

## “Interpret this!” Los Angeles interpreters strike over pay

*By Elisabeth Lyman*

In early September some 240 interpreters of the Los Angeles County Superior Court went on strike, demanding a salary schedule that would provide for salary increases of 22% over a period of five years. Although representatives of the court system claim the interpreters received a 4% raise in August bringing their yearly pay to over \$73,000, the interpreters complain of low wages and poor working conditions. They say they have had only two cost-of-living raises in the past eight years. According to the California Federation of Interpreters, an experienced interpreter makes the same amount of money as an interpreter on his or her first day of work, and that this leads to diffi-



culty in keeping qualified individuals. The tri-county court system, said to be the busiest court system in the world, employs about 400 interpreters working in Spanish, Korean, Russian and many

other languages. The picketers wore brightly colored clothing and held signs reading “Interpret this!” and “Courts unfair” aloft as they marched in front of their workplace.

Press coverage on the strike has led to interesting reactions from the public – the readers who left comments on one particular press website overwhelmingly took the side of the court system, describing the interpreters as unrealistic and the people they interpret for as simply unwilling to learn the English language.

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## Le mot de l'administratrice

By Corinne McKay

FLD Administrator



Hello and happy fall to all of you and your families! Fall is always an extremely busy time in the life

of the ATA and thus also of the FLD, and this year is no exception. The ATA annual conference begins on October 31 in San Francisco, and as in past years it will be an excellent chance to re-connect with colleagues we've met before and get to know some newcomers to the profession.

This year, with many thanks to our speaker recruiter Eugenia Tumanova, we have a nearly full slate of French-related presentations at the conference on a wide array of topics. Our invited speakers will be Véronique Sauron of the Ecole de traduction et d'interprétation at the University of Geneva, and Isabelle Der-Kévorkian of the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the ex-Yugoslavia, and each of them will be presenting two sessions during the conference. In addition, we'll have presentations on topics ranging from intellectual

property to financial translation to consecutive interpreting, so there are sure to be sessions that will appeal to FLD members of all specializations and levels of experience.

2007 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of both the French and German Language Divisions of the ATA, and we'll be celebrating the occasion with a joint FLD/GLD dinner at the conference in San Francisco. Please join us on November 1 at L'Olivier restaurant ([www.lolivier-restaurant.com](http://www.lolivier-restaurant.com)), just a few short blocks from the conference hotel. Registration for the event is open until October 10 on a space-available basis, and you can download the registration form from the FLD website at <http://www.ata-divisions.org/FLD/fldhome.htm>.

As we approach the season of our annual FLD meeting at the ATA conference, it's important to mention again that the FLD could not function at all without the efforts of our volunteers. Dominique Blachon manages the FLD e-mail list and Yahoo group, Hélène des Rosiers proofreads English and French articles for *À Propos*, David Heath keeps our website up to date, Elisabeth Lyman gathers, edits and writes articles for *À Propos* and our Assistant Administrator Mylène Vialard does

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the *À Propos* layout and helps with many other Division projects. In addition to these dedicated volunteers, there's a place for you! If you'd like to write articles for *À Propos*, recruit speakers for next year's conference, serve on the Division administrative team or anything else, please contact me at [corinne@translatewrite.com](mailto:corinne@translatewrite.com)

Best wishes for a happy and productive fall season.

## **À Propos article topic ideas**

*Want to submit something to the FLD newsletter but just don't know what to write about? Look through the ideas below to find some inspiration...*

*Remember, your article can be almost any length, from a few hundred to a few thousand words. It can be written in French or English.*

1. Your story – how you came to be a translator, including what you did before, how you trained, any pitfalls you encountered along the way... You can use this topic even if you're still a student or have just begun your translation career, since you can talk about how you became interested in the field and

what you hope to accomplish in the future.

2. A special method you've found for maintaining your target language proficiency or improving your translation skills. Maybe you watch online broadcasts of news from a target-language country and take notes? Or you make flashcards with new terms and review them while waiting in line to pay for your groceries? Share any little tips and tricks that work for you.

3. Review a book that you think would be interesting or helpful to other FLD members. It might be a new dictionary, a course book on translation techniques, a style guide, a book that's specific to a given specialization, or even a novel that arguably has relevance to the profession.

4. Review a radio program, TV program or blog that would be of interest to FLD members.

5. Interview someone, perhaps a professional from the field you specialize in, and present information that's interesting or useful for other FLD members.

6. Follow up on an article from a past issue. Do you have something to add to what was said? Perhaps you'd like to present another side of the story? This can take the form of an

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article or just a letter to the editor.

