

## The Opportunity to Be Heard: Lawsuit Expands Access to Court Interpreters in Texas



By Abby Frank, Esq.

### Texas Civil Rights Project

In April, the Texas Civil Rights Project reached a settlement in a lawsuit against Harris County, Texas (which includes Houston), for not providing an interpreter in its courts to a woman with limited English proficiency (LEP). The plaintiff, Jane Doe(1), had gone to court to seek a protective order, custody of her young daughter, and child support after leaving an abusive relationship. Though she was living in a shelter and could barely afford to support herself and her daughter, Ms. Doe had to pay more than \$1000 to hire interpreters to attend her hearings. Now, the County will provide interpreters to indigent litigants and witnesses in these and other types of civil hearings relating to family matters.

Unfortunately, lack of access to interpreters remains a problem throughout Texas. In fact, courts around the country routinely decline to provide much-needed interpreters in important civil cases. The problem is so pervasive that in August 2010, the U.S. Department of Justice wrote a letter to state supreme courts and court administrators reminding them of their obligation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which prohibits discrimination on the basis of national origin by recipients of federal funding) to provide interpreters to all LEP parties and witnesses.

In denying access to interpreters, courts deny LEP litigants their constitutional rights to due process and access to the courts. The U.S. Supreme Court is clear that a “fundamental requisite of due process is the opportunity to be heard,” an opportunity that “must be granted at a meaningful time and in a meaningful manner.” Though the Supreme Court has never directly addressed the issue of the a right to an interpreter in civil cases, it follows that this essential right to be heard is meaningless without interpreters for LEP litigants who cannot otherwise make their arguments to the court.

In advocating for increased access to interpreters in Harris County, we needed to explain the tremendous value of the work that interpreters do and the skills and training needed to do that work effectively. We were grateful to Rob Cruz and NAJIT for providing an expert report on the role of the judicial interpreter as a neutral officer of the court and the dangers of an unqualified interpreter, or no interpreter at all, in that role.

Interpreters have long advocated for the linguistic rights of LEP persons by correcting the misconceptions of attorneys and judges who don’t understand why a relative or friend can’t interpret for a limited English speaker. Without interpreters, some of the most vulnerable people in society would never have their opportunity to be heard. For LEP survivors of domestic violence like Ms. Doe, court orders provide the safety and stability they need to rebuild their lives; but they cannot obtain these crucial orders without an interpreter to give them the ability to tell their stories in their own words.

As the Texas Civil Rights Project works to increase access to judicial interpreters throughout Texas, we will continue to rely on NAJIT members to let us know where barriers to access exist and help us make the case that there can be no justice for LEP litigants with without high-quality, unbiased interpretation.

(1) Ms. Doe used an alias in court to conceal her whereabouts from her abuser.

## References

Letter from Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General, to Chief Justices/State Court Administrators (Aug. 16, 2010).

*Grannis v. Ordean*, 234 U.S. 385, 394 (1914).

*Armstrong v. Manzo*, 380 U.S. 545, 552 (1965).

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*[Abby Frank is a Staff Attorney at the Texas Civil Rights Project in Austin, TX.]*

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# Landmark Civil Rights Victory: A Shared Moment in History for Interpreters

Diane E. Teichman

This day had all the trappings of every other legal interpreting assignment I'd had for the last 32 years. I felt lucky to find an open spot in my preferred parking garage, one that had a shuttle to the courts complex yet close enough to allow a brisk walk during the few months a year free of the Houston heat. I was dressed appropriately for court in a dark suit so as to blend in. My portfolio was routinely pre-packed with a legal pad, a Kindle loaded with glossaries of legal terms, my Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) court interpreter license, my resume, a copy of the FAQs about the court interpreter regulations and code of ethics, and my simple wireless transmitter and headset. I arrived thirty minutes early to allow for broken-down elevators, long lines at security or unexpected pre-trial client briefings. Like any legal professional, a freelance interpreter learns early on that being prepared and resourceful can prevent the possibility of becoming a victim of circumstances resulting in the loss of earned and potential clients. My daily work routine is second nature up to the point of actually interpreting, when I must delicately maneuver the communications of human nature. After all these years even that still proves predictable. But today was not a routine assignment.

