

American Translators Association Japanese Language Division Annual Meeting

By Mina Seat

The following report describes the JLD Annual Meeting that took place at the ATA conference in Seattle last year. It arrived a little too late for the previous issue of the JLD Times, but as the information in it is clearly still relevant, we are including it in this issue. Enjoy!

- Administrator: Carl Sullivan
- Assistant Administrator: Richard Mott
- Secretary/Treasurer: Mina Seat

Tetu Hirai, a JLD committee member for the 2005 ATA conference, commented that ATA Headquarters had praised the Japanese Language Division. However, the ATA Conference Organizer cancelled the JLD forum this year. Some of the JLD sessions were reclassified into different categories because the Conference Organizer wanted translators other than JLD members to attend more sessions. The Conference Organizer unfortunately did not inform the JLD committee members about the cancellation of the forum beforehand. A suggestion was made that future presenters should specify whether or not the presentation is intended

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Participants of the 2005 ATA Japanese Language Division Annual Meeting were very interested in and hopeful about the future development of the Japanese Language Division. A great number of members attended the ATA conference for the first time, along with repeat attendees, and participated in sharing their opinions and offering feedback.

Ken Wagner began the conference by explaining why there were so few Japanese Language Division sessions at this year's ATA conference. He recommended conferences be based more on subject-specific topics and an effort be made to improve newsletters and conferences. He continued by highlighting the JLD's contributions, including the publication of newsletters and articles and the holding of conferences.

Ken Wagner pointed out that the JLD has a connection with the Japan Association of Translators (JAT). He also mentioned that mailing lists are a useful resource for JLD and JAT members.

The members approved new officers, who then introduced themselves.

ATA 46th Annual Conference in Seattle, WA



Photograph courtesy of Izumi Suzuki

JLD Times 掲載記事 大募集

JLD Times では、掲載する記事を随時募集しています。通訳・翻訳に関連する内容の記事でしたらどのようなトピックでもかまいません。詳細は JLD Times 編集長 David Higbee (davidbhigbee@yahoo.com.ar) までご連絡ください。

for Japanese professionals when they submit an abstract. Some presentations could fall under dual classification (cross-labeled) such as scientific/Japanese.

Six professionals, namely Ayano Nadine Hattori, Courtney M. MacNab, Richard Mott, Izumi Suzuki, Hiro Tsuchiya, and Ken Wagner, were recruited and volunteered to be 2006 ATA conference committee members.

Proposals for future presentation topics include the following:

- Guest speaker for interpreters
- Entertainment-oriented publications such as manga, graphic novels, etc.
- Voiceovers or subtitles
- East Asian Languages

The committee members have organized an on-line community, through which they can discuss the organization of the JLD sessions, including future presentations and activities to be conducted at the 2006 conference.

JLD Member Survey Results

By Irith T. Bloom

Many of you probably recall that I sent out a survey last year, in an effort to learn more about the members of the JLD. Unfortunately, I only received 33 responses, which (since I didn't sample in any statistically significant way) means that the information in these responses is not necessarily representative of the actual make-up of the division. Nonetheless, I found the results interesting, and I hope you will too.

The results are provided below. I

have included both my reflections on the results and additional information that cannot be quantified numerically in the comments that follow the results.

Please note that I did not get proper responses to each question from every respondent, so there aren't always 33 responses total.

Comments on the results

- Most respondents joined the ATA and JLD at the same time. Some joined

the ATA before the JLD existed (!), but there are a few persons who have been ATA members for less than five years, and JLD members for even less than that. Perhaps we should explore why some of those who have the option do not join the JLD right away.

- The vast majority of respondents translate Japanese to English.
- A smaller majority of respondents do not offer interpreting services at all.
- The members of the JLD work

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Results

Years as an ATA member

Up to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20+
8	9	9	6	1

Years as a JLD member

Up to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20+
9	8	9	7	0

Language pairs (translation)

J->E	E->J	Both	Neither
21	5	7	0

Language pairs (interpreting)

J->E	E->J	Both	Neither
5	0	9	19

Specialties*

Medical	Legal	Tech/Science	Patents	Finance	Other
5	5	17	7	3	15

*Since many members have more than one specialty, the total for this question is well over 33.

