

Aurora Borealis

ATA Nordic Division Newsletter - Winter 2003

For those of you who missed it, we had an excellent conference in Phoenix. We managed to match the 10% attendance rate of other divisions with 18 people in attendance. A brief summary of the topics is listed below:

Financing

In light of a drop in printing costs among the individual language divisions, and the resulting budgetary surplus, ATA's Divisions Committee is in the process of considering a change in the way the divisions are funded. There are two financial models on the table: One model is a sliding scale (1 division at \$15, 2 divisions at \$25, and 3 divisions at \$35) where dues would be paid to "ATA divisions" but not to a specific division. Each division would continue to provide the same member benefits, and these would be funded from the ATA divisions' budget. The second model being considered would raise dues for all ATA members, and members could join as many – even all – of the ATA divisions as they wanted.

The potential advantage of either of these plans is that member benefits for Nordic Division members will be funded from a budget that is beyond our current standard \$15 x 150 members. ATA Headquarters and the Board of Directors will allocate funds to the individual divisions based on the services the divisions provide. Bottom line is that either of these changes would allow a small division like ours to afford to do more for our members.

As the ATA Divisions Committee reviews these financial models, we will keep you informed. A change in division finances would not be ready before 2005.

Certification

We held a lively discussion about the pros and cons of creating an English>Danish certification exam and/or a Swedish> English certification exam during our ND Annual Meeting. Many members expressed concern over the value of the exam, especially in light of similar training and testing available for European-based translators. Others felt that the ATA certification program provides good visibility for the division (and the Nordic languages as a whole), and it also helps project managers assess a basic level of commitment and professionalism between translators – especially now that certification requires continuing education commitments.

The reality is that establishing a certification examination in a new language combination usually takes at least two years. In an effort to ensure that there is enough interest to keep the exam in a language combination alive for at least 10 years, the ATA program requires the signatures of at least 50 individuals who are interested in taking the examination before formally beginning the process of creating the exam. The trouble is that we haven't been able to get even 12 signatures from translators in our division! Therefore, we have decided to broadcast an electronic survey to determine which language pair would have the most support and then work from there.

UW Milwaukee Housing Pricing

Single room wi/shared bath:
\$40/night

Double room wi/shared bath
\$50/night

Single room wi/air conditioning, full
kitchen access **\$55/night**

Double room wi/air conditioning,
full kitchen access **\$72/night**

Sign up soon:
emmatteson@worldnet.att.net

**ATA Certification
Requirements**

As of January 2004, ATA-certified members need to complete at least 20 hours of approved continuing education over a 3-year period to maintain their certified status.

"Approved" continuing education includes attendance at workshops and seminars at ATA annual conferences and regional seminars as well as at other educational conferences held internationally during the year. Volunteer work can include being a grader for the Danish>English exam, presenting a seminar or joining an ATA committee. You can also take courses at local community colleges in your fields of specialty, e.g. basic anatomy courses, technical editing, legal courses, etc., to satisfy the requirements.

**Nordic Mid-Year Conference at
UW-Milwaukee • July 12-17, 2004**

A mid-year conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is being organized for July 12-17, 2004.

The conference has the sponsorship of the Graduate Certificate Program in Translation at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and is being organized with assistance from a newly formed ATA chapter, the Midwest Association of Translators and Interpreters (MATI). This regional group supports translators and interpreters in Illinois, Indiana, and southern Wisconsin.

Seminars are being planned for both Nordic and non-Nordic translation, including:

- Trados 6.5 and SDLX training (Jul 12-15)
- DejaVu training
- Make Your Computer Work For You (not against you!)
- Technical Writing & Translation
- The Basics of Clinical Drug Testing
- Translating Historical Documents
- Medical Translation

*Direct suggestions to Edith Matteson
emmatteson@worldnet.att.net*

This 5-day conference will take place on the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee campus and will include *very* low-cost housing. We will be reserving a few inexpensive rooms at the dorms, so sign up early. We anticipate a large turnout. Milwaukee is just over an hour's drive from Chicago, and we may be able to arrange for a little sightseeing...

FIT Conference in Helsinki 2005

At last year's Nordic dinner at the ATA conference, the Finnish members at the end of the table were eagerly discussing the possibility of organizing a conference in Helsinki, Finland, in conjunction with the FIT conference in 2005. Anyone interested in attending and/or coordinating the effort should contact Tuomas Kostianen at *tuomas@jps.net*

A Tale of Two Time Zones

By Susan Larsson

It's midnight, and the alarm just went off. Coffee cup in hand, I sit down at the computer to check my mail, read the headlines in Dagens Nyheter and Dagens Industri, click over to the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*, and plan the day's (night's?) work. Because it's 9 am in Sweden, and that's the time zone in which I work.

With little demand for the services of a Swedish to English translator in the US, I've gradually adapted my lifestyle to meet the needs of my clients, almost all of whom are located in Sweden. Living in the Pacific Northwest, this means adapting to a nine-hour time difference – which means that my day starts at midnight, 9 am in Sweden. And any time, throughout the night, when I look at the clock my mind immediately “translates” the time into Swedish time; 3 am is noon – all the clients are at lunch; 4 am they're back from lunch at 1 pm; and 8 am is closing time, 5 pm in Sweden.

Although it may seem odd to set your alarm to go off around midnight, give or take, depending on deadlines, a schedule like mine offers several advantages. For one thing, telemarketers never disturb me; in fact, if the phone rings it is almost always one of my clients or colleagues. A sunny day—which happens occasionally in rainy Washington—never distracts me when I look out the window

because it's always dark. And darkness is highly conducive to concentration. Best of all, even though I work at home, no one ever asks me where their favorite shirt is, or whether there are any clean socks or underwear, or what we're having for dinner – because the household is fast asleep. Even the dog lies peacefully in his corner and sometimes needs convincing to join me on a stroll around the block when I feel the need for air to clear my brain.

