



# PROTEUS

*The Newsletter of  
The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators*

*Vol. V, No. 4*

*Fall 1996*

*New York, NY*

## Message from the Board

### NAJIT LAUNCHES MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

NAJIT's 1997 Membership Drive is under way. We are offering special incentives to new members as well as renewals. Any NAJIT member who recruits a new member by March 31, 1997, will be rewarded with an attractive NAJIT T-shirt, while supplies last. Have the new member write "referred by [your name]" on the application form. New members will also receive copies of PROTEUS Vol. V Nos. 3 and 4 with our compliments, supplies permitting. New members who also want a T-shirt have only to join NAJIT, then recruit someone else. The sweetest incentive is that the NAJIT member who recruits the most new members will have the registration fee waived for next year's conference in Seattle.

Nearly all of NAJIT's financial support comes from membership dues. The only way we can do more for the membership without raising dues is to grow. Most NAJIT members probably know someone who ought to join but has not yet done so. I urge every NAJIT member to make an effort to persuade at least one or two such people to join NAJIT in the coming months.

#### **Conference 1997**

As 1996 comes to a close, the program for NAJIT's 1997 Meeting and Educational Conference is coming together. We recently signed a very favorable contract with the Embassy Suites Hotel, located just outside of Seattle, which offers ideal sleeping and meeting rooms at quite reasonable prices. Interactive, pre-conference workshops are being planned for the afternoon of Thursday, May 15 and all day Friday 16. These will be optional, and priced separately. The conference proper, consisting of a series of shorter presentations, will be held on Saturday 17 and Sunday 18. Most of the proposals submitted are for language-neutral presentations, so there will be plenty for interpreters across the entire

language spectrum. As the planning continues we will keep you posted via Proteus and the NAJIT Web site.

#### **CIASG Meeting**

Since May 1995, I've had the honor of representing NAJIT on the Court Interpreters Advisory Subgroup, a committee that advises the Clerks' Advisory Group and the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts on matters concerning interpreting in

the U.S. District Courts. The group consists of two Clerks, one Chief Deputy Clerk, two staff interpreters, and your servant. Our primary achievement has been the revision of two policy documents that have been in draft form for several years: Chapter XII, "Federal Court Interpreter Policies and Procedures," to be added to the *Guide to Judiciary Policies and Procedures*, and *The Federal Court Interpreters Orientation Manual*. As reported in the previous *Proteus* [L. Pelegrin, "Miami Dialogue Continues," Vol V, No. 3], these documents will be reviewed by the Clerks Advisory group and ultimately submitted to the Judicial Conference. Although AO policies directly affect only interpreters who work in the federal courts, the demonstration effect may well make these developments worth watching for interpreters in the state courts as well.

In the drafting process, some issues were controversial (e.g., when an uncertified interpreter may be used, and policy regarding the use of multiple interpreters). When the interests of saving money competed with those of the quality of court interpreting services (hence, the interests of justice), it was a struggle. A frequently heard theme at the Subgroup meetings was that you cannot tell judges how to run their courtrooms, where they reign supreme. I nonetheless argued for language that upheld the principles that NAJIT stands for. It will

*(continued on page 2)*

**The NAJIT member who recruits  
the most new members will have  
the registration fee waived for  
next year's conference in Seattle.**

## Nominations Committee Report: Three Candidates for NAJIT Board

Two of the five members of the NAJIT Board of Directors are up for re-election this year: David Mintz and Laura Murphy. During the first week in October, the 508 members in good standing received the 1997 Call for Nominations. By the due date of Friday, October 25, ten recommendations were received. Four of them were for Laura Murphy, a member of the Nominating Committee who chose to not seek reelection; one was eliminated because she is not a member of NAJIT; and two declined nomination. The remaining three recommendations, having been qualified by the Nominating Committee, are being submitted to the membership. The nominees are Daok L. Lee, David Mintz, and Dagoberto Orrantia.

We hope that in the future the membership will take a more active role in the nomination process so that NAJIT can achieve its goal of geographical and linguistic diversity on the Board.

Joaquín Chan-Sánchez  
Dena Millman  
Laura Murphy

## Message

(continued from page 1)

be interesting to see how these documents turn out after they have gone through the reviewing process and are released by the AO. I am grateful for all the helpful consultations and support I received in preparation from NAJIT members and other interested parties, primarily over courtinterp-l, NAJIT's electronic mailing list.