An attorney with the Texas Civil Rights Project (TCRP) had asked me to volunteer my services to interpret at a press conference announcing the settlement of a lawsuit that had resulted in a landmark regulation allowing access to licensed court interpreters in Family Court proceedings by indigent LEP witnesses, plaintiffs and defendants. In *Jane Doe v. Harris County*, lawyers from the TCRP had represented an indigent woman, a survivor of domestic violence, in the suit against Harris County alleging that the county had failed to provide her with the interpreting services she needed to pursue her protective order, child custody and child support hearings in Family Court. The county criminal and juvenile courts here in Houston already employed full-time interpreters for the use of all LEP participants. Nowadays there are interpreters who are employed full time in these courts, but I remember that a only a little over a decade ago we few professional interpreters in Houston had to convince lawyers and judges to permit us to interpret for their LEP clients, and pay us for the our services. Now, in April of 2012, this civil action resulted in a mutually agreed-upon plan for the county to provide licensed interpreters in hearings involving domestic violence, elder abuse, family law and child support cases.

I had met Jane Doe, a proud, bright and determined woman, a few months earlier when I had interpreted in the mediation of this case, and I had a unique perspective on the experiences, events, perceptions and even expressions that were communicated back and forth. Driving home after the mediation, I realized that I, myself, had heard, witnessed and spoken some of the same words over twenty-five years ago as an activist for the same domestic violence legislation that protected Jane Doe today. It felt very ironic that I was witnessing yet another roadblock—a linguistic one—to this hard-won basic right to protection under the law.

After the settlement was announced I realized I would be walking the path of my country's civil rights history twice in my life. Once for my own civil rights as a woman, and now for the civil right this country afforded all people to have access to our judicial system. I felt proud that this right was to be ensured by means of my profession. I remembered interpreting in the century-old courthouses in the small Texas counties where one can still see the separate balconies that were once restricted to blacks and women. History was looping around in a very intricate bow.

At this press conference I would be interpreting about interpreting. I honestly did not know what to expect. I had received the press release only the night before, so it was a matter of sight translating it and predicting terms and concepts that would appear in the question and answer session. I knew that the case and lawsuit would be the focal point, but I hoped there would be a chance for me to educate the media about the interpreting profession. I hoped to be able to show that ours is a regulated profession comprised of trained practitioners required to undertake continuous skill development, not merely individuals who owe their occupation to a happenstance of place of birth or language classes. Given the lack of awareness of the nature of our profession here in Houston, I prayed silently for a somewhat sensible line of questions and responses that would educate the listeners about

the fact that interpreters are bound to obey an oath to render between the source and target languages an endless series of industry-specific, emotional and legal terminology, while conforming to the rules of legal procedure. But I would settle for a statement in which my colleagues and I were not referred to as translators. Either way, I had extra copies of those handy TDLR FAQ sheets on licensed court interpreting if I found an appropriate time to offer them.

The press conference was scheduled to be held outside the building that houses the offices of the Harris County Commissioners, the administrative body of the county courts. Jane Doe was bright-faced and excited. The attorney, Abby Frank, kind, friendly and confident, showed no signs of having driven well over two hours from her office in Austin early that morning. And none of us let the rain dampen our resolve. Only three media representatives showed up: Univision television, the local CBS television affiliate and the local NPR radio station. At that moment I regretted not having translated the press release beforehand to send to the other Spanish media, and I wished I had asked colleagues to translate it into the various languages that represented by the LEP communities of Houston, but there hadn't been time. The reporter from Univision wanted to interview Jane Doe in Spanish. Ms. Frank speaks limited Spanish so I interpreted that interview for her. The other two reporters chose to interview Ms. Frank individually. I interpreted the questions directed to Jane Doe, who had handwritten her feelings on a small piece of paper. She teared up when talking about her daughter who had needed her protection from an abusive father and who, now, along with other LEPs, could count on seamless legal protection in courts. Jane shared that her daughter had called her a hero because of this victory.