ATA certification

J->E	E->J	Both	Neither
7	4	3	19

Have degree/certificate in translation

Yes	No
2	31

Years of formal language training

None	Up to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19
1	13	7	8	2

Years since started studying Japanese and/or English

Up to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20+
0	1	2	3	27

Years elapsed between start of study and start of work as a translator

Up to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20+
3	7	8	7	8

Years spent in source language country

Up to 4	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20+
8	11	3	3	7

Currently enrolled in Japanese and/or English language courses

Yes	No
2	31

Teach or have taught translation or Japanese and/or English language courses

Yes	No
6	27

Current location

U.S.A.	Other
33	0

Newsletter of the Japanese Language Division of the American Translators Association

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From the Administrator

Carl Sullivan



Let me begin by thanking Irith Bloom, the *JLD Times* Editor for many years now, who is retiring from this assignment with this issue. Irith, thanks so much for many hours of devoted service to the division—we will miss you greatly! We wish you the best.

As I sit at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii (performing my Navy reserve duties), on the deck of a Japanese self defense force destroyer, gazing at a beautiful sunset, I wonder what the weather is like in your area right now—our 600+ member division spans the globe, yet we are all connected by the touch of a keyboard! We take this for granted nowadays, yet it is still amazing. I hope that this issue finds you doing well, whether you are sitting in your Tokyo high rise, house in the Niigata tanbo, suburban Kansas City dwelling, D.C. townhouse, or wherever you are. One of the beauties of our business is that you can often be where you want to be!

Thought about the evolution of our lives as interpreters/translators—you probably find yourself on one or more of the following levels:

The “infant” stage—through some means (a fascinating story in each case), you came to acquire two languages. Through work, education, or a combination of both, you also came to acquire expertise in one or more fields—business, medicine, engineering, law, etc.—and most probably in several specific sub-fields within one of those areas. For some reason, maybe desire for a change, becoming tired of the rat race and politics of your job, wanting to work at home, wanting to improve your finances, or simply love of the challenge of working with languages, you have started to think—“is translation for me?” You feel some confidence in your abilities, but are not quite sure that you can really do this, so you are “testing the waters”—checking it out. You have questions like, “Am I good enough?” “Is it really possible to make enough money at this?” “Can I really work at home?” “What qualifications do I need?” “What is the accreditation exam like/How do I prepare for it/What are my chances of passing it?” “What kinds of training are available to improve myself?” “How do I promote myself to find work?” “Is my field of expertise in-demand for interpreting/translation?” “Who are the employers?” “How does the process work when performing a job?” “What are the positives and negatives of this type of work?”

Or, maybe you have progressed beyond this to a second stage—you have actually started translating/interpreting—either in-house at an agency, or as a freelancer. You found that, yes, it can be done! However, the honeymoon stage is over, and you see some of the challenges to success. You seek answers to questions such as, “How should I best manage my business?” “Should I change the rates I charge?” “What should I do when my computer constantly breaks, or the Internet goes down?” “Which dictionaries/reference aids should I buy this year?” “How do I say no when I am too busy to good clients, and still keep them interested for the next job?” “What can I do to improve the accuracy/quality of my translations?”

Maybe you are in a third stage—deeper into this thing. Now you ask, “Where and how can I devote myself to further research on the specialized field that I’m being hired for all the time?” “What is the best way to improve the efficiency/excellence of my business?” “What are my peers doing to be successful?” “How can I guarantee the continued success of my work?” “How can I diversify my skills to maintain success?” “How do I find the best possible help to improve my business?” “What more can I challenge myself with?” “I feel burned out; how can I find more personal time and still be successful?” “I feel out of touch with the latest technology; can the latest translation tools really help me?”

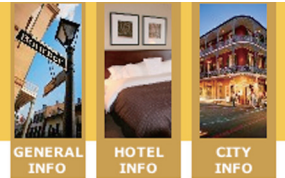
Or, maybe you have been doing this as long as Jon Johanning, and are in, shall we say, the “final stage!” In such case you are asking questions like... well, I don’t know yet... you’d better ask him (just teasing ya, Jon)!