7. Share a cautionary tale. Have you recently had a bad experience that could have been avoided if only you had taken certain precautions? Perhaps you took a job made up of several files and didn't take the time to look at all of them before accepting, with disastrous results? Please be sure to preserve the anonymity of any parties with whom you may have had disputes.

8. Talk about your working methods. How do you organize your workday? Do you have an interesting office set-up, or do you work in an unusual room of the house? Do you work closely with another translator? Have you recently made an improvement – such as investing in new software or office equipment – that has simplified your work? Is the radio or TV on in the background? Do you often work in pajamas? How many hours in a row do you work before taking a break?

9. Tips for getting through an all-nighter.

10. How do you keep track of your accounting details? Do you use a paper notebook, an Excel file, accounting software?

11. Describe a recent encounter

(conversation with the person next to you on the plane, etc.) in which you were able to enlighten someone on just what it is that translators and/or interpreters do (and don't do!)

12. How to get to the bottom of a tricky term that's not in any dictionary and can't be found online.

13. Have you ever found a new client in an unusual way? Share any methods of making contact you've discovered that might not occur to most of us.

14. Discuss a phenomenon that's been observed in French or English – an intriguing example of Verlan, new loan words, etc.

15. See something in the news about translators or interpreters? Review the article or

broadcast and share your views on it.

16. Share a translation blunder you've spotted.

17. Talk about your first experience attending an ATA conference or other ATA or FLD event. What did you learn? Do you have any recommendations for anyone else who may be contemplating attending such an event for the first time?



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18. Write about one particular term (or a set of related terms) that poses special difficulties.

19. Discuss new regulations or decisions regarding uses and applications of certain terms.

20. Discuss the differences between the varieties of the French language: Canadian French, Swiss French, Belgian French, North African French, Sub-Saharan

French, etc.

20. Special challenges inherent to interpreting for people whose accents and expressions are different from your own (for example, if you are a native French speaker from France and the people you are interpreting for are French speakers from Africa.)

21. Something completely different? Send queries to the editor at [elisabeth.lyman@yahoo.com](mailto:elisabeth.lyman@yahoo.com). We look forward to your contribution to *À Propos!*

## FLD DINNER IN SAN FRANCISCO

L'Olivier Restaurant

[www.lolivier-restaurant.com](http://www.lolivier-restaurant.com)

465 Davis Court (between Washington and Jackson), San Francisco, CA  
Thursday, November 1, 2007

Wine and mingling at 7:00 PM, dinner served at 8:00 PM



### First Course

Duck paté en galantine with celery remoulade  
Baked brie in philo dough with baby frisée (vegetarian)

### Main Course

Chicken roulade with prosciutto, spinach and swiss cheese  
Noisettes of pork tenderloin with homemade apple sauce and mashed potatoes  
Filet of salmon with ginger-lime sauce  
Pasta with seasonal vegetables (vegetarian; can be vegan upon request)

### Dessert

Crème brûlée  
Chocolate mousse cake  
\*Vegan option available upon request



See FLD Website for details: <http://www.ata-divisions.org/FLD/fldhome.htm>

## 48<sup>th</sup> annual ATA conference – San Francisco

### French and French-related sessions scheduled as of late September

#### French sessions

#### F-1 Translating in the Field of Intellectual Property

Frédéric Houbert

Thursday, 1:30-3:00pm - All Levels

Even to the seasoned legal translator, intellectual property terminology can be baffling at times. Is *copyright* the same as *droit d'auteur*? What is the difference between intellectual property and industrial property? What is *patent prosecution* as opposed to *patent litigation*? Such "culture-bound" terms can prove quite challenging. For instance, if *droit d'auteur* is fine for *copyright*, what, then, is *copyright law* in French? The speaker will try to answer these and other questions through a survey of the main pitfalls encountered in the translation of intellectual property texts.

#### F-2 A Day in the Life of a Translator at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

Isabelle Der-Kévorkian

Friday, 10:00-11:30am - All Levels

This session will provide an overview of the history and mission of the International

Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. It will examine the workings of its Conference and Language Services section and the psychological and technical challenges that its staff faces on a daily basis. Topics will include getting in and learning the job and the complexities of translation in the context of crimes against humanity.

#### F-3 Do You Speak Swiss? An Overview of Swiss-French Peculiarities

Véronique A. Sauron

Friday, 1:30-3:00pm - All Levels

It is often said that the differences between Swiss French and French are minor and mostly lexical. This is particularly true for daily communication. However, these differences exist and should be taken into account while translating for Swiss clients. If it is true that many differences between French and Swiss French are due to political and administrative differences, then the influence of German and English is another important factor in the way French is spoken and written in Switzerland. The status of the language (communication and translation)

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and its peculiarities will be discussed based on the analysis of advertisements and legal and financial documents.