The off-camera commentary was very supportive. But despite the term *licensed court interpreter* being used well over ten times in the press release and statements by Ms. Frank, the reporters called us translators when they spoke for themselves. I offered to help pack their equipment and tucked a folded up FAQ sheet in with their camera and tripod.

Again I flashed back to the press conferences of the 1980's when domestic violence was still considered a debated concept. I was a spokesperson for the organization that spearheaded the change of law, and at our press conferences we made sure to have over twenty reporters and a huge crowd of supporters that cheered at each response we gave to their questions. This time there were legal procedures we had to follow and the press conference was at the discretion of the TCRP. I felt that my interpreter colleagues should have been there to share in this moment. Our work is a disciplined task yet based on compassion, and this moment gave credence to the importance of our discipline and role in the judicial system.

Following the press conference, Ms. Frank asked me to sight translate the settlement agreement for Jane Doe, so the three of us ducked into a small deli. Crowded around a tiny table, Jane heard the impact of this settlement that was the product of her determination and the hard work of the lawyers and staff at the TCRP. My last official duty was to provide the Sight Translation Acknowledgement form in both English and Spanish, which was then signed by both me and Jane Doe. My heart warmed when Jane said she wanted to frame that form next to a framed copy of her settlement agreement. The three of us walked to the corner where we would go our separate ways. At one point we had a direct view of the Family Courts Building and Jane Doe stopped and was silent, looking wistfully at the people entering and leaving the courthouse. I could tell that her mind was a flood of memories of the past two-plus years. She took a deep breath and said, "¿Crees que saben?" "*Do you think they know?*" Ms. Frank smiled, and shaking her head, she hinted at the work that implementing this new right would entail.

#### AFTERWORD:

I have since publicized information on the right of indigent LEP witnesses, plaintiffs and defendants in Family Court: "The Harris County LEP Plan for Court Proceedings," through translator and interpreter associations, on my online networking groups, and on Facebook and LinkedIn pages. I also informed the five legal clinics where I volunteer and all of my clients: lawyers, judges and T&I agencies. Not one responded that they had heard about it. I still receive an average of four calls a month from pro bono attorneys asking me to interpret gratis at Family Court, because of a deadline issue or an issue of qualifying as indigent. It is not clear yet, how this process must be followed. So, I say yes and go interpret pro bono because saying no will unravel all of the efforts throughout our history, both Jane Doe's and mine.

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[Diane Teichman is a Master Licensed Court Interpreter in the State of Texas, who has specialized in legal and law enforcement interpreting and translation for 32 years. Her clients and contracts include private firms, the FBI, DEA and Immigration court. A series editor of textbooks on interpreting for Multilingual Matters Publishers, Diane is a member of ATA, NAJIT and HITA. She can be reached at: [www.linguisticworld.com](http://www.linguisticworld.com) .]

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[The following is a link to Highlights of the Harris County LEP Proficiency Plan for Court Proceedings: [http://hitagroup.org/files/Harris\\_County\\_LEP\\_Plan-Highlights.pdf](http://hitagroup.org/files/Harris_County_LEP_Plan-Highlights.pdf)—Ed.]

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## Professional Opinion:

## Provided by Rob Cruz, Chairman, NAJIT, in Doe v. Harris County, TX

The role of the judiciary interpreter in the United States is oftentimes misunderstood. Although many may view the interpreter as an “aide” for the limited English proficient (LEP) individual, the judiciary interpreter is actually a neutral officer of the court. His or her function is to protect the integrity of the criminal justice system by removing language proficiency, or lack thereof, as an impediment to the equal dispensation of justice. The role of the judiciary interpreter is twofold, to wit: to ensure the constitutional rights - be they civil or criminal - of the LEP individual, and to ensure the government’s right and expectation that a lack of proficiency in a language should not exempt an individual from the normal course of justice.

Proper judiciary interpreting involves rendering interpretations exactly, or as close to exactly, as originally spoken without editing, omitting, paraphrasing or summarizing. This concept of “legal equivalence” in judiciary interpreting is one of the aspects that makes the job so exacting and demanding.