### The Internet

Which brings us to the next topic: the aforementioned e-mail list, specifically devoted to court interpreting and legal translation, has become an extremely valuable and effective means of communication among court interpreters around the U.S. and elsewhere. It is also a resource for jobs: there have recently been help wanted postings for translators and interpreters of several

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

July 1 to September 30, 1996

Monica A. Ambrosi, Edmond, OK  
Robert B. Anderson, Kennewick, WA  
Laura Avila, Bayside, NY  
Jacqueline C. Baertschi, New York, NY  
Cynthia Joan Berry, Lawrence, MA  
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Gloria J. Sera-Mulet, Los Angeles, CA  
Lorena I. Sevilla S., Middleburg, VA  
Benilda Taft-Kiewek, San Francisco, CA  
InHyang Kim Waters, New York, NY  
Gabrielle K. Winter, Palm Beach Gardens, FL  
Nelly Wolf, St. Joseph, MI

languages. Sign language interpreters are actively involved in the discussion, as are interpreter trainers worldwide. Interpreters caught in troubling predicaments have asked for help and gotten it promptly. Resources of all kinds—books, videotapes, courses, publications—are announced in this forum. Every NAJIT member who has not done so already should make it a New Years' resolution to get plugged in, and then see <<http://www.najit.org/listserv.html>> for further information. Courtinterp-l is but one of many good reasons to get an Internet account. The Net is by no means a panacea, but it is a necessary and important tool.

David Mintz  
Chair, Board of Directors

# Dominican Argot

By the Terminology Working Group

Oral translation of colloquial language, a difficult task even for someone who is interpreting for a compatriot, is made more difficult by the presence of regionalisms, idioms, anglicisms and underworld slang. In interpreting for Dominican speakers in the courts, we have come across a number of words and expressions which cannot be found in dictionaries, or are found in glossaries of difficult access. The following list of terms and phrases heard recently among Dominican speakers in New York City was compiled by Dena Millman and Dagoberto Orrantia. Marcia Parron, who is herself Dominican, reviewed it for accuracy. This is the second list dealing with Dominican Spanish published in *Proteus*; the first one can be found in Vol. 2, No. 3, (Fall, 1993). Both are part of continuing projects of the Terminology Working Group to document contemporary speech of interest to the court interpreter.

**a la lata** mucho: *Me ha llamado a la lata*, He's been calling me all the time.

**abusador** exagerado: *No vamos a ser abusadores*, Let's not overdo it.

**agallú** [<agalludo] ambicioso, hambriento: *Ese hombre es agallú*, That man is greedy.

**ajorao** con prisa: *Estoy ajorao; no te puedo atender*, I'm in a rush; I can't take care of you.

**amarrar** poner preso: *A Ramón y Miguel los amarraron*, They locked up Ramón and Miguel.

**andén** caminando: *Todo el día con su andén por el mall*, They walk around the mall all day.

**aparato** kilo: *Un aparato de manteca*, A kilo of heroin.

**azulejos** la policía

**bi** [<brother] hermano: *Me haces quedar mal con la gente a mí, bi*, You're making me look bad with the people, B.

**balsa** o **barsa** una balsa de mentiras, a bunch of lies.

**bejucos** o **bojucos** líneas telefónicas: *Hablamos allá mejor, porque usted sabe cómo son estos bojucos*, We'd better talk there, because you know how these phones are.

**bomba** muy bueno: *Eso sí que está bomba*, That's really great.

**bosú** [<bozudo] bigotudo

**bravos** policía (federal): *Los bravos se le tiraron en el apartamento*, The feds moved in on his apartment.

**brega** dificultades: *La brega esa que me hicieron*, That job they did on me.

**bunchar** engañar: *Cualquiera no me buncha a mí*, Not anybody can trick me.

**caballá** tontería, nimiedad: *preguntas en inglés como 'Today is nice' y así caballás*, Questions in English like 'Today is nice' and dumb things like that.

**caballaíta** cantidad pequeña: *El hombre apareció con una caballaíta*, The man showed up with a tiny little bit.

**caballo** amigo, camarada: *Ayúdeme, caballo*, Help me out, man.

**caché** fino, elegante: *Ese reloj es caché*, That's a fancy watch.

**cachú** cosa fácil: *Eso es un cachú en la 74; el alto está así*, It's real easy on 74th; that's the way it is uptown.

**cadenu** que usa cadenas como adorno: *los cadenuses*, the guys with the big chains.

**camellar** trabajar: *El resto lo camellamos*, We'll work off the rest.

**can** fiesta: *tener un can*, to throw a party

**cantazo** pase: *el chamaquito se dio un par de cantazos*, the kid took a couple of hits.

**carne de puerco** tipo despreciable; individuo de raza negra: *Un carne de puerco estaba allí*, A low-life was there.

**casimente** casi, en efecto, de hecho: *Yo casimente no lo uso*, I hardly use it.

**chanchán** ahora, ya: *Me lo das chanchán*, Give it to me now.

**chapiada** cortada, diluida: *No es vaina chapiá como tienen estos por aquí*, This stuff's not cut like they've got around here.

