



# PROTEUS

The Newsletter of  
The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators

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Summer, 1997

New York, NY

## Message from the Board

# 501(c)(3) Status Achieved

For the past two years NAJIT has been involved in creating a tax-exempt entity, known in IRS jargon as having 501(c)(3) status, that could raise funds for educational and other non-business activities. Thanks to the diligent efforts of our Executive Director Arlene Stock, who spent many months consulting with our lawyers, we are pleased to announce that we are now ready to launch the **Society for the Study of Translation and Interpretation** of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators. The Society will enable us to seek grants and finance major projects, such as training and certification programs. It has long been an objective of NAJIT to form a 501(c)(3) entity, and this achievement is undoubtedly one of the most important in our organization's 18-year history.

## Web Update

As promised in past issues of *Proteus*, The NAJIT Online Directory is now in place at <http://www.najit.org/directory.html>. Web visitors can search our membership database by member name, language, location, credentials, or a combination of either language and credentials or location and credentials. Location searches can be based on state, area code or zip code. While the hard copy version of the directory comes out annually, the online version can painlessly be updated as often as we like. New members can be added soon after they join. If you change any of your contact information, you should notify NAJIT headquarters so that your record will be changed accordingly. Comments and questions about the directory itself should be addressed to [webmaster@najit.org](mailto:webmaster@najit.org).

Although courts and law offices still go to their Rolodexes before the Internet when they need an interpreter or a translator, the conventional wisdom holds that Internet commerce will expand quickly. Moreover, in the larger translation world, the Net is already a vi-

tally important medium. The online directory is a service to members that puts them in a position to take advantage of these developments.

## Conferences Past and Future

After crunching the final financial numbers on the last NAJIT conference, it appears that NAJIT took a moderate loss on the event. We were planning for an attendance of about 250, but less than 200 turned out. On the other hand, feedback from conference members on the quality of the presenters and presentations was overwhelmingly positive. The figures shown here (see table) reflect the cumulative responses from the evaluation forms handed in for all of the presentations.

	Usefulness	Interest	Presenter
Excellent	53%	54%	48%
Very Good	19%	17%	18%
Good	15%	13%	15%
Fair	6%	6%	8%
Poor	3%	2%	6%
No Response	4%	7%	6%

Planning for next year's conference in San Antonio is well under way. Tentative plans are to hold the 1999 and 2000 conferences in San Diego and Miami, respectively. If you are interested in presenting at the San Antonio meeting, please submit your proposal to NAJIT headquarters by October 1.

## The NAJIT Board of Directors

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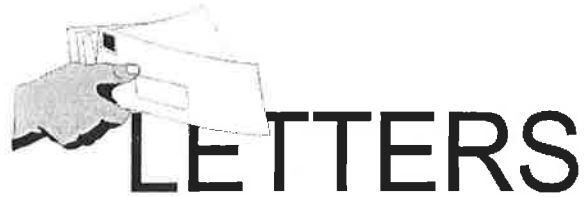
## Proteus

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## To NAJIT Members and Board of Directors

July 8, 1997

I just received my Spring issue of *Proteus* and, being in these remote and isolated parts of the world, I just found out about Jim Farrell's plight in New Jersey.

I wish to publicly commend and applaud James Farrell's integrity and courage, risking his own well-being for the well-being of the profession everywhere, not just in the United States. We have very few heroes left in this world, and even fewer in this field. Jim Farrell's actions are inspiring, but foremost in my mind right now is his immediate survival if he is not working.

I strongly believe at this point that judiciary interpreters need a solidarity fund, and if need be channel work from around the country to those whose income may be suffering as a result of retaliatory practices by their local courts. In fact, greater professional solidarity, not just moral but monetary as well, could be just the incentive needed for more interpreters to take a firm stand on fundamental issues such as team interpreting.

We should all feel insulted and outraged at this intrusion by non-interpreters attempting to dictate performance quality standards for our profession when they don't have the slightest idea what interpreting entails.

I would ask those judges and administrators who insist on undermining our professional standards to stand in our shoes for one day, or one hour. They should go into a courtroom and repeat—simply repeat—with no additional cognitive process involved (i.e., interpreting) everything that is said on the record, non-stop, for one hour, two hours, three hours... a whole day?

I dare predict that those judges and administrators will be absolutely exhausted after the first 20 minutes, and probably hyperventilating after a full hour of this exercise. I base my contention, not on empirical or lab-controlled research, but on my own experience with interpreting students. It takes a great many hours of interpreting practice under classroom conditions to surpass that five-minute fatigue threshold experienced

by beginners. However, surpassing the 30-minute mental fatigue threshold reached by even the most experienced interpreter requires an extraordinary effort. That effort cannot be sustained for long. Soon the interpreter's concentration capacity is reduced to levels of unacceptable judiciary performance (i.e., errors and omissions that constitute gross incompetence for this profession.)