Thus, the complexities involved in judiciary interpreting are numerous. In order to provide legally-equivalent renditions, judiciary interpreters must possess unique cognitive skills, in addition to a complete command of language and vocabulary, encompassing all registers or range, both in English and the foreign language. These skills take years to develop, and must continually be refined, as language constantly evolves. Most jurisdictions require certification or licensure for judiciary interpreters to ensure competency and uniform standards of quality. This process involves a tremendous amount of preparation, rigorous training, testing and continuing education requirements.

Judiciary interpreters must also abide by a code of ethics, either the federal code, an individual state’s code or the NAJIT code, depending on the jurisdiction. While codes may vary slightly, they share the same fundamental canons. Among them are “Accuracy and Completeness”, “Impartiality and Avoidance of Conflicts of Interests” and “Confidentiality”. These canons exist to ensure the interpreter’s neutrality. Requiring an LEP individual to directly retain an interpreter for in-court interpretation violates some of these ethical rules, leading to the appearance of impropriety and sub-standard interpreting, as qualified, competent judiciary interpreters are reluctant to promote ethical violations in order to secure work. Furthermore, the self-described interpreter who is ultimately retained or volunteers will obviously not be constrained by ethical codes, to wit: the mere acceptance of the in-court assignment violates portions of the codes. As such, it also gives rise to the possibility that a purposefully partial or biased rendition by the self-described interpreter can affect the outcome of a case in a manner incongruent with the interests of justice, as well as to the detriment of society.

The facts in this case as they pertain to interpreter services indicate a lack of understanding of the role, ethical responsibility and purpose of judiciary interpreters. Irrespective of civil rights and constitutional arguments, denying an LEP individual a qualified court-appointed interpreter, free of charge, is shortsighted and misguided. It presupposes that the interpreter is only there for the LEP individual when in actuality the judiciary interpreter has a dual role to also serve the interest of justice, the court and society as a whole. Prosecutors, defense attorneys and law enforcement officials also depend on competent, unbiased interpretation to fulfill their responsibilities to the Court.

The possibility of undetected, biased interpretation can undermine a just resolution without the Court’s knowledge. Therefore, judicial conduct like that described in this complaint places both the real and perceived integrity of the justice system in jeopardy. From a fiscal standpoint, it also creates actions such as this litigation, the defense of which typically costs the taxpayer far more than the potential interpreter fees in the cases involved. If for no other reasons than these, it is imperative that the expense of interpreter services, in all cases, be acknowledged and budgeted for along with the other essential services that are a result of having a system of justice that is fundamentally fair in a pluralistic society.

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## Long Consecutive: Alive And Well, Or An Anachronism?

Nancy Festinger

In the 1980’s sociolinguists such as Susan Berk-Seligson began to study courtroom discourse. In her groundbreaking study (1990), **The Bilingual Courtroom** (of which a new edition appeared in 2002), Berk-Seligson focused on the Spanish<>English interpretation of witness testimony. Her research showed that when witnesses were permitted to tell their story uninterrupted, they were deemed more credible by juries.

However, in most courtrooms I’ve worked in over three decades, witnesses testifying through interpreters tell their stories piecemeal, only a few short sentences at a time. Most court interpreters—even those with a reliable note-taking system—dread or avoid “long consecutive,” which would render longer narratives. State or federal certification exams may have long consecutive sections that extend to 150 words, but certainly not to multiple paragraphs’ worth of witness testimony at one time. While a court interpreter needs some long consecutive technique to pass a certification exam, long consecutive rarely makes an appearance in actual courtroom proceedings. Surely we are not the only field where theory supports one technique and common practice

another. Indeed, it's precisely because court interpreters rely so much on short-term memory in their day-to-day work that they tend to lose whatever long-term memory skills they once had.

Probably neither judges nor attorneys are familiar with the socio-linguistic literature on courtroom discourse. (Would they care? I wonder.)