**chapiar** cortar

**charlatán** informal, que no cumple: *El tiguere es un charlatán, ni me llamó pa atrás*. The guy's a bullshitter, he didn't even call me back.

**chequiarse** verse: *nos chequiamos pues*, I'll see you later then.

**cheles, chelitos** dinero: *Yo lo que quiero es que me den mis cheles*, What I want is for them to give me my money.

**chepa** azar, casualidad: *De chepa lo mato*, I almost killed him.

**chichí** niño pequeño

**chilata** pequeña cantidad de dinero

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**chimbilín** niño pequeño

**chin** porción ínfima: *¿Tienes un chin de esa vaina? Do you have a little bit of that stuff? Ponme a Tony un chin,* Put Tony on for a bit. **chinchín** poco a poco; porción ínfima. *Me lo das chinchín,* Give it to me little by little.

**chinchilín** niño; porción ínfima

**chiva** mala, difícil: *Ahora es que está chiva la cosa,* Now the thing is bad.

**clavar** esconder: *¿Tú tienes adónde clavar eso? Do you have someplace to stash that?*

**clavo** escondite; botín; compartimiento secreto: *Yo tenía un carrito ahí con clavo,* I had a car with a trap.

**colombique** colombiano

**corbejú** peludo

**corozo** palma, semilla: *Ahora estamos llegando al meollo del corozo,* Now we're getting to the bottom of things. *Es más duro que el corozo,* He's harder than a rock.

**crucetear** pasar repetidamente por el mismo lugar

**cuartos** dinero

**cuivero** [<curvero, que tira curvas]: *Eso está duro y cuivero,* That's tricky and hard.

**de pinga** excelente

**diamante** diez: *Tráigase un diamante allí,* Bring a ten there.

**doctor** drogadicto: *El doctor dijo que no sirve,* The doctor said that it's no good.

**echar agua** bautizar

**El Alto** upper Manhattan; Washington Heights

**enllave** enchufe, palanca: *Si no tiene el enllave en la aduana, paga más,* If you don't have a fix in with customs, you'll pay more.

**está todo** [tá-tó] adiós, en el teléfono.

**estar de vacaciones** estar en la cárcel

**estudiao** instruido: *Un hombre estudiao como el Vaquero,* An educated man like El Vaquero.

**firmar con los azulejos** caer preso: *Está de vacaciones; firmó con los azulejos,* He's on vacation, he signed on with the cops.

**friquiarse** *Ella se friquió,* She freaked out.

**fucú** maleficio, fatalidad

**funda** bolsa de papel

**gramear** o **gramiar** vender droga por gramos

**grasa** heroína: *Le pega a la grasa uno de ellos allí,* One of them hits on the grease there.

**guangá** brujería

**guillo** brazalete

**güira** güiro

**hacer** [<to make] ganar

**heavy** 1. bien: *Pues está heavy entonces,* So it's heavy then. 2. bueno: *Está heavy, está mortal,* It's heavy; it'll knock you out.

**jabao** mulato de ojos, piel y pelo de color claro: *El jabao, el de arriba, le dio siete,* The jabao, the one from up there, gave him seven.

**jarineado** o **jariniado** acatarrado

**jarinar** lloviznar

**jarto** harto: *Ya yo estoy jarto de muela,* I'm sick and tired of this bullshit.

**jeepeta** o **yipeta** jeep: *Una jeepeta Grand Cherokee,* A jeep Grand Cherokee.

**jodedera** necedad; el narcotráfico

**llante** lloriqueo, cuento. *No vengas con ese llante,* Don't give me that story.

**llantear** lloriquear

**llantén** lloriqueo

**llave de chocolate** cadena perpetua: *Le van a echar una llave de chocolate,* They're going to lock you up and throw away the key.

**loco** vocativo: *¿Qué pasa, loco?* What's up, man?

**loco** veintiocho gramos [porque hay 28 kms. de distancia entre Santo Domingo y cierto manicomio]

**lucas** mil dólares: *Hacer par de lucas aunque sea,* To make a couple of thou at least.

**machete** corte, diluyente. *El machete lo dañó,* The cut ruined it.

**macuto** mochila de campesino

**macuto** soborno: *Gastos de macuto,* Pay-off money.

**macuteo** 1. sablazo. 2. soborno: *Hay macuteo allí,* They're paying people off there.

**mamañema** tipejo: *Es un mamañema,* He's a cock-sucker.

**mamarse un huevo** perder el tiempo

**manteca** heroína: *Un aparato de manteca,* A kilo of heroin.

**mascota** cuaderno

**mata y cuarta** [game of marbles: very close to the target] *Ya estamos en el mata y cuarta,* We're about ready to pounce.