Anyone claiming that he or she can work alone all day long and not suffer the consequences of mental fatigue and loss in accuracy is either not doing the job as it should be done, or is not a professional interpreter.

I would like to suggest three courses of action to be spearheaded by NAJIT, but not necessarily limited to NAJIT:

- (1) Take immediate steps to create a solidarity network to provide specific moral and material support to judiciary interpreters who may be victims of retaliatory or unfair labor practices from employment providers because these interpreters openly advocate professional standards and working conditions;
- (2) Create and disseminate sensitivity training modules for non-interpreting court personnel that individual interpreters anywhere can use in their respective courts;
- (3) Call upon the Communications Workers of America (CWA) to support and possibly provide legal assistance in administrative or judiciary remedies on behalf of all judiciary interpreters in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. (The CWA is the parent union for the Translators and Interpreters Guild, which should be made aware of this situation without further delay and asked to join NAJIT in a nation-wide effort to stop court administrators from subverting the working standards we have struggled so hard to achieve through our own professionalization efforts over the past 20 years.)

I wish to be the first one to volunteer for any effort in this direction approved by the membership and the Board.

Janis Palma  
San Juan, Puerto Rico

## “The Interpreters: A Historical Perspective”

Daniel Sherr

Anyone who has ever had any contact with interpreters (which probably means most of the readers of this article) knows that they are quite a feisty bunch. If generalizations are odious, they are virtually impossible in a group where individuality seems to be the one point of commonality.

This is one of the salient features of *The Interpreters: A Historical Perspective*, researched and directed by Evelyn Moggio-Ortiz, a United Nations staff interpreter, with financial backing from the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), Phillips, and the government of France. Yes, it traces the history of interpreting from the pre-World War II era, when all interpreting was consecutive. Yes, it recounts the Nuremberg trials, and the birth of modern simultaneous interpreting. Yes, it follows the development of interpreting at the United Nations through the present day. But the history of interpreting is the history of the interpreters, and the film is interspersed with interviews with some of these behind-the-scenes actors, without whom 20th century history might be substantially different.

Personally, I still cannot get over the story of the two interpreters who could do consecutive interpreting for over an hour straight without taking notes. (They were not working in the courts, though.) But there are other interviews also, which lead one to believe that some of these interpreters were truly exceptional individuals.

The film contains interviews in all six official languages of the U.N.: English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic. A version of the film has been made in each U.N. language, with subtitles in that language whenever someone speaks in one of the other five. As befits a film about interpreting, the subtitles are masterful in and of themselves. A few gems I gleaned from the English version were: *juriste* > “legal expert”; *la candidature de X fut proposée* > “X was nominated”; *liberté de manoeuvre* > “leeway”; *insensibilisé* > “numbed”; *effets de manche* > “rhetorical flourishes”; *reserve* > “discretion”; and *secret professionnel* > “confidentiality.”

For all of us who have always looked up to the U.N. as a standard-setter and example for the profession, the

(continued on page 6)

## VIVA LA DIFERENCIA (2)

Richard Palmer

**Viva la diferencia** is a compilation of Spanish-English false cognates which *Proteus* will publish in installments. The first appeared in Vol. VI, No. 1.

### **bloc**

*La secretaria fue a buscar su bloc para que el jefe pudiese dictarle la carta.*

"The secretary went to get her pad so that her boss could dictate the letter to her."

### **cargo**

*El cargo de vicepresidente de la nueva entidad le tocará al hijo del presidente.*

"The position of vicepresident of the new company will go to the president's son."

### **carpeta**

*Todas las cartas referentes al caso se encuentran en esta carpeta.*

"All of the letters concerning the case are in this file folder."

### **casualidad**

*Fue únicamente por casualidad que llegué a ver el desfile.*

"It was only by chance that I managed to see the parade."

### **celebrar**

*Mañana se celebrará una audiencia preliminar para determinar si hay motivos fundados para enjuiciar al acusado.*

"Tomorrow a preliminary hearing will take place to decide whether there is probable cause to try the defendant."

### **cínico**

*Cuando su marido ofreció presentarle a su nueva novia, María le respondió: "¡Qué cínico eres!"*

"When her husband offered to introduce her to his new girlfriend, María answered him, 'What a louse you are!'"

### **circulación**

*El agente de circulación le puso una multa por estar estacionado en doble fila.*

"The traffic policeman gave him a fine for double parking."