When working at the witness stand, an experienced interpreter will pace delivery so as to capture a witness's complete answer, including hedges and hesitations. (Berk-Seligson pointed out that a witness's "discourse markers" tended to be omitted or altered in the interpretation, despite the fact that hedges or hesitations affect a jury's impression of a witness and their credibility determination.) The longer the time lag between testimony and interpretation, the more room for error or overlooked detail, even when taking notes. If a witness prattles on for too long in a foreign language, the interpreter gets nervous and so does the judge. Usually the judge will jump in to order the witness to pause, or to instruct the interpreter to render the answer. Then, too, any part of a witness's answer may be objectionable. Attorneys seek to control testimony by letting it trickle out a bit at a time. Even witnesses on direct who are asked to "tell what happened" are usually interrupted by counsel after a sentence or two.

Witnesses who go on and on without giving an interpreter a chance to interpret are the bane of the court interpreter's existence. Of course, the more incoherent an answer, the harder it is to render accurately. Logical sequence is easy; illogic is harder to reproduce. Many witnesses ramble, and it is devilishly hard to capture all the verbal details of an illogical or non-responsive answer if the tale is uninterrupted for chunking. Even coherent answers, if long, challenge an experienced interpreter to comprehend, recall and render the testimony completely (in the proper register, of course), especially with names, numbers, or other important evidentiary references.

So while I believe a foreign language witness's opportunity to be judged credible should be equal to that of an English-speaking witness, as a practicing interpreter, I am unabashedly in the camp of those who seek to regulate the amount of information a witness can throw at you. Occasionally I have challenged myself to take more detailed notes and let a witness speak for longer without interruption (more often in attorney-client consultations than on the witness stand), but even then, the longest I have gone could not really be called "long consecutive." Most of us rely to a fault on our short-term memory and call it a day. Of course, predictability has a lot to do with this. If a witness at trial is testifying and I have no idea what in the world he might say, the stakes are high. If I have spent hours (or days) prepping a witness and have heard the same story many times, I can swallow bigger portions of information without fear of failure or distortion.

Stories are legendary about U.N. interpreters who in the old days before the widespread use of simultaneous equipment would do extremely long consecutive, rendering half-hour speeches back in perfect order for the audience. (Like the story of one interpreter who did a flawless reproduction of a twenty-minute political speech. His admiring colleague asked to see his notepad: the paper had a single mark on it.) But there is no need for such memory feats these days; simultaneous rules the planet in international venues. I thought this miraculously long consecutive was an anachronism from another era.

Last fall, while in Paris, I had the opportunity to visit l' ESIT, the Sorbonne's École Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs (ESIT) ([www.univ-paris3.fr/esit/](http://www.univ-paris3.fr/esit/)), having been invited to observe an interpreting class taught by Clare Donovan, currently chief interpreter at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) ([www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)). At ESIT, the two-year conference interpreter school in Paris, long consecutive is alive and well. The fall semester had just begun, and the class was composed of some twenty second-year students of different language combinations. They had spent their first year learning note-taking and practicing long consecutive, among other things; in the second year they were to tackle simultaneous.

We met in an old conference room that had been used in the past for NATO meetings, now named after Danica Seleskovich, De Gaulle's interpreter, pioneering teacher of conference interpreting and former director of ESIT. [photo: [http://www.prix-danica-seleskovitch.org/keiser\\_photo\\_03.html](http://www.prix-danica-seleskovitch.org/keiser_photo_03.html)]. [For a recent biography (in French), see: [aiic.net/ViewPage.cfm/page2655.htm](http://aiic.net/ViewPage.cfm/page2655.htm)]

The students began by introducing themselves. They were from all over the European Union, 75% female, 25% male, representing 10 or 12 languages in total (in addition to French). Most had work histories in other fields, including law, travel, business, banking, advertising, etc. My visit was used as an interpreting exercise: I was asked to speak extemporaneously for five or ten minutes about the field of court interpreting in the United States. At New York speed, I complied, recounting my career history, the story of federal and state court interpreter certification exams, the need for court interpreters in the U.S., and other topics. In ten minutes one can say quite a lot. It was an informal talk, so I free-associated, threw in many colloquialisms, tried to crack a joke or two.

