS interpreters only have an opportunity to come to interpret in court once a month, or even less. Some interpreters complain about not having a partner to work with, when they are interpreting during a trial. This definitely presents serious challenges.

When an interpreter is initially contracted to do work, it is expected, to some degree, that there will be a period, during which the new interpreter will be learning how to avoid the common interpreter pitfalls and ethical violations. But when the interpreter only works 10-20 hours per month or, for some languages, per year, this period of adjustment becomes very long and doesn't work the way one would expect it to.

Even though some LOTS interpreters have been coming to interpret to the courts for years, their total number of hours of experience may not be impressive at all. But with the passage of time, a



Russian Interpreter Irina Kamensky on the Job

certain level of comfort and confidence develops in both the hiring party and the contractor, which can lead to dangerous presumptions that the interpreter is experienced enough to handle any situation presented. Such presumptions can come both from the hiring manager and the interpreter her/himself, which makes them both prone to making mistakes in judgment.

Colleagues make a difference

The other side of the coin, however, is the inevitable position many LOTS interpreters find themselves in. Namely, having every intention and the ability to work as many hours as possible, but not being able to accrue the hours desired due to low demand for their language. The demand for interpreters in languages other than Spanish is not near as high nor is it constant.

Not having as many (or any) colleagues to work and consult with is another important factor. Spanish interpreters enjoy the luxury of being able to be corrected by a colleague, who understand them, or witnessing an excellent rendition of interpretation they can learn from. For LOTS interpreters in many instances that doesn't happen. They work by themselves and sometimes have no access to quality dictionaries. Educational opportunities for the LOTS interpreters are hard to come by. Language-neutral trainings, designed specifically for the LOTS interpreters, are not offered as frequently as trainings for the Spanish interpreters. As to the

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CHALLENGES FACED...

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language-specific trainings, those are a rare gem. It is not cost-efficient to make a class for just a few interpreters, so class organizers have to find ways to cater to all LOTS interpreters together, even though they may be aware that that doesn't fully satisfy the need. Language neutral classes, of course, by design, can't offer the same level of personalized feedback as language-specific classes.

One of the solutions to this difficult situation is to let the LOTS interpreters have easier access to supervisory staff or a contact person on location. When a LOTS interpreter, who commonly travels throughout various districts in Colorado, comes to a given courtroom, they don't necessarily remember all the details they may need.

Staff and managing interpreters' offices can be in a different building or behind doors that the contract interpreter can't access. It is possible the interpreter has been in this courthouse before, and theoretically should remember where everything is.

But that last visit may have been years ago. Knowing to check in with the right person, which clerk holds onto the interpreting equipment, or where to sit in a visible place in a crowded courtroom, (so the District Attorneys can see them and remember there is an interpreter waiting), can save a lot of time and be a huge help.

Reference material

Another form of support that is already offered by the managing staff is educational printouts, dictionaries offered in other languages, and monolingual reference material. A lot of this material is present in court interpreter offices and available to all interpreters, including LOTS, but experience shows that interpreters often don't know or remember about it, or don't know the rules on using it.

Since interpreters are notorious for being chatty by nature, let's take advantage of this and keep our communication lines open. It will keep the interpreters happy, and our services top notch!

Additionally, for your convenience, I've included here a schedule of orientations and court interpreter certification exams for the year.

SCHEDULE FOR COURT INTERPRETER ORIENTATIONS AND EXAMS FOR 2014

ORIENTATION	WRITTEN EXAM <i>* please see note below</i>	SKILLS BUILDING CLASS	ORAL EXAM***	Registration Information
2014				
February 28, 2014 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Cost: \$200.00** All languages ***CLOSED***	March 28, 2014 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Cost: \$50.00** All languages ***CLOSED***	<i>dates and additional information will be posted when available</i>		
June 13, 2014 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Cost: \$200.00** All languages - Registration deadline: May 23, 2014 Register Here	June 27, 2014 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Cost: \$50.00** All languages - Registration deadline: June 13, 2014 Register Here	<i>dates and additional information will be posted when available</i>	August 22, 2014 exams will be individually scheduled for each candidate in the language in which they wish to obtain certification Cost: \$350.00 (form will be available 6/1/14)	
October 3, 2014 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Cost: \$200.00** All languages	November 14, 2014 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Cost: \$50.00** All languages	<i>dates and additional information will be posted when available</i>		

A WITHERING MARKET...

(Continued from page 2)

2012) and its translations continue to get better as Google improves its Corpus Linguistics and statistical techniques. Advances in all kinds of technologies, but information technologies in particular, might appear to be linear, but they have in fact been exponential with such a degree of historical consistency that they are actually predictable. We have to keep up with the way technology affects our field and I encourage everyone to attend the related presentation at the next CAPI membership meeting (“The Future of Interpreting”).

Yes, these techniques continue to improve, but before you start getting your affairs in order to jump off the tallest building in Las Animas County, the truth is, machine translation is far from resolving a number of fundamental problems despite its undeniably useful place in the coming world.