### **block**

"Our house is located some three blocks from the stadium."

*Nuestra casa está ubicada a unas tres cuadras del estadio.*

### **cargo**

"When the customs inspectors came aboard to check the cargo, they found several tons of cocaine in the hold."

*Cuando subieron a bordo los inspectores aduaneros para revisar la carga, encontraron varias toneladas de cocaína en la bodega.*

### **carpet**

"Yesterday, they laid wall to wall carpet in our office."

*Ayer instalaron una moqueta en nuestro despacho.*

### **casualty**

"After the battle it is always necessary to count the casualties."

*Después de la batalla, siempre es preciso contar las bajas.*

### **celebrate**

"The marriage was celebrated in a small country church."

*El matrimonio se solemnizó en una pequeña iglesia rural.*

### **cynical**

"After so many disappointments in life, he has become rather cynical."

*Después de tantos desengaños en la vida, él se ha vuelto bastante amargado.*

### **circulation**

"That newspaper has a circulation of more than 50,000."

*Ese periódico tiene una tirada de más de 50.000.*

**compromiso**

*Tengo tantos compromisos que no voy a poder atender a ese señor.*

"I have so many commitments that I am not going to be able to attend to that gentleman."

**complaciente**

*El gerente siempre ha sido muy complaciente con nosotros.*

"The manager has always been very obliging toward us."

**complexión**

*Describieron al ladrón como un hombre de complexión robusta.*

"They described the thief as a man with a heavy build."

**convicción**

*Dijo con convicción que algún día sería cura.*

"He said with conviction that he would become a priest someday."

**condescendiente**

*Yo no puedo criticar a ese caballero porque siempre ha sido muy condescendiente conmigo.*

"I cannot criticize that gentleman for he has always been very helpful toward me."

**confección**

*La confección de la ropa femenina constituye una industria muy rentable.*

"The manufacture of women's clothing constitutes a very profitable industry."

**conferencia**

*El profesor dará una conferencia sobre los jívaros del Ecuador.*

"The professor will give a lecture on the 'jivaros' of Ecuador."

**confidencia**

*Alertados por una confidencia telefónica, los policías se dirigieron al lugar donde se hacía el negocio.*

"Having been alerted by a phone tip, the police went to the place where the deal was taking place."

**conmoción**

*Después del accidente, los médicos le apreciaron una conmoción cerebral.*

"After the accident, the doctors found that he had a brain concussion."

**compromise**

"They wish to buy the business for less money so we shall have to make a compromise."

*Quieren comprar el negocio por menos dinero de modo que tendremos que hacer una concesión.*

**complacent**

"He won the championship last year and now he feels very complacent."

*Ganó el campeonato el año pasado y ahora se siente muy satisfecho de sí mismo.*

**complexion**

"The model has a fair complexion and therefore must avoid the sun's rays."

*La modelo tiene la tez blanca y por lo tanto debe evitar los rayos solares.*

**conviction**

"The defendant had a prior conviction which appeared on his criminal record."

*El acusado tenía una condena anterior que aparecía en su historial delictivo.*

**condescending**

"In a very condescending manner, she told us that we could come in."

*Con aire de superioridad, nos dijo que podíamos entrar.*

**confection**

"Confections are the candies that one eats at a confectionery."

*Los confites son los dulces que uno come en una confitería.*

**conference**

"Next week we will attend a doctors' conference in Houston."

*La próxima semana asistiremos a un congreso médico en Houston.*

**confidence**

"I have the utmost confidence in the men who work under me."

*Tengo una confianza completa en los hombres que trabajan a mis órdenes.*

**commotion**

"I heard the commotion in the hall and opened the door to see what was going on."

*Oí el tumulto en el pasillo y abrí la puerta para ver lo que pasaba.*

**consistente**

*El cocinero le agregó más harina a la mezcla para que fuera más consistente.*

"The cook added more flour to the mix so that it would be thicker."

**constante**

*Pablo ha sido un amigo constante a través de los años.*

"Paul has been a staunch friend throughout the years."

**constipado**

*El niño está constipado y el médico le ha recetado unas gotas nasales.*

"The child has a cold and the doctor has prescribed some nose drops for him."

**contrapartida**

*Los rusos les regalaron 50.000 toneladas de trigo como contrapartida del petróleo suministrado por ellos.*

"The Russians gave them 50,000 tons of wheat as compensation for the petroleum provided by them."

**control**

*Hay puntos de control a todo lo largo de la frontera.*

"There are check points all along the border."

**conveniente**

*Es conveniente que Vd. se aprenda estas palabras si piensa ser intérprete.*

"It is advisable that you learn these words if you intend to be an interpreter."