The students assiduously took notes during my talk and then, to my utter amazement, when called upon randomly, took turns reading from their notes and interpreting into perfect French everything I had said, including my parenthetical remarks, all given back in the exact order in which I had said it. My jocular and overall tone were well reproduced. We went through this exercise two or three times with new content and new students. Inevitably, a few mistakes crept in. For example, I made a reference to a translation error I had once spied in the Spanish translation of *Slaughterhouse Five*—a Milky Way bar had been translated as The Milky Way Tavern—and one student credited me for translating the whole book into Spanish. Logically this was not possible, as

previously I had told them I translate literature into English only. However, their overall accuracy was very high. No court interpreter I know could have done as well with that amount of material.

Perhaps therein lies the difference in technique and training between court and conference interpreting. But the fact remains—with a nod to Jacques Brel—long consecutive is alive and well and living in Paris.

When I discussed this issue with Clare Donovan, she said, “It seems to me that ‘long’ consecutive can be taught in a relatively short time and it could be useful in court interpreting, giving witnesses and other parties the opportunity to develop a structured line of reasoning. I understand that there are numerous reasons why long consecutive is not used in court and police interpreting, but if aspiring interpreters were to be taught these skills, they could then use them where appropriate, improving service and also gaining more visibility and prestige for the profession.”

#### References

Berk-Seligson, Susan, *The Bilingual Courtroom*, The University of Chicago Press, 2002

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*[Nancy Festinger recently retired from her post as chief interpreter at the US District Court for the Southern District of NY. Formerly she was editor of Proteus.]*

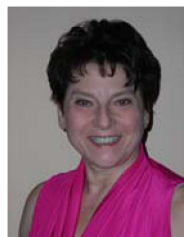
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## NAJIT NEWS

### Meet the Directors



**Rob Cruz**, Chairman of NAJIT's board, is a practicing certified interpreter in Tennessee, and an active member of various federal and state committees on LEP and interpreter policy. Rob was born in Cuba and came to Miami at the age of two. He was raised in Little Havana by loving parents whom he adores. While pursuing a career in sales and public speaking and traveling extensively throughout the United States, he fell in love with Tennessee and its people and has made the foothills of the Smoky Mountains his home for the past twelve years. He has served on the board of directors of various arts, civic and business organizations prior to his tenure as a NAJIT Director. He loves his family, his German Shepherds Spenser and Kojak, and is a diehard fan of all of south Florida's sports teams.



**Rosemary W. Dann, Esq.** is a Massachusetts certified court interpreter and a recent "immigrant" to Florida. Having previously served as Secretary and Chair of the Board and having chaired or been a member of numerous committees and commissions, she is currently editor of "Proteus". Before becoming a judiciary interpreter, she taught Spanish at the high school and college levels and practiced law for thirteen years. When not involved in interpreting or NAJIT business, she performs in community and professional theatre, and is preparing to offer bilingual tours for visitors to St. Augustine.



**Kathleen Shelly**, currently secretary of the NAJIT Board of Directors, is a Delaware translator and interpreter certified by the Consortium for Language Access in the Courts. She has a master's degree plus doctoral work in Latin American literature from the Ohio State University, and was a college professor for 12 years. A member of NAJIT since 2005, she welcomes the chance to contribute to an organization that does so much to promote the interpreting profession. She is also a member of ATA and the Delaware Valley Translators Association. A trained mezzo-soprano, she participates in various choral groups. Her three founding cats like to sing along during practice sessions.



**Bethany Korp-Edwards** is a staff interpreter with the US District Court, New Mexico, having previously worked as a staff interpreter in the New Jersey Superior Court. She has also taught and trained interpreters for Rutgers University in New Jersey, the National Center for Interpretation, and the New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts. She recently served as President of the New Mexico Translators and Interpreters Association. She holds a BA in Spanish (William & Mary) and an MA in Spanish Translation (Rutgers).