Accessibility and availability are essential; it's as convenient for clients to contact me as if I were in Sweden. Most do so by e-mail and I download frequently in order to respond quickly. The e-mail program runs in the background, programmed to play a special .wav file (like, “make my day” or “Houston, we've got a problem!”) when a message arrives from a client. Alerted to a message from a client, I quickly read and reply: sure, I can handle that, or sorry, no time for anything new, or that's not my field, better get someone else. Clients often say that no one responds as quickly as I do, which translates into work for me; either they've sent an inquiry to several translators, and I'm first to respond – or they've sent it to me, because they know they'll hear back from me immediately. And it works for me.

In practical terms, on a typical night I have breakfast around 1 am; a snack a few hours later. A neighbor drops by for coffee about 5 am and we take a three-mile walk (clients know my schedule and plan around it). When I get back I take a few minutes to chat with my sleepy daughter, who is getting ready for school. In the old days, I took her to the bus; now she drives herself. Somewhere around 4 or 5 in the afternoon in Sweden (7 or 8 am for

me) I shut the computer down, and head for bed and a chat with my husband, who is just getting up for work. The work night is over, and the day begins. Or vice versa.

“When do you sleep?” and “How do you have time for the family?” are the questions I’m asked most frequently. The first is easy; I need six hours of sleep, but divide it into two sessions: from 8 to 11, twice a day, give or take. The second is one of the great advantages, because I get to enjoy the sunshine that I would have missed had I been forced to sit at the computer during the day. No problems chauffeuring kids to appointments, or getting to the bank while it’s open. In fact, when I’m in Sweden during the summer and work from my office there, I often wonder how people handle daily chores if they have to work during working hours! It’s like having two days for the price of one.

Review: WordFinder

By David Rumsey

Just when I thought my bookshelf couldn’t hold any more language dictionaries, I discovered WordFinder. No more straining my neck turning to look up exotic terms or getting wet fingers flicking through Vinterberg’s massive Dansk>Engelsk Ordbog. WordFinder allows you to load a host of Scandinavian dictionaries onto your computer. The collection of Swedish <> English dictionaries includes almost all Swedish dictionaries available, including the full line of Nordstedts dictionaries (including Swedish<>German and Swedish<>French dictionaries). There are a few large Norwegian<>English dictionaries, including the standard Kunnskapsforlaget’s English <> Norwegian. The only major gap in the collection is in the Danish<> English collection. The Danish dictionaries are largely from the publisher L&S, while dictionaries from Gad’s, including Vinterberg’s Dansk>Engelsk Ordbog have not yet been added to their collection. (A number of Danish dictionaries are currently included with

another Danish dictionary software, yet WordFinder is negotiating the rights to more Danish dictionaries).

WordFinder integrates quite smoothly with both MS-Word as well as Internet Explorer. In Word, you simply highlight the word in question, hit the Shift + Right Alt key, and WordFinder will bring up the selected entry automatically. Another few clicks and you can insert the dictionary’s entry into your Word document.

WordFinder also allows you to add notes to dictionary entries, create custom dictionaries, add online dictionaries to WordFinder, and search multiple dictionaries at one time by creating dictionary groups. (cont’d)

Aurora Borealis Lives!!

I am sure many of you thought the newsletter breathed its last breath last year, but we’ve revived it. I am looking for any small articles on the topics below to help keep it going!

- Working from home
- Working with children at home
- Dealing with Scandinavian clients
- Dictionary Reviews
- Tax and accounting tips
- Software reviews
- Troublesome translations

Submit ideas to drumsey@wwt.net

(continued from previous)

WordFinder also comes with a separate application, EasyReader, which works with the Internet Explorer browser to provide online translation of websites. As you run the cursor over unfamiliar words on a website, Easy Reader provides the translation in small rollover labels, (i.e., the small tags that appear when you hold the cursor over a button on your toolbar).

The main drawback to WordFinder includes a relatively confusing system to search within single or multiple entry windows. It's easy to get turned around and discover that you cannot find the translation for "dator", because you're still stuck in the entry window for "dagis."

Another minor irritant is having to scroll through entry screens using a scroll bar, as opposed to placing the arrow in the entry window and moving it with the arrow keys.

The pricing is also somewhat confusing in that each dictionary costs roughly the same, regardless of the size of the dictionary, 30 entries or 30,000 entries.

Overall, WordFinder helps to speed the translation process significantly, especially in conjunction with a translation memory program. It allows you to take your dictionary collection with you and complete your translation projects anywhere you want. It's an investment that is well worth it.

Swedish Translation Booklets Available from SFÖ

There are still copies available of two booklets from the Swedish Association of Professional Translators (SFÖ) entitled "*Translating Names in Swedish*" and "*Common Pitfalls in Swedish Translation*". Contact ATA Headquarters mary@atanet.org if you are interested in receiving a copy of these booklets.

Highlights from Helle Frandsen

Helle Frandsen presented an in-depth seminar on the *Legal Pitfalls in English-Danish Translation* at ATA's 44th Annual Conference in Phoenix.

Ms. Frandsen provided an overview of the differences in the Danish and US/English legal systems and the resulting "false friends," semantic differences, sentence structures and features that are characteristic of Danish and English legal language.

It was a very interesting seminar that provided insight into translating both governmental texts as well as commercial contracts. The seminar was also attended by a few non-Nordic legal translators as well.

She has a colleague interested in providing a similar seminar on Financial Translation next year in Toronto.