

## The Party Line

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

*Jim Walker*

It is hard to believe that I have already been Assistant Administrator of the Slavic Languages Division for nearly six months. Thus far the job does not seem too onerous, but maybe I'm not doing all that I should. What exactly should I be doing?

According to the Division's by-laws, "The Assistant Administrator shall assist the Administrator as required and take an active interest in the activities of the Division." I hope that I have helped our hard-working Administrator, Natalia Kissock, at least a little bit, and I certainly do take an active interest in the activities of the Division, but that is a rather vague duty, isn't it?

Again according to the by-laws, "The purpose of the Division is to serve as a means of communication among its members, provide information and service to its members in specific fields of interest related to translation and/or interpretation into or from Russian and/or other Slavic languages, as well as languages of former Soviet republics, organize meetings to further cooperation and information exchanges among members, and promote the policies and objectives of the Association." I enthusiastically support all of these objectives, but exactly what needs to be done to accomplish them? I need to hear from you, the members of the SLD, with specific suggestions about what you want from the Division. Of course, the danger of speaking up with a suggestion is that you may be appointed chairperson of the committee to implement it!

In the absence of more specific instructions or suggestions, I do what I want to do. Mostly that has been helping to establish the Russian Translators Club on the Internet, which can be an excellent tool for accomplishing all of the objectives set forth above. The Club was founded by Galina Raff, and she has put a great deal of work into building it up. I am very happy about how well it has been functioning so far, but somewhat disappointed that more people have not joined yet. I hope that by now everyone has received an invitation to join. You should check it out, if nothing else, just for the incredibly useful links there. If you received an invitation, but neglected to join before it expired, just e-mail me, and I will send you another one.

I found the Division by-laws quoted above on the SLD web site, which is sorely in need of updating. In my statement on my candidacy for Assistant Administrator, I promised to delegate aggressively. And in keeping with that promise, I am requesting that several people volunteer to form a committee to update and improve the web site. This web site is probably our best means of communicating with the outside world and letting translation and interpretation consumers know that if they need high-quality translation or interpretation into or out of a Slavic language they should be dealing with an SLD member. Therefore, it is important that we keep it as professional and current as possible. In the event that volunteers do not step forward, I will be calling and cajoling members who claim computers as a specialty.

Here is a wild idea. As you may know, the Portuguese Division has been having a regular spring meeting for several years now. Is there enough interest among SLD members for us to have a spring meeting? It could be a kind of mini-conference, but more relaxed and informal, with only SLD members participating. What do you think?

Those are some of the things I want to do with the Division. What do you want to do? Let me know. Assistant Administrator and SLD's party animal, Jim Walker, can be reached at [perevod@ellijay.com](mailto:perevod@ellijay.com).

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## NEW VISSON WORK: YOURS FOR REVIEWING

Our publication continues to attract the notice of the leading lights in the Slavic language community. Lynn Visson, author of *From Russian into English: An Introduction to Simultaneous Interpretation*, which is recommended enthusiastically by many of our most proficient interpreters, has contacted us in order to subscribe to *SlavFile* and offer her newest work for review. «Практикум по синхронному переводу с русского на английский» (с аудиоприложением) Moskva: Valent, 2000, includes a 200 page book and four 60 minute cassettes. The target audience encompasses those studying and teaching simultaneous interpretation; advanced translation students; interpreters who want to practice; and advanced Russian language students. The book consists of 25 Russian texts with English translations with stylistic variants, commentary and explanations of interpretation/translation difficulties, clean English text.

The tapes have readings in Russian of all of the texts, followed by English reading. Russian readers are professional Russian actors; English readers are interpreters, with American, British, Australian, Indian, Canadian accents.

Many of the tapes are read at both slow and fast speeds, so that interpreters can practice.

We will send this work to the first reviewer who contacts us and who has qualifications putting him/her in the target audience described above. Reviewer will have till approximately August 1 to complete a review and will of course get to keep the book and tapes. Contact Lydia at coordinates on masthead.



## DICTIONARY EXCHANGE

Yahoo! Клуб русских переводчиков has opened a Dictionary Exchange program. Its goal is to provide a mechanism whereby translators can exchange duplicate or otherwise superfluous dictionaries. To view the list of dictionaries available for exchange go to <http://briefcase.yahoo.com/bms36>, or from the Club (<http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/russiantranslators>), click on Links and go to the Dictionary Exchange Master List.

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**OFFERS OF WORK FROM EMPLOYERS AND CLIENTS ARE PUBLISHED FREE**

### 2000 DEADLINE

Fall issue	August 1
Winter 2001 issue	December 1

### DISCOUNTS

- 20% discount for SLD members
- 10% discount for second and each consecutive ad on calendar year basis.
- Only one discount is allowed.

# SlavFile Mailbox

March 11, 2000

To the editors:

I received with some excitement my very first *SlavFile* newsletter today (Winter/Spring 2000). I have just become a member of ATA, and am currently enrolled in a translation certification program at the University of California at Berkeley. I have translated from Bulgarian, Macedonian and Serbian/Croatian, as well as Romanian, on an occasional freelance basis for many years, and am looking forward to working professionally in those languages some day.