At any rate, no matter what stage you are in—I have found that the ATA/JLD have answers for you! Recently, several new members have contacted me to ask questions like some of these—I have greatly enjoyed responding to them (I have referred them further to experts within our division), and would love to talk to any of you. Contacting our division members is one very good way to get answers.

Or, you could attend this year’s conference in New Orleans, November 1-4. There you will find excellent presentations from our division, as well as within the ATA in general, that will answer so many of your questions. The JLD’s conference committee, consisting of Ayano Hattori, Courtney MacNab, Richard Mott, Izumi Suzuki, Hiro Tsuchiya, and Ken Wagner, has put together one of our greatest slates of presentations ever—to include presentations on conference interpreting, translating in several specific technical fields, translating idioms, how to start and run a Japanese translation business, and other superb topics (to be mentioned in greater detail later when the slate is officially approved).

Of perhaps equal value will be the networking that you do face to face with division members, employers, and experts in the field; dinners, gatherings, and other meetings are planned to facilitate this. If you haven’t thought about it yet, or especially if this is your first time and you feel a bit scared or intimidated—don’t worry, the fish are friendly! Yes, it costs some money to get to the conference, but I bet that you will think it was more than worth it when it is over. You should definitely plan to come!

I wish everyone well. Please contact me if you have any questions (435-835-8504/masae@mail.manti.com). Enjoy the weather, and travel safely this summer!



Conference registration begins in July. Look for your Preliminary Program and Registration Form in the July issue of *The ATA Chronicle*.

Laissez les bons temps rouler!

(Let the good times roll!)

Don't miss this opportunity to network, meet newcomers and seasoned professionals, market yourself and your skills, reunite with friends and colleagues, and have fun!

in a wide range of specialties. Some of the specialties that wound up classified under "other" include fitness, entertainment, fashion, music, manga, fine art, and architecture. There were also a few literature translators, and even one who deals with language pedagogy.

- Fewer than half of the respondents are ATA certified.
- While only two of the respondents have a degree or

certificate in translation, most of the respondents have at least a B.A., and many have higher degrees, sometimes (but not necessarily) in a field related to their translation specialty. Many of the respondents have a degree in a field that is relevant to Japanese <-> English translation, such as English literature or Japanese history.

- Respondents generally have some formal language training, and most of them began that training more

than a decade ago.

- Most respondents have lived at least a few years in their source language country.
- Most respondents are not enrolled in any sort of language course at the moment, though some still teach either translation or language courses.

I found the fact that every single respondent is a resident of the United States particularly fascinating. I wonder if that will change now that the ATA certifies non-residents. Should we (as a division) be seeking to expand beyond the borders of the United States, as JAT has expanded beyond Japan?

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to this survey. I enjoyed getting to know you all very much!

Special thanks to Craig McGinty, who came up with the idea for the survey as well as many of the survey questions.

From the Editor

Irith T. Bloom

As mentioned in this issue's "From the Administrator", I am stepping down from my post as editor of the *JLD Times*. Unfortunately, increasing obligations in both my personal and professional life make it impossible for me to devote enough time and attention to the *JLD Times*. The editing position will be taken over by the capable David Higbee, whom you will 'meet' in the next issue of the Times.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has

contributed to the *JLD Times* in the past three or so years (and for that matter, everyone who contributed before that, too!). I could never have done this job without you. Special thanks are due to Hideki Ishii (our hard-working layout expert), Ben Tompkins (former *JLD Times* editor, without whose advice I wouldn't have even known where to start), Ken Wagner (Division Administrator for much of my time as editor), and Carl Sullivan (current Division Administrator).

Editing the *JLD Times* has been an extremely worthwhile experience. I have learned so much from the articles submitted to me, and have enjoyed the opportunity to give back a little to the Japanese <-> English translation community in general, and

to the Japanese Language Division in particular. I urge all of you to get involved in the division, whether by volunteering to fill one of the division's offices, helping the conference committee find the perfect speaker, or submitting an article to the *JLD Times* (this is by no means an exhaustive list, of course). I promise you that your generosity will be richly rewarded.

There are too many of you to name individually, but again, thank you to everyone who made my job as editor of the *JLD Times* such a pleasure.

Gratefully,
Irith Trietsch Bloom
JLD Times Editor