#### **F-4 French Language Division Annual Meeting**

[Corinne L. McKay](#)

Saturday, 8:00-9:30am - All Levels

#### **F-5 A Comparison of English and French Punctuation**

[Grant Hamilton](#)

Saturday, 10:00-11:30am - All Levels

When is a comma not a comma? When is a dash an ellipsis? A hyphen a solidus? This session will provide a compelling comparison of English and French punctuation, so that you know exactly what to watch out for when translating from one language to the other. On your punctuation marks, get set, go!

#### **F-6 Terminology for French>English Technical Cosmetic Translation**

[Karen M. Tkaczyk](#)

Saturday, 1:30-3:00pm - All Levels

This session will give an overview of the subjects that translators should be familiar

with if they plan to translate technical material for the cosmetics and toiletries industry. It will introduce cosmetic science, ingredients, formulation, manufacturing, and regulatory affairs, along with basic terminology and definitions, and some specific instances of tricky French terms. Information on a wide variety of useful resources and reference materials will be included.

#### **French-related sessions**

##### **Seminar F**

**Traduire les statuts de société  
(English>French): quelques pistes**

[Véronique A. Sauron](#)

Wednesday, 9:00-12:00noon - All Levels

(Presenting Language: French)

This workshop is a continuation of the presentation given at the 2006 ATA Annual Conference on translating bylaws from English into French. It is intended for translators who wish to enhance their knowledge regarding the translation of this type of legal document. Practical exercises will enable participants to translate specific American terminology accurately into French. Emphasis will also be put on phraseology in order for participants to learn how to think and write like lawyers, which is a particularly difficult challenge for those who are not familiar with the legal style.

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### **FIN-1 Getting the Terminology Right in Financial Translation**

[Robert B. Killingsworth](#)

Thursday, 3:30-5:00pm - All Levels

For a specialized translator, understanding what X is in the source language is not enough. You must be able to call X by its "right" name in the target language. In a field as broad, international, and fast evolving as finance, every job you do is likely to involve an X for which you do not know the Y. This presentation will focus on the skill set involved in finding and choosing the right term, including objectives, contexts, sources, techniques, and pitfalls. The presenter will use French>English examples, but the focus will be on the process of choosing the correct term in any language pair.

### **I-3 French Consecutive Interpreting Workout**

[Jacolyn Harmer](#) and [Julie E. Johnson](#)

Thursday, 3:30-5:00pm - Intermediate/  
Advanced

(Presenting Languages: English and French)

If you feel that your consecutive interpreting skills might be rusty, or if you just want to enjoy a hands-on practice session with French and English colleagues, this session will be for you. It will be designed for active profes-

sional interpreters who already have a solid foundation in basic consecutive interpreting skills, including note taking. The presenters will briefly review the consecutive interpreting process, the principles of effective listening and analysis, note taking, and delivery by working through several guided small group exercises.

### **L-6 Translating *Mines* by Susan Straight: How to Apply the Theory and Practice of Translation to Avoid Cultural Clichés**

[Cecile Bonnet](#)

Saturday, 3:30-5:00pm - Beginner/  
Intermediate

Susan Straight is a writer and National Book Award finalist. Her short story *Mines* was included in *Best American Short Stories 2003*. Translating *Mines* into French presents several challenges as the slang, slurs, and rap references in the text are rooted in an African-American environment. Keeping the cultural flavor of the text without falling into easy clichés is an interesting aspect to study in light of the theory and practice of translation. The speaker will explain the translation strategy she adopted to handle the complexities of this piece of literature.

## What's the Word?

*By Elisabeth Lyman*

As a translator or interpreter, you are very likely also a logophile, or lover of words. If you enjoy learning obscure words and exploring the etymology of terms and expressions, check out the following two informative sources.

You might already be familiar with Reference.com, a valuable online resource compiling English dictionary, thesaurus and encyclopedia entries. But have you heard of its Word of the Day? Anyone can subscribe for free to receive a daily e-mail presenting a (more or less) obscure English word along with its definition and etymology and a few examples of the word used in literature or the media. There's an unsubscribe link inside each e-mail, so it's easy to discontinue your subscription at any time. The Word of the Day entry for Saturday, September 8: "fungible (adj.) 1. (Law) Freely exchangeable for or replaceable by another of like nature or kind in the satisfaction of an obligation. 2. Interchangeable. 3. Something that is exchangeable or substitutable. Usually used in the plural." To subscribe to Word of the Day, go to <http://dictionary.reference.com/wordoftheday/list/>.