**mayimbe** apodo del cantante Fernandito Villalona

**meter paquetes** mentir; inventar historias

**miéquina** o **miérquina** exclamación

**Mingo** Santo Domingo: *El está pa Mingo,* He's in Santo Domingo.

**mortal** excelente  
**mosquito** tractor  
**muela** necesidades: *No me vengas con muela*, Don't give me that bull.

**palomo** tonto; marica: *Peleamos porque me llamó palomo*, We fought because he called me a faggot.

**palela** marica

**paniquiarse** asustarse: *El amigo mío hasta se paniquió, mano*, My friend panicked, man.

**paquetear** meter en paquetes: *Freddy va a paquetearlo*, Freddy is going to package it up.

**pariguayo** zoquete: *Mira ese pariguayo*, Look at that dummy.

**pasola** motocicleta

**pesao** tipo importante: *Si yo fuera un pesao...* If I were a big shot...

**picada** negocio: *Ahí dizque la picada es buena*, They say business is good there.

**picar** 1. moler: *El negocio mío es picar*, My business is grinding it up. 2. pedir prestado

**pingú** excelente: *Esa vaina allá es pingú*, That stuff is fucking great.

**piña** granada de mano

**poderes** hechizos: *Dígale a la bruja que empiece con los poderes*, Tell the witch to start casting her spells.

**polvorete** polvo

**pólvoro** bueno: *¿Cómo está eso? Esta pólvoro*, How's that stuff? It's great.

**pulgón** vividor, aprovechado

**quita** libre del vicio: *El patrón está quita*, The boss got [is] off the stuff.

**recibo** dinero: *¿Tú tienes el recibo entero?* Do you have the entire receipt?

**reguero** montón: *Un reguero de vainitas*, A whole bunch of stuff.

**reventear** revender

**romo** ron

**romper corozos** resolver un problema difícil

**saco** montón: *Un saco de veces te llamé*, I called you a bunch of times.

**samplear** dar una muestra: *Pero que te samplee, hermano*, But let him give you a sample, brother.

**segurete** seguro: *Si es segurete, pues lo hacemos*, If it's definite, then let's do it.

**sentarse** declarar en un juicio: *¿El va a sentarse?* Is he going to testify?

**setear** [<set up] 1. escoger como víctima: *A ese muchacho lo tienen seteado*, They set that guy up. 2.

prepararse: *Cuidado que ese hombre no esté seteando pa llevarse los cuartos*, Make sure that guy isn't getting ready to go off with the money.

**tape** tapadera: *Ese negocio es un tape*, That business is a cover.

**tarea** medida superficial equivalente a 636 m<sup>2</sup> o a 0,15 acres: *Una finca que mide cien tareas*, A farm that measures 100 tareas (15 acres).

**tarea** cuerda: brincar tarea

**tener un can** celebrar una fiesta

**tíguera** mujer, tipa: *Tengo que darle esa vaina a esa tiguera*, I have to give that stuff to that broad.

**tiguere** sujeto, tipo: tough guy, street-wise guy

**tiguerecito** tipejo: *Anda con un tiguerecito allí*, He's going around with some punk there.

**timacle** tipo importante: *¿Qué dice ese timacle?* What does that hot shot have to say?

**tirar**--1. comer: *Me voy a tirar un sancochito ahora*, I'm going to have some stew now. 2. llamar por mensáfono: *Yo te tiro*, I'll beep you. 3. vender: *El quería que yo lo tirara*, He wanted me to sell it.

**trosito** [< little truck]: *Se iban a juntar en el trosito allí*, They were to meet near the little truck.

**tumbao** modo de ser o actuar: *Cambia ese tumbao*, Change your tune.

**tumbe** robo: *O es un policía o es un tumble*, It's either the cops or it's a rip-off.

**tutumpote** personaje importante, rico o poderoso

**trúcamelo** el juego de la rayuela

**uña** conjuntivitis: *Tengo una uña en el ojo*, I have conjunctivitis in my eye.

**vaina** stuff, thing, shit

**velorio** *La bruja ofreció un velorio a los santos*, The witch lit some candles for the saints. ■

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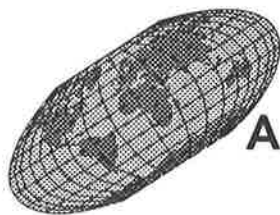
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## Charlotte's Corner

# A Visit to the New York Public Library

Alexander Rainof



These last few weeks Charlotte has spun her web with the purest of silks, having become, for the sake of the NAJIT membership, a bookworm at the New York Public Library (<http://www.nypl.org/>). Her temporary home proved to be truly magnificent; as it enters its second century of service, the NYPL has created one of the most useful and extensive sites on the Internet. The location is so comprehensive and varied that nothing short of a modern Ariadne is needed to guide the judicial interpreter and translator through this superb Internet labyrinth of interconnected links. Charlotte has bravely assumed the mantle of her sister, replacing the famous gold thread of yore with some cybernetic silk of her own.