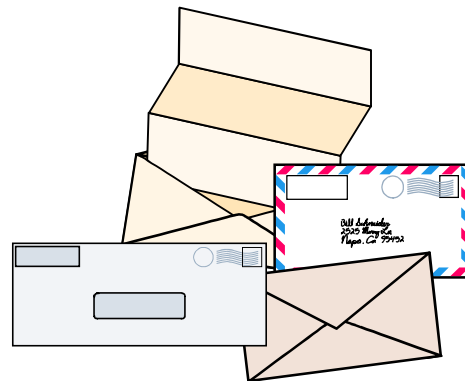
I leafed through the newsletter, becoming more and more anxious as I realized that absolutely every article dealt exclusively with Russian language issues. I asked myself why I enrolled in the Slavic Languages Division of the ATA, and if it shouldn't be called instead "Russian Language Division"!

I am interested to know what efforts your editorial team is making toward including those who work with other Slavic languages. I read in your article that you "have tried to use occasional SlavFile special language issues...to expand the scope of the division beyond a narrow focus on Russian only," so I'm assuming that you've made efforts to be more inclusive. But I would assume that non-Russian material should make it into each issue of the SlavFile. Are there so few South and West Slavists among your members, or does your editorial staff simply receive no contributions in this area?

I appreciate any comment.

With best wishes,

Rachel MacFarlane  
Berkeley, CA  
merakli@earthlink.net



## *The editors reply:*

Dear Rachel,

Thank you very much for your thoughtful letter; I very greatly appreciate your taking the time to write to us, rather than becoming disaffected and simply dropping your membership.

You talk about the name of our division—you are quite right, of course, that the majority of our members work primarily or exclusively in Russian. The division was started 9 or so years ago for and by people working primarily with Russian. Some years ago we voted to change our name from Russian Language to Slavic Language Division. The rationale for this was that many of our members did work with other languages and that we felt we would be happy to welcome and serve as an umbrella division for the other Slavic languages.

This is still our policy: we have invited, recruited, canvassed etc. every ATA member we encounter (we being the editors and other people very involved in the division), we have had special Polish- and Ukrainian -focused issues of the SlavFile and since Laura Wolfson and I have been editing the newsletter, we have published every contribution in or about a Slavic Language other than Russian, and/or by translators of same that has been submitted to us. However, as you have noted, the articles we have received do not amount to even one such contribution per issue.

*Continued on page 4*

## **Riding the Rough Roads between Russian and English**

*Nora Favorov*

Faced with an expression beyond the ken of all known dictionaries, a business term that represents a concept existing in the source culture but not the target culture, a touchy legal or political situation in which you know a translation which is correct in certain other contexts would wreak havoc in this particular context, or a line of poetry that seems to be the exclusive property of some russophone (or anglophone) muse, shedding all its magic in the target language, haven't you ever wished you had a roomful of bilingual minds to help you solve your problem? Whether or not you plan to attend the ATA conference in Orlando this September, send me your

stumpers and I will collect them for a roundtable discussion of possible solutions at a panel bearing the same title as this announcement. Of course, in most cases the problems presented will no longer be *актуальными* for the translators who submit them. The point is to have fun applying our collective brainpower to some interesting translation issues, and, as always, to learn something in the process. Don't delay! Send them while they're fresh! There's no need to limit yourselves to terms you are actually hired to translate. Any idiom or term you come across is fair game.

Nora Favorov • 8364 Amber Oak Dr. • Orlando, FL 32817  
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I believe that there is something of a vicious cycle involved here. In spite of our words and attitudes, translators and interpreters of SLOTR (Slavic Languages other than Russian) may not feel welcome in our division because there are so few of them already in it and for this reason, more of them do not join. There may be additional resentment due to the fact that we have taken the word “Slavic” for our division, though it is my belief that if the other Slavic Languages wished to form a separate division, the vast majority of our members would agree to cede them the name without protest, and in such a case we would go back to calling ourselves the Russian Language Division.

Now for your personal disappointment. We would be very happy to have you contribute to SlavFile; if you would like write material yourself and collect material which others have written for a South Slavic issue or simply from time to time, we would be delighted. Contributors do not have to be ATA or SLD members, but we typically do not reprint material from other publications. We do ask, however, that articles written in languages other than English or Russian be accompanied by a translation into English, if for no other reason than that the editors would like to know what they say before we agree to publish them. As a first step, I propose that we publish your letter accompanied by this reply. If this does not seem a viable course of action to you, and you feel deceived by the name of our division, I will personally talk to our division administrators and the officers and/or directors ATA and request that you be allowed to apply your SLD dues to membership in any other ATA division you choose. I hope though, that you will choose instead to become an active member of SLD and help us recruit others like yourself.

Sincerely yours,

*Lydia Razran Stone, Editor, SlavFile*

Further note from the editors: Rachel has temporarily declined to produce an article for us on the grounds that her career as a translator is only just getting under way. HOWEVER, we extend the remarks addressed to her in the above letter to every translator of Slavic languages other than Russian. Please let us hear from you. Even letters/articles of complaint are a step forward.

The new issue of WIRED has a big section on machine translation. One author compares MT to a box containing 100 cookies, with the label “95 of these cookies have not been poisoned.”

The stuff on machine translation is in the May 2000 issue of Wired.

You can get more at [www.wired.com/wired](http://www.wired.com/wired) if you're interested.