Alternatively, you can bookmark <http://dictionary.reference.com/wordoftheday/> and check it from time to time.

Those of you who are interested in a more in-depth examination of words and language can listen to archived broadcasts of the stimulating radio program *A Way with Words*. The show is described on its main site (<http://www.kpbs.org/words/>) as "a romp through the English language with authors and language experts Martha Barnette and Grant Barrett. They tackle listeners' questions about all aspects of language – word origins, grammar, slang, regional dialects, pronunciation, good writing and much more." Although the show was recently canceled due to a lack of funding after being on the air since 1999, archives of the program are to remain accessible at <http://www.kpbs.org/words/> and new online-only podcasts continue to be added at <http://www.waywordradio.org/>.



## Introducing the *À Propos* Translation Workshop

With this issue of our newsletter we're launching a new feature – the Translation Workshop. Here's how it works: each issue will include a short translation or editing task (FR to EN or vice-versa). Readers can try their hand at translating or editing the text and then compare their results to an expert's version published in the following issue.

If you have a text you'd like to suggest for a

future installment of the Translation Workshop, please write to the editor at [elisabeth.lyman@yahoo.com](mailto:elisabeth.lyman@yahoo.com)

Our first Translation Workshop task is from an editing assignment. Study the source and target texts below, then edit the target text for accuracy and style. The "official" edited version of the target text will appear in the Winter 2007 issue.

### SOURCE

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#### Extrait Statuts SAS

Toutefois, si la Société a donné son consentement à un projet de nantissement d'actions dans les conditions ci-dessus, en cas de cession à un tiers, ce consentement emportera agrément du cessionnaire en cas de réalisation forcée des actions nanties, selon les dispositions de l'article 2078 alinéa 1er du Code Civil, à moins que la Société ne préfère après la cession racheter sans délai les actions en vue de réduire son capital.

En cas de cession ou transmission à un tiers du droit préférentiel de souscription à l'occasion d'une augmentation de capital par l'émission d'actions nouvelles de numéraire, et pour faciliter la réalisation de l'opération, l'exercice éventuel des droits de rachat ci-dessus stipulés, ne s'appliquera pas directement à la cession ou transmission du droit préférentiel de souscription qui demeurera libre, mais portera sur les actions nouvelles souscrites au moyen de l'utilisation du droit préférentiel de souscription cédé. Le souscripteur de ces actions n'aura pas à présenter de demande d'agrément ; celle-ci résultera implicitement de la réalisation définitive de l'augmentation de capital et c'est à compter de la date de cette réalisation que partira le délai pendant lequel pourront être exercés les droits de rachat ci-dessus stipulés.

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## TARGET

Excerpt from SAS [*Société par Actions Simplifiée*/simplified joint-stock corporation) Articles of Incorporation

However, if the Company has given its consent to the use of shares as collateral under the conditions above, in the event of transfer to a third party, this consent will carry the transferee's approval in case of forced liquidation of the pledged shares, according to the provisions of the first paragraph of Article 2078 of the Civil Code, unless the Company prefers to repurchase the shares as soon as possible after the transfer for the purpose of reducing its capital.

In case of transfer or transmission to a third party of the preferential subscription right at the time of an increase in capital by issue of new cash shares, and in order to facilitate completion of the transaction, the potential exercise of repurchase rights stipulated above shall not apply directly to the transfer or transmission of the preferential subscription right, which shall remain free, but shall be applicable to the new subscribed shares using the ceded preferential subscription right. The underwriter of these shares shall not be required to present an application for approval; this shall implicitly issue from the definitive completion of the capital increase, and starting from the date of this completion, the time frame within which the rights of repurchase stipulated above may be exercised shall begin.



## French Language Division

Newsletter of the French Language Division of the  
American Translators Association  
225 Reinerkers Lane, Suite 590  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: 703-683-6100  
Fax: 703-683-6122  
E-mail: [ata@atanet.org](mailto:ata@atanet.org)

Annual Conference: San Francisco  
Oct 31st - Nov 3rd, 2007

**We're interested in  
what you have to say!  
Write us TODAY!!**

***À propos* is published three times a year. Letters to the editor, articles, and other information relevant to the FLD are welcome. Submissions are subject to editing. The copyright on all articles remains with the authors.**

**Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the editor or the French Language Division of the ATA.**