**correcto**

*El director estuvo muy correcto con nosotros.*

"The principal was very polite to us."

**consistent**

"His statements are consistent with what he said yesterday."

*Sus declaraciones son compatibles con lo que dijo ayer.*

**constant**

"That constant noise from the factory gets on my nerves."

*Ese ruido incesante de la fábrica me crispa los nervios.*

**constipated**

"If you ate more bran, you would not be so constipated."

*Si comieras más afrecho, no estarías tan estreñado.*

**counterpart**

"The Secretary of State will have to consult with his English counterpart before reaching a final decision."  
*El Secretario de Estado tendrá que consultar con su homólogo inglés antes de llegar a una decisión final.*

**control**

"These are matters over which we have no control."

*Estos son asuntos ajenos a nuestra voluntad.*

**convenient**

"This little can opener is very convenient when one is travelling."

*Este pequeño abrelatas es muy cómodo cuando se viaja.*

**correct**

"You are perfectly correct to think that way."

*Tiene Vd. toda la razón de pensar así.*

## Historical Perspective

(continued from page 3)

film is both enriching and inspirational. It is available in all six official languages, in NTSC, VHS or PAL/SECAM. Its \$28 price includes shipping, and can be paid by American Express, Visa, Eurocard, or Mastercard. Send the name of the cardholder, the card number, expiration date and cardholder's signature to AIIC; 10, avenue de Sécheron; CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland; fax: (41-22) 732 4151, and telephone (41-22) 731 3323/732 2754. Bank transfers can also be made to AIIC account no. 210 654 00Y Union de Banques suisses, 8, rue du Rhône, CH 1211 Geneva 2, Switzer-

land. And if you want to hone your conference interpreting skills, try the Danny Kaye peroration which leads off the video.

### NAJIT T-Shirts Available

These high quality, 100% cotton, ash-gray T's display the NAJIT logo and name in blue lettering on the front; on the back, our phone number and Web address. Sizes: M, L, and XL. \$15 each, 3 for \$40, plus \$2.15 per shirt domestic shipping and handling. For overseas orders, please inquire. Call (212) 692-9581 or e-mail [hq@najit.org](mailto:hq@najit.org).

19th ANNUAL MEETING AND EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE  
of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF JUDICIARY INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS • MAY 15-17, 1998

CALL FOR PAPERS

NAJIT invites proposals for presentations (60 minutes), panel discussions, or interactive pre-conference workshops (90-180 minutes) on any topic related to court interpretation and translation, including the following:

- ◆ Interpreter training
- ◆ Specialized terminology
- ◆ Interpreting languages other than Spanish
- ◆ Legal translation
- ◆ Computer technology for interpreters
- ◆ Tape transcription and translation
- ◆ Interpretation and translation theory
- ◆ Cross-cultural issues
- ◆ Self-study and skill enhancement
- ◆ Research techniques
- ◆ Professional concerns (i.e., employee vs. independent contractor status, financial planning, etc.)
- ◆ Ethics

*Please note: Language neutral proposals are encouraged. NAJIT regrets that it cannot waive registration fees or pay expenses or honoraria for conference presenters.*

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS: OCTOBER 1, 1997**

Please submit the following information (in English):

1. Title, duration and language of presentation;
2. Abstract of presentation in paragraph form not to exceed 150 words;
3. Your name, title or position; mailing and e-mail addresses; telephone and fax numbers;
4. A biographical narrative not to exceed 150 words and a résumé.

Send submissions to: NAJIT, 551 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3025, New York, NY 10176  
Fax: 212-687-4016; e-mail: [headquarters@najit.org](mailto:headquarters@najit.org)

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Languages \_\_\_\_\_

Credentials:

\_\_\_\_\_ Federal \_\_\_\_\_ State From which state(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ATA What language combinations? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Dept. of State: Escort \_\_\_\_\_ Seminar \_\_\_\_\_ Conference \_\_\_\_\_

I do not wish to be listed on NAJIT's Web site \_\_\_\_\_

I was referred to NAJIT by \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Credentials \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a language instructor at a college, please indicate which one: \_\_\_\_\_

I am an interpreter , translator .

*I certify that the above information is correct and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### PAYMENT SCHEDULE

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual: \$75                      \_\_\_\_\_ Student: \$25                      \_\_\_\_\_ Institution: \$150

Outside U.S.A. and Territories, \$15 Additional

*\* Student membership is available only to students of interpreting and translation who derive no income from employment as interpreters or translators.*

Contributions or gifts to NAJIT are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. However, dues payments may be deductible by members as an ordinary and necessary business expense to the extent permitted under IRS Code.

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