In fact, in this issue of *Proteus* Charlotte will discuss in some detail only one site out of the numerous URLs that can be accessed from the New York Public Library Home Page: The Internet Law Library of the U.S. House of Representatives. Select from the NYPL Home Page, under The Research Libraries, the link to the "Science, Industry and Business Library" (SIBL). This will connect you to eight new links under the heading Sources of Information in Science, Industry and Business (<http://www.nypl.org/research/sibl/index.html>), all of them rich in information: 1) "How to Find U.S. Company Information," 2) "Worldwide Business Directories at SIBL," 3) "International Trade Home Page," 4) "International Statistical Yearbooks at SIBL," 5) "Patents and Trademarks at the New York Public Library," 6) "New York State and Federal Legal Materials on the Internet," 7) "Selected Internet Sites in Science, Business and Government," and 8) "List of Electronic Resources at SIBL." Choose number six, "New York State and Federal Legal Materials on the Internet," which will, in turn, open a menu of six sites: "State Legal Materials," "New York City," "United States Federal Law," "Special Topic: Taxation," "Foreign and International Law Sites," and "Other Legal Web Sites."

"State Legal Materials" connects to the New York State Court of Appeals Decisions and to bulletins which offer extensive notes and commentary on significant recent New York Court of Appeals decisions by Cornell law students, as well as to the New York State Senate (which includes bills and resolutions, the New York State Constitution, the 1996 Session laws and the

Governor's chapter and veto messages), the New York State Assembly (which also includes bills, resolutions, statutes, etc.), and the New York State Home Page.

"New York City" includes links to the New York City Council (which contains the full text of Local Laws of 1995), to the City of New York Home Page (Mayor) and to the Public Advocate's Home Page.

"United States Federal Law" has links to United States Supreme Court Decisions, Decisions of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, the United States Government Printing Office, U.S. Congressional Bills, The United States Code, the United States Senate, the United States House of Representatives, the Code of Federal Regulations, and the Federal Register.

"Special Topic: Taxation" connects to the Internal Revenue Service (which includes regulations, publications, and tax forms), as well as to many other sites providing tax information.

"Foreign and International Law Sites" is of particular interest to the forensic translator and interpreter. Under the crosslink it has with the House of Representatives one can access "Laws of other Nations (Listed by Countries)" and "Treaties and International Law." Other sites available are: Foreign and International Law (Cornell), Canadian Law (Université de Montréal), and the International Trade Law Project (which includes the texts of such treaties as NAFTA, GATT, and the Maastricht Treaty).

"Other Legal Web Sites" connects with the Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School, the WWW Virtual Library - Law, Law Links (LEXIS), and others.

All of these sites provide excellent materials for training in terminology, sight translation, and simultaneous interpretation. However, "Laws of other Nations (Listed by Countries)," under "Foreign and International Law Sites," is of particular importance to the forensic translator and interpreter. Being part of the Internet Law Library of the U.S. House of Representatives, it can be located directly through its new site, <http://law.house.gov/52.htm>, where—oh joy!—one can access 196 nations (including less well-known countries such as Bhutan, Comoros, Kiribati, Niue, Tuvalu and Vanuatu). Each country constitutes a separate link, where one can often find not only numerous legal documents such as constitutions, assessments of human



rights policies, laws in general, specialized laws (e.g., elections, copyright), but financial and even philosophical and literary texts as well. Often these documents are available in both the national language of each specific country and in English. For instance, Colombia has the text of its 1982 Constitution in both Spanish and English. This is the case with several of the other Spanish-speaking countries from where a variety of texts in Spanish and English can be downloaded. Brazil has the text of the Brazilian Constitution in both Portuguese and Spanish, while Canada and France have numerous documents in French and English including, in the case of France, the entire text of the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, the Law on the Use of French, the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1787, and documents on Family Law. Switzerland has a draft text of its constitution in French, German, and Italian, as well as texts in English. Germany has a plethora of documents in both German and English with, surprisingly enough, some texts in Spanish, Danish, Swedish and Norwegian as well. Greece offers texts in Greek and English and, of course, selections from Plato and Aristotle. Hungary has texts in Hungarian, English, and French; Iran in both English and Farsi; and Israel in English and, again somewhat surprisingly, in Spanish. Italy not only has numerous texts in Italian and English, but also documents relating to Roman law in German and, naturally, in Latin. The Japan link includes a text of the Japanese Constitution in Japanese, English, and yes, in Spanish, as well as the texts of the Second World War Instruments of Surrender, and the text of the Copyright Laws of Japan (in Japanese), among others. For the texts in Japanese a decoding program is needed. Mexico also has an abundance of texts available, including the Civil Code, the Constitution, Statutes, Election Laws, the text of NAFTA, a projection on the National Development 1995-2000, and information relating to visas and monetary policy. Romania offers the text of its Constitution in Romanian, English, and in Spanish. Russia has the text of its Constitution in English and Russian (the Cyrillic needs a decoding program), while the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, besides Russian, also provides documents in English, French, Turkish, and German (including the Communist Manifesto). Yugoslavia posts documents, in both English and French, relating to the proceedings of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. In summary, every nation listed, from Albania to Zimbabwe, offers invaluable information which can be used by the forensic translator and interpreter for training in vocabulary acquisition, sight translation, and simultaneous inter-

pretation. Charlotte hopes that you will visit this wonderful site often, and profit from it, and will meet you again soon, at the New York Public Library.