Professionals needed!

Machine translations and similar technologies are not about to replace humans because language is not just yobibytes of data stored in a massive library or the internet that can be searched by an incomprehensible algorithm for the right answer.

The problem is that language is nuanced, colorful, and ever-evolving; it’s so integral to the human experience that instead of the library analogy, an image of a very slow flowing river is more fitting. Every bucket of water that passes you by, at this moment in time, is a factor in your interpretation or translation. But that factor will not be true tomorrow. It was not true yesterday.

If I communicated with the young people sitting in the very same classrooms I attended in my youth (same language, same culture) using the same slang I used back then, it will take them but seconds to know I’m an old geezer (from their perspective, of course). Technology today cannot account for nor predict these contextual nuances.

This is the reason why many of us are passionate about what we do. There is always a new challenge, a new problem to solve. It’s like listening to a song you love that is slightly new and different every time you hear it. And this never-ending quest of ours to master this beast is at the very heart of what makes us professionals and one of the reasons why we are not about to be replaced—quite the contrary in my opinion.

Super-computer or super-interpreter?

But for the sake of argument, let’s say that Kurzweil’s Technological Singularity is really around the corner and that Star Trek’s Universal Translator is about to hit the market (the one with the sultry voice please). Still, we would not be replaced because they face another more fundamental problem. Such technologies will not be accessible across the board in today’s world. According to Internet World Stats, internet usage has increased tremendously in the world during the last 12 years at an overall rate of over 500%. However, we are talking about a generous calculation of some 34% of the world’s population having access.

I do expect it to continue to grow especially as smartphones get cheaper, but the prediction of the “supercomputer in every garage” flies on the face of the fact that almost half of the world’s population survives on less than \$2.50 (\$2 US dollars and 50 cents) a day. In the US, access to the internet will be declared universal before too long, but according to the US Census and the Economic Policy Institute, the total population living under the poverty line has increased from 11.7% in 1979 to 15% in 2013 despite the presence of several periods of economic expansion during all the business cycles that have occurred in those 30 years (including the current



Photo: www.denverpost.com

(continued on page 8)

A WITHERING MARKET...

(continued from page 7)

one). One of the most pertinent stats in the Center for Immigrant Studies report cited above discloses that 41% of adults in the population of the new arrivals in Colorado lack a high school education. What is more likely to happen, that they will be using one of them supercomputers of the future or that you might be interpreting or translating for some of them one of these days?

CAPI's role

Studying and learning is what we do to be successful in this business. This is where CAPI can make a modest contribution by continuing to make affordable continuing education available. There are so many other ways in which CAPI can make a contribution, too. CAPI has maintained a relationship with the Colorado Judicial Department since it created its Language Access Program. Judicial entered into an agreement with the Department of Justice in 2011 to provide interpretation universally to all those who lack English Language Proficiency in all court proceedings and operations. It was a change of historic importance, really.

Although in recent years, health care facilities and agencies across the United States have made strides in providing appropriate language services, there has been little clarity about what constitutes appropriate training, qualifications, and performance for bilingual health care interpreters. Ground continues to be gained, but health care interpreting across the country is uneven and inconsistent. Many states across the country have decided that only certified interpreters can interpret for medical providers, and in some places it's illegal to use children for interpretation. Shouldn't that also be true in Colorado? Is there anything that CAPI could do to help that process along?

I urge you to participate in our annual meeting on May 10, 2014. So, if you are not a member, consider joining and adding your voice and expertise to the discussion. If you are a member, reflect on what you can contribute and how you can help advance our common interest in the profession as we face this coming period. Perhaps even consider running for office. Electing a new board is an important task as its actions and decisions touch each of our professional lives in some way or another. It is a valuable experience and there are still a couple of posts that have no candidates.



CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER!

German E. Velasco, Court Certified Interpreter and Crosscultural Communications Consultant has recently published a new weapon to his arsenal: *Effective Attorney Work through an Interpreter: Twenty Tips to Work More Effectively in the Courtroom*. If interested, follow this link: http://www.amazon.com/Effective-Attorney-Work-through-Interpreter-ebook/dp/B00EMEM2P6/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1399224106&sr=8-1&keywords=german+velasco

Sean Stromberg, staff Spanish interpreter in boulder informed us that Bradford Publishing recently announced the publication of his *Legal Translation and Court Interpreting Dictionary, English/Spanish, Spanish/English*. If interested, follow this link: <http://www.bradfordpublishing.com/Attorneys/Legal-Translation-and-Court-Interpreting-Dictionary-English-Spanish-Spanish-English>

Ana Stout, Court Certified Interpreter and owner of Transfinem Language Services, who is an Adjunct Instructor at the Colorado Mesa University and President of the Foundation for Cultural Exchange has recently joined a very select group of colleagues in Colorado. Anna is now an ATA certified translator.