### Responses to Boris Silverstejn's Idiom Savants column in the last issue of the SlavFile:

I. From Raisa Gertsberg, Huntington Beach, CA, [raisag@gte.net](mailto:raisag@gte.net)

Attached {are} a few suggestions for the translations in the idioms' list (*SlavFile*, Vol.10, No. 1-2). Hope it's OK that some of those come from dictionaries I have. Since I work primarily in high-tech subject areas (such as computers, software, telecommunications, etc.) and use only specialized technical glossaries most of the time, it was fun to look up some interesting words in general dictionaries for a change.

Curfew (for a teenager)

I suggest “детское время”. Although it would probably sound a little offensive to a teenager who no longer considers herself a child. To her you can just say “Чтобы была дома не позже 10!” and then hope and pray that she is.

Middlebrow

From “A Supplement to the New English-Russian Dictionary”, I. R. Galperin:

1. человек среднего интеллекта; обыватель;
2. приверженец традиционных представлений об искусстве, культуре и т. п.; человек с отсталыми вкусами.

Bite the bullet

From the “Dictionary of New Words and Meanings”, Z. S. Trofimova:

1. стиснуть зубы, терпеть, крепиться;
2. принять трудное решение.

II. From Tim Sergay, Columbus Ohio, [sergay.1@osu.edu](mailto:sergay.1@osu.edu), who also found the dictionary translation of middlebrow.

Here's the neologism I have in mind for the family-discipline sense of “curfew”: “шнурочный час,” a pun modeled on “комедантский час” using the youth slang word for parents (“шнурки в стакане” — “родители дома”) and the phrase “урочный час,” “the appointed hour.”

III. From: Edward E.M. Wright, Talbott, TN [ex007@lcs.net](mailto:ex007@lcs.net)

A relatively new idiom I have encountered in industrial contexts: с колес — just in time. It is being used the same way as the English phrase.

Example 1: Plant manager: We can operate с колес [on a just-in-time basis].

Example 2:...fuel supplies will be arriving at the power plants с колес [just in time or on a just-in-time basis.]

When I encountered the first quote, there was not enough context to confirm the meaning, but the second one provided enough context to make a reasonable translation and it fit the first quote also.

**Response to Kevin Hendzel's Glossary published in the last *SlavFile* issue:**

From Brand Frentz, North Makato, MN  
maziegfr@aol.com

There is a small problem in the current issue {of *SlavFile*} on p. 16, in Kevin Hendzel's generally very intelligent and helpful material. The sixth line uses the familiar phrase "введение в действие." but {I would} argue that this phrase does not mean "enactment of legislation." A legislature enacts legislation by passing it, which is "принять законопроект," and not yet "введение." Legislation normally includes a clause specifying the "введение в действие," which means "putting into force," "taking effect," or some such phrase. In other words, {the Russian term} refers to that precise moment in time when the law becomes enforceable. (I am a lawyer as well as translator, and we always need to pin down when laws take effect, the date after which they can be applied. That date is often months after they are "enacted"). English gerunds sound awkward, while Russian uses them easily, so I usually employ some sort of circumlocution in translating this phrase.

**Kevin replies:**

My thanks to Mr. Frentz for his sharp eye. That was both a good catch and a valuable contribution.

The problem with the entry was not in the original Russian phrases or even in the translation. The problem was with my choice of context for the phrase, and my insertion of the word "legislation" in the English translation when it did not appear in the original Russian phrase.

The original Russian phrase was "порядок введения в действие," indicating almost certainly that the context was an industrial procedure or plant standard. There are two reasons that it couldn't be legislation. First, there is no "procedure" for assuring that legislation takes effect once it is enacted, since the effective date is usually the last provision indicated on the statute itself. Second, the more common phrase for capturing the notion of legislation taking effect is "введение в силу," not "...в действие." I should have spotted this.

The correct context would have yielded "implementation procedure" for a plant standard or work procedure. It could also apply to an industry standard.

I would encourage others to contribute corrections, revisions or alternate translations to the lists published in the *SlavFile* as this helps us to keep the material accurate and reliable.

Kevin Hendzel  
Arlington, VA.

**COMMUNITY TRANSLATION IN SEATTLE**

*Larissa Kulinich*

An open discussion at the fall 1999 meeting of the Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society (NOTIS) Slavic SIG (Special Interest Group) led to the surprising realization that there was no consensus as to how to translate many common English words into Russian. Many translators had struggled alone with certain words, thinking that their difficulty was unique, caused by their own failings. On February 15<sup>th</sup>, the Slavic SIG held its Spring 2000 meeting, which included a workshop focusing on the translation of selected words suggested by members after the fall meeting. The workshop attracted enthusiasts and experts, generating a lively, productive and intellectually stimulating exchange.

The English word "community" attracted the most attention. Attempts to translate this word into Russian were based on 15 texts averaging 100 words each, taken from newspaper and magazine articles. The topics of the articles covered a wide range of issues - politics, economics, finance, professional and civic life, education, ethnic problems, travel, art, and sports. Our task at the workshop was to translate phrases with the word "community" from English into Russian within the context of each article. Following the workshop the author of this article undertook to provide a classification scheme based on the specific meanings of the word "community" and various structural patterns in which it occurs.