This concludes today's web on the WWW in Charlotte's Corner. We would be most grateful to all of you if you were to share with us any useful URL you may have discovered. We will try to include them in Charlotte's Corner, and will most certainly give you credit for your contribution. Please send your information, or any questions you may have, to Dr. Alexander Rainof, either by mail (1021 12th Street, #101, Santa Monica, CA 90403); by e-mail (arainof@ucla.edu); or by fax (310-395-1885), or through my Web Site (<http://www.electriciti.com/~trey/alexis/>) which has an e-mail link. ■

*Editor's note: This is the first of two parts.*

## COURTINTERP-L Mailbombed

David Mintz

On two separate occasions in October and November 1996, NAJIT's electronic mailing list *courtinterp-l* was the object of a form of cyber-aggression known as mail bombing. Approximately 160 subscribers around the world found their mailboxes flooded with hundreds of nastily-worded messages that said that they had been blocked from sending mail to a site known as ucmhou.fc.net. These messages contained copies of the e-mail from *courtinterp-l* that the site was rejecting. Several people posted messages to the list expressing indignation and/or pleading for help, which ironically only exacerbated the problem, since every message sent to the list was getting bounced back. Other subscribers retained their sense of humor through the crisis.

In the October incident I phoned Colossus, the company that hosts NAJIT's Website and listserver, and reported the problem, which subsided shortly thereafter. I later received an e-mail from one of Colossus' technicians, who explained that "we never found out who did the mail bombing (they were using fake addresses and our majordomo at the time didn't record headers), but [we] have put in security to reduce the chance of this happening again. And more importantly, we've put in some tracking software so we may catch the guy next time."

However, as of this writing, a preliminary investigation of the second incident suggests that Colossus

*(continued on page 8)*

## Cascadia '96 Conference

Marcia Gotler

I recently attended the Fourth Biennial Cascadia Conference in beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia. The event was co-sponsored by the Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society (NOTIS), the Society of Medical Interpreters (SOMI), and the Washington State Court Interpreters and Translators Society (WITS), all based in Seattle, along with the Society of Translators and Interpreters of British Columbia (STIBC). As one of the only "foreigners" attending this regional conference, and a great lover of the Northwest, I found the meeting to be of particular interest.

One of the highlights of Cascadia '96 actually occurred the day before the conference officially began. Early arrivals were taken on a tour of the Supreme Court of British Columbia. (The Supreme Court designation is similar to that used in New York, and refers to a court that hears cases involving serious felonies and certain civil matters.) We began with an orientation speech by Evelyn Neaman of the Law Courts Education Society of British Columbia, a publicly-funded non-profit organization dedicated to community outreach. Not only does the Society educate citizens on the judicial system and recruit volunteers, from deputies to judges, to speak to them, but it also educates courthouse staff on issues of concern to immigrants and Natives (as Canada's indigenous people are referred to). Three bilingual advocates serve as liaisons to Vancouver's large and diverse Asian community, and a comprehensive, easy-to-understand booklet on British Columbia's legal system, covering such topics as workers' and tenants' rights, police powers, and the courts, is provided in eight languages, as well as English. Mock trials are held regularly for people in all walks of life to become better acquainted with legal procedure. This idyllic scenario is not necessarily the norm throughout Canada; British Columbia appears to be a model in this regard.

The orientation speech was followed by a tour of the court itself. Perhaps because our systems are in many respects so similar, the differences between Canadian and U.S. court procedures stood out. (Some practices also vary from province to province within Canada itself.) The first thing I noticed upon entering the Supreme Court was the lack of metal detectors. (Chalk one up for strict gun and weapons control.) It is housed in the modern Law Courts Building, whose spacious, airy

atrium suggests a hotel or suburban mall, rather than a courthouse, and which was designed so that ordinary citizens would feel welcome. Clerks and lawyers wear robes with white collars, while judges sport more elaborate collars, cuffs, and lapels in red. Judges are addressed as "My Lord," and referred to as "Mr." or "Madam Justice." Trial lawyers are referred to as "barristers," while those specializing in contract law are called "solicitors." Lawyers representing the government are called "crown prosecutors." One bows slightly in the direction of the bench upon entering and leaving the courtroom. However, there was none of the exaggerated formality in courtroom interactions that Americans often associate with the British (and no wigs!), and I even spotted a male attorney wearing an earring, something I've seen in New York, but never in the federal courts where I work occasionally in the South and Midwest.