**María Cristina de la Vega** is a Cuban-American Spanish interpreter certified federally, by the State of Florida and by NAJIT. She is also a conference interpreter and member of AIIC. She holds an MBA and is the owner of an agency in Miami. She loves music and enjoys singing and playing Latin boleros on the guitar. She chairs the Public Relations Committee and has her own blog, which you can follow at <http://mariacristinadelavegamusings.wordpress.com>.



**Robin Lanier** serves as NAJIT's Executive Director. She has four decades of experience in trade association management and has served as Executive Director since 2008.

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## Message from the Chair





Dear Colleagues,

I hope that this message finds you well. I am grateful to have been reelected to the Board of Directors and honored that my fellow directors saw fit to select me as the Chairman for this term. I welcome the privilege of serving for the upcoming year. The time since our conference has been both busy and rewarding. It was wonderful to have an opportunity to interact with so many of you in Cambridge. By most accounts, the 2012 conference was a resounding success. A sincere thank you is in order to Rosemary Dann and Doina Francu our Conference committee Co-Chairs and to our administrative staff, Robin Lanier and Zalina Kotaeva. The entire Board of Directors joins me in thanking them and all of you who were in attendance.

I hope you found the conference enriching. We were so fortunate to have Dr. Roda Roberts as our keynote speaker. She spoke of the paradigm of interpreters helping to improve access with their services yet oftentimes failing to receive the necessary access to allow them to do that with which they are tasked. **It was a very insightful and timely speech**



I would like to once again thank our outgoing Treasurer and retiring director, Dr. Peter Lindquist for his years of service and dedication. **The Board of Directors presented him with a token of our gratitude during the annual meeting.** I also would like to welcome our newest member to the Board of Directors, Bethany Korps-Edwards and congratulate our Secretary Kathleen Shelly on her reelection. I look forward to serving with such wonderful ambassadors for the profession.

At the annual meeting I also spoke about some of NAJIT's activities, projects and accomplishments in the year since our conference in Long Beach in 2011. **I was proud to present that report.**

The interval since our conference in May 2011 confirms that we are living in exciting times for our professions of interpreting and translation. NAJIT continues to be a part of a collaborative effort that includes the leaders of the International Association of Conference Interpreters, the American Translators Association, the International Medical Interpreters Association, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, and The American Association of Language Specialists. We hope that other organizations of national scope and similar interests will join us as we continue to move toward more collaboration and coalesce around issues of commonality. This newfound resolve to work together across national organizations and disciplines will undoubtedly yield benefits to all of our respective members. I am happy to be a part of this effort as I feel strongly that in areas of shared interests and the common goals of advancement and professionalization, a unified national voice will carry substantial weight. I spoke



briefly about this at the Interpret America summit in Monterey, California in mid-June and was met with enthusiasm from those



in attendance.

NAJIT has also begun to participate on an existing project to create a standard of practice model that can be accredited through the American Society of Testing and Materials, International. This committee, which is comprised of interpreters, users of interpreter services and language companies, aims to create national standards both for interpreters and for language companies. Much work lies ahead, but this project presents an incredible opportunity to possibly credential or accredit interpreters who work in areas where no accreditation or certification yet exist. It also aims to accredit language companies in such a way as to combat the type of unfair practices that we are all too familiar with. It is indeed an exciting and pivotal time for the interpreting and translation professions in North America. I hope to continue to bring you reports of progress as we work on the broad strokes and the finer details of our professions' landscape. I am honored every single day to Chair this organization. I hope you enjoy the audio files from the Cambridge conference.

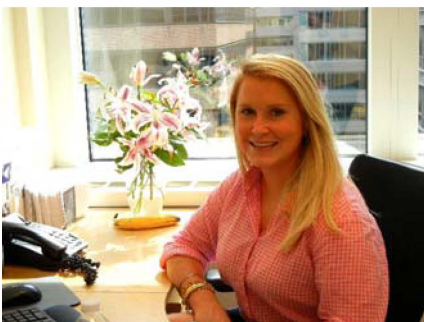
Sincerely,

**Rob Cruz**

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## Welcome to the New Administrator

We are pleased to introduce our new administrator, Carrington Blake, who has taken the reins from Zalina Kotaeva. Zalina will be beginning a masters degree program at New York University. We wish her all the best in her new endeavors.