I agree completely with lexicographer Kenneth Katzner's statement (see *SlavFile*, Vol. 10, No. 1-2, p. 1, 26) that the process of identifying the meanings of words in various contexts and providing relevant explanations requires a slow and methodical approach and I would add that it is also absorbing and gratifying. After our workshop, I could not help delving more deeply into "community research" and identified 90 additional uses of the word "community." The data below further substantiate the translation options which resulted from our collective effort.

It might be worthwhile noting that the word "community" is used in newspaper articles with surprising frequency. In a random sample from *The Seattle Times* (Local News, Section B, Sunday, March 19, 2000) containing 17 articles, the word "community" occurred in seven of them: once in one article, twice in four articles, four times in one article, and eight times in one article.

Various uses of the word "community" in the collected examples can be placed into categories generally consistent with dictionary definitions. Some of the meanings and structural patterns lend themselves to further classification into subcategories. The overall classification scheme I derived follows.

I. The first category relates to **people**. It is the largest category, constituting 72 percent of the examples. This category can be subdivided into the following four subcategories:

1. People who reside in a specific location.

The most common structural patterns here are:

a) A modifier — adjective, a possessive pronoun, or a demonstrative pronoun — plus "community," e.g., **small communities, those communities, local communities, the whole community, an organic community, their community, homeless community, rural communities;**

b) The word "community" followed by the name of a locality or another phrase relating to a locality, e.g., **the community of Barrow, community of mainland Americans;**

c) The word “community” used as a modifier to emphasize some organized activity in which people living locally are involved e.g.: **community activist, community service, community organizer, community events, community party, community volunteer, on-site community services.**

The specific word combinations translated during the workshop that fell into the preceding subcategories are as follows.

1a) ... to participate in creating art for **our community** - ... для наших местных жителей; ...will be carried forward by **our community** - ...нашим сообществом...; he challenges the University and **the community** to work better - ...университет и общественность; someone in **the community** — ... среди местного населения (местных жителей).

1b)...the **community of mainland Americans** - контингент (группа) американцев с континента.

1c) ... a few large **community events** - ... общественные мероприятия; ...**community service** and journalistic goals and values — общественная работа; ...said 29-year-old **community organizer** — общественный организатор (активист).

2) People who belong to certain ethnic groups and nationalities. The following examples illustrate this usage of the word “community”. The **Eskimo community, Shi’ite community, the black community.** The suggested translation is **население.** The example below was translated at the workshop. ...the World Trade Organization and the **black community** - ... и черное население.

3) People who belong to a certain group or organization centered around specific interests, age groups, religion, sexual orientation, or similar affiliations or characteristics. For example: **senior communities, ethnic and religious communities, evangelical communities, minority communities.** Possible translations here can be: **общество, сообщество, группа.** Participants of the workshop dealt with the following word combinations: **gay and lesbian community... - общество гомосексуалистов и лесбиянок; minority communities — национальные меньшинства.**

4) People who are members of a certain profession. For example: **farming community, metaphysical/ holistic health community, technical community, engineering community.** The options that were discussed for translating the word “community” in this context were as follows. A noun in the plural denoting a profession in the generic sense - **врачи, инженеры;** a collective noun with the suffix —**ство**—студенчество, учительство; **круги** — медицинские круги; деловые круги; **в мире (в среде)** plus the name of the particular profession in the genitive plural case — в мире (среде) юристов. The following examples were considered at the workshop: ... of an economically viable **farming community** — фермеры (фермерство); the **investment community** ... - инвесторы, в мире инвесторов (инвестиции); ... in the Seattle **business community** ... - деловые круги.

**II.** The second category relates to a **locality** inhabited by a certain group of people and accounts for 23 % of the examples. This category can be subdivided into three subcategories, asso-

ciated with particular syntactic patterns. These syntactic patterns are similar to the ones of category I .1. They are as follows.

1. A modifier —an adjective, a possessive pronoun, a demonstrative pronoun —plus the word “community,” e.g., ... people in **our community**; ...a **dust-covered community**; ... road projects in **rural communities**; ... the **gated communities** and parks; ...to grow up in a **safe community.**

2. The word “community” used as a modifier or in the possessive case, e.g.,...a variety of **community spaces**; ...the **community’s teen center**; a **community college.**

3. The word “community” plus “of” followed either by a geographic name or modifying nouns, adjectives or participles. For example: ... from the **community of Magisterio**; ...a **community of tattered beach umbrellas, ragged bedspreads, plastic bins.**

Workshop participants concluded that when the word “community” is used in meaning II, it should be translated as **район, город, округ, местность, среда.** These are the examples considered at the workshop: It was a night class at a **community college** on this city’s north side... **местный (районный) колледж города**....Participating translators were particularly proud of the following example: - ...my kids know that **their community** is the world. The suggested translation was — мои дети знают, что **их дом**—это весь мир.

**III.** The third category relates to a **group of associated nations.** It is the smallest category, accounting for only 5 % of references. It is easy to identify the word “community” as being in this category, since it is almost always modified by the adjective “international.” The suggested translation options are as follows: **мировая (международная) общественность, мировое сообщество; мировое содружество.**

At the workshop two instances of the usage of the word “community” in this meaning were discussed: ...North Korea meets the **international community’s** concerns... **международная общественность**; ...intensify bilateral relationships and cooperation in the **international community** — **международное сообщество.**

By way of conclusion, I want to thank the NOTIS Slavic SIG members who contributed their time, effort, knowledge, and enthusiasm to make this workshop so productive and memorable. I hope that the conclusions reached by the participants of the workshop will prove helpful to other English-Russian translators, and that the ideas, methods, and insights may even be of some use to other language groups. The additional terms discussed at our meeting will be covered in a second *SlavFile* article.