The physical layout of the courtroom is also somewhat different. The witness sits sideways, facing the

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## Mailbombing

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itself may in fact have had something to do with a malfunction that caused NAJIT's mail to flood the ucmhou.fc.net site, which in turn bounced it back at courtinterp-1 in self-defense, which of course sent it back again, creating an infinite loop. If true, this theory belies the explanation Colossus gave us in regard to the first incident. The true cause of these problems remains obscure, but in any event I am looking for another site for NAJIT to move to in case these problems recur.

The November incident apparently drove away nearly a third of our subscribers, destroying several months of progress. Some subscribers exceeded their disk space quotas on their mail servers before they had an opportunity to delete the junk messages, and thus missed legitimate mail that was returned to sender. Anyone who had an account that bills by the hour spent a little money on the time it took to sift through the rubble. For most subscribers, however, the incidents appear to have been upsetting and annoying but otherwise harmless. *Proteus* readers who fled from the list are encouraged to return. ■



jury across the room. The accused ("defendant" is only used in Canada for civil proceedings) is seated in a box—a raised platform with a long, padded bench and railing, somewhat like a miniature jury box—behind the attorneys, centered directly in front of the rail that separates the public from the rest of the courtroom. This makes it more cumbersome for defendants to consult with their attorneys during the trial, since they (or an observant judge) must ask a sheriff to call counsel over. (Doubtless many lawyers here would find this a welcome relief from the distraction of having an overly-anxious client beside them.) Interpreters sit—guess where—right next to the accused, which doesn't make hearing any easier.

Aside from these largely ceremonial courtroom practices, other differences are subtle. Rules of trial procedure are quite similar. There are twelve jurors for criminal trials (eight for civil); however, there are no alternates, as a verdict may be decided by the ten remaining jurors, in the case of attrition. The only questions normally permitted in the *voir dire* are name, age, and occupation; attorneys must otherwise rely on instinct, or bias, as the case may be. At the request of the accused, trials may be wholly conducted in French. There are no sidebars; jurors are led out of the courtroom during sensitive objections. In their jury charge, in addition to explaining concepts such as reasonable doubt and admissible evidence, judges are required to summarize the cases presented by both parties, something some observers feel should be eliminated to avoid inadvertently revealing personal opinions. Finally, in contrast to many judiciaries in the U.S., there are no sentencing guidelines, nor is there general support for the concept.

When it comes to interpreters, British Columbia is back here on the ground with the rest of us mortals. The provincial courts are "experimenting" with headphone equipment, but it is normally used only for multiple-defendant cases. One interpreter per courtroom is the norm. (If it's any consolation, criminal matters are heard only from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.) Accredited interpreters owe their presence in the Canadian courtroom to a decision in the case of *Regina* [as in Queen] *versus Tran*, in which a mistrial was declared because the interpreter—who had only provided summary interpretation—was called upon as an identity witness during the trial to testify that the accused had lost weight during the preceding months. This case was said to be a great educational tool for judges in the importance of using professional, unbiased interpreters.

The first session I attended on the following day did not live up to expectations. Billed as a talk on setting up a home office and "software alternatives" for language professionals, it opened with an infomercial, complete with slice-of-life small business software success stories, followed by a sales presentation by a Microsoft skill. I ducked out to hear about the infobahn (a.k.a. information superhighway) from Caitlin Walsh and Melissa Meier Tarker of NOTIS. I'm not yet plugged into the Web, so I was very much a passive observer, but the information, complete with an on-screen demonstration, seemed comprehensive and up-to-date. So far, so good. But it wasn't long before the Microsoft behemoth once again raised its fearsome head. It turned out one of our presenters was married to a Microsoft employee, while the other had formerly been employed there—not to suggest that they were anything less than impartial in their presentation. Perhaps that's just to be expected out in Bill Gates country.

The afternoon sessions included a talk by Sergeant Koos Dykstra and Detective Robb McLaren of the Vancouver City Police Narcotics Unit. McLaren, who began the session wearing a long wig, shades, and bandanna headband, like a drug dealer out of an old Barretta episode, gradually stripped off his disguise to show us that "narcs are normal." We learned that, in spite of Vancouver's proximity to the U.S., drug usage patterns are somewhat different. Crack is not a popular choice (although it is common in eastern Canada), presumably because cocaine, often injected by addicts, is so cheap in British Columbia. It is sometimes sold in the form of a "ball," a strictly local creation, in which small amounts of cocaine are rolled up in a piece of plastic tied with thread or dental floss. Cocaine and heroin for sale on the street are often packaged in "decks"—tiny, hand-made, origami-like paper envelopes invented by resourceful drug dealers. Drug slang varies as well. "Middlers" are those who bring together customers and dealers. To "buff" is to dilute drugs with a cutting agent. "T's and R's,"—Talwin (synthetic heroin) and the prescription drug Ritalin—are currently fading in popularity due to the increased availability of the real thing.