Carrington grew up Alexandria, VA and has lived in Old Town her entire life. In 2009, she graduated from Randolph-Macon College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History. When she isn't working at NAJIT, she enjoys doing yoga and riding her bike along the Mt Vernon bike trail.

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## Items of Interest

## AIIC Tweets about NAJIT Blog

The NAJIT blog is getting international coverage, thanks to a recent tweet by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC).

There are currently over 60 entries on topics covering ASL, community, conference and court and medical interpreting, , ethics, and other topics of interest to interpreters. If you haven't yet gone to the blog, or haven't been there recently, don't miss out on the writings of our talented bloggers.

<http://najit.org/blog/>

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### Links

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Street terms (in English) for drugs and the drug trade.

<http://www.expomed.com/drugtest/files/drugterms.pdf>

Good for practice in English and Spanish from the Low Country area of GA and SC

[www.lavozlatinaonline.com](http://www.lavozlatinaonline.com)

Pan American Health Organization- English and Spanish - good vocabulary source

[http://new.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=3181&Itemid=259&lang=en](http://new.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3181&Itemid=259&lang=en)

"Dígallo bien" is an interactive site on the Univisión website.

<http://univisionnuevayork.univision.com/noticias/estadosunidos/article/2010-03-10/digalo-bien-consejos-del-idioma>

Online slang dictionary of American, English and Urban slang

<http://onlineslangdictionary.com>

Guide to English grammar and writing

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Arabic-language news channel from Sky

<http://t.co/RbfsIQK4>

Arawak language learning book in the works

<http://www.stabroeknews.com/2012/news/stories/07/15/guiana-arawaks-seek-to-revive-their-language/>

Advantages of bilingualism

<http://bigthink.com/ideas/why-speaking-two-languages-improves-self-control>

Furnishing your home office

<http://freelanceswitch.com/freelancing-essentials/5-ideas-for-choosing-your-home-office-equipment-setup/>

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## Regular Departments

### Media

Bear on Patrol with Gonzo the Police Interpreter (Muppets)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9oJR2egKEs&feature=related>

Tips from Memory Champion

[http://xfinitytv.comcast.net/tv/National-Geographic-Specials/104258/2150688277/Memory-Champion/videos?cmpid=FCST\\_hero\\_tv](http://xfinitytv.comcast.net/tv/National-Geographic-Specials/104258/2150688277/Memory-Champion/videos?cmpid=FCST_hero_tv)

David Crystal on the English language in 100 words | Minnesota Public Radio News:

<http://t.co/rrtMYeAh>

## Noteable Quoteables

"Context is the invisible environment, the interrelated conditions, the structure of interpretation ... like water to a fish. The fish doesn't see the water, isn't necessarily aware of the water, doesn't think about the water. And yet, everything in a fish's world is consistent with and generated from the fact the fish exists in water. Similarly, every word you speak, and every action you take, is naturally consistent with and indicative of your context."

--John Hanley

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered;  
forgive them anyway.  
If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;  
be kind anyway.  
If you are successful, you will win some false friends  
and some true enemies;  
succeed anyway.  
If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;  
be honest and frank anyway.  
What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;  
build anyway.  
If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;  
be happy anyway.  
The good you do today, people will forget tomorrow;  
do good anyway.  
Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;  
give the world the best you have anyway.  
You see in the final analysis, it is between you and God;  
it never was between you and them anyway.

-- Mother Teresa

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## The Last Laugh

### THE SPELL CHECK

Eye halve a spelling chequer  
It came with my pea sea  
It plainly marques four my revue  
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.  
Eye strike a key and type a word  
And weight four it two say  
Weather eye am wrong oar write  
It shows me strait a weigh.  
As soon as a mist ache is maid  
It nose bee fore two long  
And eye can put the error rite  
Its rare lea ever wrong.  
Eye have run this poem threw it  
I am shore your pleased two no

I am sure you pleased the no

Its letter perfect awl the weigh

My chequer tolled me sew.

--Original author unknown (courtesy of Catalina Bajpai)

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