Larissa Kulinich taught English at a University level for 18 years in Novokuznetsk, Russia, and worked there as a free-lance translator and interpreter between English and Russian. Currently she teaches Russian at the Seattle Central Community College and is a free-lance English < > Russian translator and interpreter in medical, legal and business areas. Larissa can be reached at: Tel.: (206) 236-0286; FAX: (206) 275-0231; E-mail: larajim@earthlink.net

## THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE TODAY

by Larissa Ryazanova-Clarke and Terence Wade

Review by Vera Reife

Published by Routledge, London and New York, 1999  
ISBN # 0-415-14256, 369 pp., \$25.00

I would like to draw your attention to a new book by Larissa Ryazanova-Clarke and Terence Wade, *The Russian Language Today*. Larissa Ryazanova-Clarke is a lecturer in Russian at the University of Edinburgh. Terence Wade is a Professor Emeritus and Research Fellow in Russian Studies at the University of Strathclyde. Although the book is academic in tone and abundant in linguistic terminology, I read it with no less interest and involvement than I would a novel. It is the first full analysis and modern guide to the contemporary Russian language written in English I have encountered.

This book reveals the striking correlation that exists between the features of a language and the historical events occurring in the country where that language is spoken. In the twentieth century, Russia has suffered greater and more dramatic change than perhaps any other country in the world. With impressive precision, the authors trace how all aspects of the language, from vocabulary to grammar, have been modified due as a result of even relatively minor historical events. For example, the authors illustrate how the meaning of the word товарищ shifted from its prerevolutionary meaning of “friend” to “colleague” and later, as result of growing changes the Revolution and Bolsheviks coming to power, became a synonym of коммунист “communist.” Under Stalin’s rule, товарищ completely displaced the old terms of роподин and госпожа (Mr. and Miss/ Mrs). Today these two words are again being used in their original meanings as a result of the recent changes in Russia.

*The Russian Language Today* is impressive in its linguistic and historical authenticity, consistency, and coherence. Every observation is supported by extracts from literary sources and the contemporary press.

Although linguistics has never been an exact science, this book describes every aspect of the language with mathematical precision and amazing detail, touching on the vocabulary of all classes of Russian society. The authors describe gradual changes in the languages of politics, media, science, the theater, the judiciary, and even slang. The reader sees how historical changes affect not only language structure, grammar, semantics and word formation, but also the socio-stylistic aspects of language, as well as phraseology. For example, on page 51 we read: “Soviet society of the 1960s experienced some relief from the perverse morals of Stalinism, and certain humane concepts corrupted by ideology of previous years were revived in their original sense. Thus, гуманизм (humanism), доброта (kindness), and жалость (compassion), which in earlier political contexts had had negative overtones, as words which described undesirable emotions, now shed their negative connotations.”

The book consists of two parts. The first part describes the history of the Soviet Russia and the development of the Russian language, starting from the Russian Revolution up through the

present time. The reader sees how the Revolution, the Civil War, Stalin’s regime, World War II, Khrushchev’s thaw, Brezhnev’s period of “stagnation,” perestroika, and the introduction of the free market are reflected in the lexicon of the language spoken by the citizenry. The authors describe lexical development from 1917 to 1985 and allow readers to witness the phraseological innovations, neologisms, and loan words that have crowded the language of the farmer, the poet, the media, and the номенклатура. The early Soviet period was abundant with German and French lexical borrowings. When the “Iron Curtain” began to be drawn aside, the Russian language was infiltrated with Americanisms, whose numbers continue to increase as a result of perestroika and a more open market. The first section also describes changes in geographic and institutional names and the rehabilitation of religious and pre-Soviet economic terminology.

The second part of the book concentrates primarily on word-formation procedures, grammatical changes, and how abbreviations are formed. In particular, it describes the linguistic factors involved in new historical developments and in the process of affixation. Part two also discusses such phenomena as clipped compounds (for example, генералька from генеральная репетиция “dress rehearsal,” многоэтажка from многоэтажное здание “multi-story building”); verbal and other nouns, truncated forms, acronyms, and many other linguistic forms. This part is particularly interesting in its discussion of the phenomena of changes in place names that have been taking place since the late 1980s. These changes affect the names of streets, cities, and the republics that have become new, independent states. We are shown how pre-Revolutionary names are returning to the Russian language, and learn that the Russian people are eagerly repudiating vocabulary connected with one of the darkest times in the Russian history—the period of the Stalin regime and Lenin’s dictatorship.

The book demonstrates profound and precise knowledge of twentieth-century Russian history, especially the history of the last decade, and scrupulously describes the connection between those events and the Russian language. *The Russian Language Today* is a great addition to studies of the Russian language. I was impressed by the great amount of serious labor that went into the writing of this book. I highly recommend it to everyone who is subject to the hypnotic lure exercised by the country that, as Alexander Blok once said, “lies between two warring races, the Mongols and the Europeans.” Any reader entranced by the complicated Russian language and the mysterious Russian soul will want to read this book.