Among the conference's most memorable moments was the keynote address by interpreter Sidney Rittenberg, who was the kind of person you wish you could take home to dinner just to keep hearing his stories. Mr. Rittenberg is a warm, intelligent man who has led an extraordinary

life and gained a great deal of wisdom in the process. Stationed in China in 1945 after a stint at the U.S. Army Language School, he stayed on working with the United Nations after the war. In the truce negotiations between Communists and Nationalists during the Chinese Civil War, his aid was enlisted by a U.S. colonel, since the two factions did not trust each other's own interpreters. After thus falling into the profession, Mr. Rittenberg later went on to interpret for Mao Tse Dong and Chou En Lai. However, sixteen of his thirty-five years in China were spent in solitary confinement on charges of spying, of which he maintains his innocence. He came to appreciate the importance of having an interpreter in legal proceedings first-hand, when after three years of linguistic and cultural immersion in China, he was first questioned by interrogators, and still felt he could not adequately express himself under the circumstances. (He never did get an interpreter.) During his first six years of solitary, after one year in a blackened cell, he was allowed reading material in Chinese, which no doubt helped prepare him for his future job as a diplomatic interpreter. Mr. Rittenberg is now a consultant to companies doing business in China.

Mr. Rittenberg suggested that when interpreting, one

should focus on the speaker's main point, attaching all secondary ideas to it, as if hanging clothes on a line. He emphasized the need to preserve register and to search for idiomatic expressions which have a similar impact on listeners as the original, rather than the identical meaning. (We Spanish interpreters got a taste of our own medicine when he gave an example of a too-literal translation of an English expression, and as the Chinese interpreters present exploded into laughter we could only look around the room and try not to feel left out.) Those of us who suffer from stage-fright may find it reassuring that Mr. Rittenberg says he still gets butterflies every time he interprets. Finally, he suggested that interpreters practice humility: not to pretend to know, hear, or understand when they do not; to work for improvement in their native language as well as in those they have acquired; and to accept criticism. I left wishing he would write a memoir so I could learn more about his fascinating life and ideas.

The organizers of Cascadia '96 are to be commended for the range of topics and speakers they offered at the conference, as well as for the beautiful facilities they provided. It was both an informative and enjoyable event, as I am sure future conferences will be. ■



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## 1996 Membership Directory Errata

The names of four members in good standing were omitted in error from the 1996 Membership Directory. We deeply regret the omissions and apologize to Felice-Saeed Bezri, Dr. Jose A. Diaz, A.J. Elterman, and Lorenzo M. Montoya. Their listings follow.

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## ITEMS OF INTEREST

**January 12-17, 1997. Ascona/Ticino, Switzerland.** International Workshop on Methodological Approaches to Interpretation. Address: Ecole de Traduction et d'Interprétation, Université de Genève, 102, bd. Carl-Vogt, CH-1221 Genève, Switzerland. Fax: +411-22-781.62.21; email: moser@uni2a.unige.ch

**January 18-19, 1996. Albuquerque, New Mexico.** Federal Judicial Center Workshop for Federal Court Interpreters. Draft agenda includes updates on new laws and legislation, telephone interpreting, and Administrative Office activities; group discussions on consecutive interpreting, terminology and vocabulary; and issues of interest to staff and free-lance interpreters. The workshop is open to all federal staff interpreters and to federally certified freelance interpreters who (1) work in the federal courts, and (2) are included on the AOUSC's roster of certified interpreters. Address: The Federal Judicial Center, 1 Columbus Circle, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002-8003.

**April 21-25, 1997. Capitolio Center, Havana.** Expolingua Habana '97. The Organizing Committee welcomes papers on lexicography, terminology, interpretation, translation and related topics. Abstract of up to 250 words should be submitted by December 31, 1996. Address: Organizing Committee, Expolingua Habana 97, Capitolio de La Habana, P.O. Box 2014, La Habana 10200 Cuba. Tel.: 62-6531; Fax: (537) 338237; e-mail: ctte@ceniai.cu.

**May 16-18, 1997. Seattle, Washington.** 18th Annual NAJIT Meeting and Educational Conference. Address: NAJIT, 551 Fifth Ave., Suite 3025, New York, NY 10176. Tel. (212) 692-9581; Fax (212) 687-4106; e-mail: headquarters@najit.org; <http://www.najit.org>



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