Reviewer Vera Reife lives in Somerset, New Jersey. She is a Russian interpreter (simultaneous/consecutive) and translator. Currently, most of her work is as a court interpreter for the New Jersey court system and New York Federal courts. As a translator, she specializes in law, medicine and the humanities. She would love to increase the proportion of her professional time devoted to conference interpretation and literary translations. She can be reached electronically at VeraR7@aol.com

## ADVENTURES IN POETRY TRANSLATION

### SLD GUEST HOFSTADTER GIVES LITERARY DIVISION TALK

By Nora Seligman Favorov

What is so special about poetry as a genre? What exactly is lost when a poem is translated into prose? Compare, for instance, two versions of the opening lines of *Eugene Onegin*, a prose translation by the author of this article and a verse translation by Douglas Hofstadter:

1. In falling seriously ill, my uncle, a man [who lives by] the most honorable rules, found the best possible way to force [us] to respect him.

2. My uncle, matchless moral model,  
When deathly ill, learned how to make  
His friends respect him, bow and coddle —  
Of all his ploys, that takes the cake.

Both versions do an adequate job of providing the information and setting the ironic tone that launches Pushkin's tale, but only one invites the reader to gallop away on the majestic steed of iambic tetrameter. Not only is the reader propelled forward with each hoof beat, but the view from the saddle is much richer. The experience of following plot and character development is enhanced by our appreciation of the side show, in which the author and/or translator performs the acrobatics required by the dictates of rhyme and rhythm. Each additional formal constraint moves the trapeze higher, and we "oh" and "ah" all the more with every successful *salto mortale*, just as we laugh appreciatively each time the artist turns clown and intentionally (and artfully) stumbles.

Once his father'd been most dutiful;  
Now, though, lived by the phrase "Owe debts!"  
Still, he staged grand balls quite beautiful,  
Till his creditors cast their *nyets*.<sup>1</sup>

But let's not take the circus metaphor too far. There is something magical that happens when words are successfully arranged in verse form. The impact of good poetry on our thoughts and emotions is distinctly different from the impact of good prose. Form matters, which is why, as Hofstadter pointed out, no one will feel excitement over Nabokov's word-for-word translation of *Eugene Onegin*, despite the fact that it is a perspicuous translation of a great work.

Hofstadter entitled his talk "Both Losing & Gaining: Adventures in Translation." As an illustration of what is lost when translators simplify their task by abandoning formal aspects of the original, he presented the case of a Chinese poem by eighth-century painter, calligrapher and poet Wang Wei. Thanks to the efforts of Eliot Weinberger and Octavio Paz, who have published multiple translations of this poem in their book *Nineteen Ways of Looking at Wang Wei*, and to the efforts of Vikram Seth, who has also published a translation of the same poem, there were plenty of versions available for comparison. None, however, so much as tipped its hat to the poem's original form, composed of four lines of five characters each, with each character representing a single syllable.

Hofstadter has studied Chinese and thus was able to read us the original. As he pointed out, precision and terseness are essential qualities of the original poem. Of all the published translations of the poem Hofstadter most liked Seth's, but still found it inadequate. "My own approach was based on my feeling that the translation of poetry should bring into your own language some quality from outside which is not just ideas or content, but structure or form - that is, new ways of using language that have never been exploited in your language. I felt as if this rendering of the Wang Wei poem in English, though very graceful, was not bringing anything linguistically or structurally new into English, and that something else had to be brought in to give readers more of a feel for the original Chinese."

Hofstadter set out to translate the poem following its original structure of four lines consisting of five single-syllable words each (see "Deer Glade" below). Then he decided to try something that he himself admits is a bit "extreme," namely to recreate some of the visual effect of the original Chinese, which was written in vertical columns, arranged from right to left. Furthermore, he split the words, stacking one half word on another and used a font that would at least suggest the appearance of Chinese characters (see "Bleak Peak" below).

<sup>1</sup> Both poetic excerpts from *Eugene Onegin* are from Douglas Hofstadter's 1999 translation published by Basic Books.

#### Deer Glade (tr. Douglas Hofstadter)

Deer Enclosure (word-for-word gloss)  
by Wang Wei

empty hill not see person  
but hear person language sound  
return shadow enter deep forest  
back shine green moss on

Bleak peak, no one seen,  
But hark, sound of voice,  
Sun shafts pierce dark woods,  
Bounce off high green moss.

#### Deer Park (tr. Vikram Seth)

Empty hills, no man in sight –  
Just echoes of the voice of men.  
In the deep wood reflected light  
Shines on the blue-green moss again.

Bleak Peak (tr. Douglas Hofstadter)  
To be read in columns from right to left.

<i>fl</i> <i>ck</i>	<i>su</i> <i>n</i>	<i>bu</i> <i>t</i>	<i>bl</i> <i>ak</i>
<i>fr</i> <i>m</i>	<i>hl</i> <i>eks</i>	<i>hark</i> <i>nk</i>	<i>pk</i> <i>ak</i>
<i>hi</i> <i>gh</i>	<i>pie</i> <i>ncc</i>	<i>hush</i> <i>sh</i>	<i>sp</i> <i>y</i>
<i>gre</i> <i>en</i>	<i>dn</i> <i>nk</i>	<i>l</i> <i>ke</i>	<i>n</i> <i>a</i>
<i>ba</i> <i>nk</i>	<i>ba</i> <i>sk</i>	<i>ta</i> <i>lk</i>	<i>fo</i> <i>lk</i>



The purpose of this exercise, as I understand it, is not to prove the importance of being visually close to the original when undertaking poetic translation, but just to bring the anglophone reader a little closer to the experience of reading the original Chinese. The original cannot possibly be perfectly recreated in English, but in making such a creative attempt to preserve form, Hofstadter opens a new vista on this poetic landscape, one very foreign for most of us in the audience.

From 8<sup>th</sup> century China, the presentation took us to 16<sup>th</sup> century France, introducing the poem “Ma Mignonne” by Clément Marot, which is the focus of Hofstadter’s book on translation and other matters linguistic, *Le Ton beau de Marot*. After presenting the poem in French and in a literal gloss (which he made clear he did not consider a translation, since it missed the main feature of the poem, the charm of its form) Hofstadter made some comments on the structure of the poem and took us through several treatments of it by himself, friends, colleagues and his mother (whose “Hi Toots!” version of “Ma Mignonne” plays fast and loose with the form and tone, but was a great hit with the audience). The tale of Hofstadter’s love story with this poem is a fascinating one. I would encourage anyone with an interest in poetry translation to read about it in *Le Ton beau de Marot* (Basic Books).

Hofstadter has long been a student of artificial intelligence and the potential (or lack thereof) of machines to replicate the workings of the human brain (a subject also explored in *Le Ton beau de Marot*). He closed his talk with some examples of machine translation that can only be described as “humorous” and perhaps also as “encouraging” or “discouraging,” depending on whether you are a provider or a consumer of translation services. Unfortunately, the constraints of space prevent me from sharing all of these masterpieces with the readers of the *SlavFile*. Highlights from those not reproduced below include the translation of “Ma Mignonne” as “My Flapper” (evidently French slang from the twenties) and “There there is no time went for a walk and I, but north for me is harmful” as a translation of “Там некогда гулял и я; но вреден север для меня”. The Intertran system certainly came up with a few gems in translating “Боже мой” as

“Crikey” and “и день и ночь” as “ampersand day ampersand darkey.” Hofstadter made the point that, as poetry goes, *Eugeny Onegin* is neither obscure nor terribly complicated in its syntax. If machine translation would so butcher Pushkin, certainly other poets would fare even worse. Of course, our guest was preaching to the converted, but the audience clearly enjoyed this dramatic and humorous demonstration of just how essential they, as human translators, are to the process of translation.

*Eugene Onegin* stanza I.1 as anglicized by Stylus:

My DYADYA, most honour rules,  
when not it(he) has for fun fallen ill,  
to respect self has forced,  
And it is better to invent could not.  
His(its) example other science,  
But Bozhe my, which boredom  
to sit with ill both day, and night,  
not departing step away.  
Which low KOVARSTVO  
Half-live to amuse,  
it(him) pillows POPRAVLJAT',  
is sad to submit a medicine,  
to sigh and to think about self:  
When of features will take you.

*Eugene Onegin* stanza I.1 as anglicized by Systran:

My uncle, the most honest rules,  
When not into the joke of ZANEMOG.  
It to respect itself forced  
And better invent could not.  
Its example to others science,  
But God is my, what boredom  
To sit with the patient and day, and night,  
Without having moved away and to step/pitch away.  
What low insidiousness  
Of half-dead to amuse,  
To it pillows/pads to repair,  
Is sad to bring medicine,  
To sigh and to think about itself:  
When features is taken you.

Nora Seligman Favorov is a freelance commercial and literary translator living in Orlando, Florida. She is organizing a roundtable discussion of a variety of difficult R-E-R translation problems to be held at the ATA convention in September and would appreciate the submission (now!) of any and all “stumpers” that SLD members can come up with for discussion in Orlando. She can be reached at [norafavorov@earthlink.net](mailto:norafavorov@earthlink.net) or 407-679-8151.

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## LINGUISTIC APPROACHES TO PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATION: ENGLISH LANGUAGE EQUIVALENTS TO NOMINALIZATION IN RUSSIAN

Review of presentation given at the St. Louis ATA meeting by Michael K. Launer, Ph.D.,  
The Florida State University & *RussTech Language Services, Inc.*

*Reviewed by Kathy Stackhouse*

This presentation focused on a feature of Russian that poses a significant challenge for Russian>English translators: how to find good English renderings for nouns derived from verbs, e.g., *установка* < *установить*; *оценка* < *оценить*. Dr. Launer cited three traditional English equivalents for the two Russian forms: derived noun (*establishment, evaluation + of*); gerundive (*establishing, evaluating*); and infinitive (*to establish, to evaluate*) and went into considerable detail on the wide range of other alternatives that may result in better-formed English sentences. He provided a multitude of fine examples from Russian-language texts on nuclear safety and a variety of possible English renderings. Space limitations permit the reviewer to cite only a small number here.

The presentation included a discussion of variations appropriate for particular disciplines or audiences. In the real world, client preferences (the translation company or the end user, or both) may also dictate how the translator should render a passage.

The five English lexical (*i.e.*, noun phrase) equivalents to Russian nominalizations covered in the seminar include:

gerundives;  
abstract nouns;  
infinitives;  
complex noun phrases;  
a gerundive or an abstract noun followed by an infinitive.

Examples and commentary follow:

Gerundives

В ядерных гарантиях *определение* содержания в образце урана или плутония обычно включает в себя:

*Измерение* полной массы образца.

*Приведение* образца в такое химическое состояние, которое необходимо для проведения анализа (например, *растворение* в азотной кислоте).

*Определение* наличия веществ, мешающих измерению.

*Определение* изотопных концентраций урана или плутония и *вычисление* эффективной атомной массы.

In nuclear safeguards, *determining* the content of a uranium or plutonium sample usually includes:

*Measuring* the total mass of the sample.

*Bringing* the sample into a chemical state required to conduct the analysis (for example, by *dissolving* the sample in nitric acid).

*Identifying* the presence of any substances that would impede measurement.

*Determining* the isotopic concentrations of uranium or plutonium and *calculating* the effective atomic mass.

Abstract nouns

Задачи, которые должна решать ФИС:

Сбор, передача и хранение информации

Ранжирование информации по степени конфиденциальности

Слежение за соблюдением регламента сроков отчетности

Слежение за перемещением местонахождения и количества ЯМ

Информационная поддержка управляющих решений на каждом уровне управления.

Functions to be performed by the FIS:

Data collection, transmittal, and storage;

Prioritization of information by security classification;

Tracking compliance with reporting schedules;

Tracking nuclear material quantities and movements;

Information support for management decisions at all management levels.

Infinitives

Система мер по физической защите, учету и контролю ЯМ, предназначенная *для*:

*Сдерживания, предотвращения, обнаружения* перемещения ЯМ на неразрешенные цели: владение, использование или применение его для саботажа;

*Соответствующего реагирования* в случае обнаружения приведенного выше переключения.

A system of measures related to NM protection, control, and accounting intended *to*:

*Deter, prevent, or detect* NM movement for unauthorized purposes: its possession, use or application in sabotage;

*Respond appropriately* in case any of the types of diversion listed above are discovered.

Complex noun phrases

Определение инвентарного количества ЯМ, находящегося в зоне баланса материала на основе комиссионных *проверок*:

*Подсчета* имеющегося количества учетных единиц.

*Идентификации* и *взвешивания* учетных единиц.

*Отбора* проб и их *анализа*.

*Проведения* неразрушающего анализа.

Бирок, пломб и печатей и последующего сличения полученного количества ЯМ с данными учетной документации.

Determining the inventory quantity of NM found in a material balance area on the basis of team *audits to*:

*Count* the actual quantity of items;

*Identify* and *weigh* items;

*Select* samples and *analyze* them;

*Conduct* non-destructive assays;

[*Verify*] tags and seals; and subsequent verification of the resultant quantity of NM with data in accounting documentation.

SENTENTIAL EQUIVALENTS TO RUSSIAN NOMINALIZATIONS

Quite often there is no natural way to express nominalized Russian nouns using English noun phrases. Rather, the translator must construct a complex sentence—one that contains a subordinate clause.

*соответствие* определенного оборудования предъявляемым требованиям

Определенное оборудование *соответствует* предъявляемым требованиям

*поступление* содержащихся в нем радиоактивных веществ в окружающую среду

Радиоактивные вещества, содержащиеся в [источнике], *поступят* [могут поступить] в окружающую среду

A variety of syntactic structures may serve as the best rendition of a Russian nominalization. These include subordinated declarative sentences, yes/no questions, and *wh*-questions (questions containing a question word). Statistically, declarative sentences occur much more frequently than do questions.

*Принятие решения о соответствии* идентификационных признаков личности *признакам*, зафиксированным для этой личности.

*Deciding whether or not* a person's identification characteristics *match* the characteristics recorded for that person

Another significant category involves structures that paraphrase purpose clauses. These are the equivalent of *чтобы*-clauses:

*выделение* делительной компоненты излучения

*чтобы выделить* делительную компоненту излучения

*непрерывность* процесса

*чтобы процесс* [оказался] *непрерывным*

Sentences exhibiting this characteristic usually have an expression such as *с целью* or *для чего-л* or are introduced by a passive participle:

Variants on “*чтобы*” + Infinitive

Совокупность организационно-технических мер и средств, **направленная на** оперативное прерывание развития обнаруженных несанкционированных действий, *развертывание* и *ввод* в действие всех сил реагирования

The aggregate of administrative and technical measures and equipment **intended to** *interrupt* the progress of unauthorized activities in a timely manner, and **to** *mobilize* and *deploy* all response forces

A variation on this type of structure in English manifests subordination of a question:

Деятельность, **проводимая** в системе государственного учета и контроля ЯМ **в целях** *определения изменений количества ЯМ*, происходящих за определенные периоды времени, и *ведение* учетных документов

Activities **conducted** in a national NM control and accounting system **in order to** *determine what changes in this quantity have occurred* over specific time periods, and *to maintain* accounting documents

Another major category of English paraphrases relies on relative structures. These may entail the use of relative pronouns (*who*, *which*, *that*), or adverbial structures using relational words:

Ситуация, вызванная получением информации от технических средств обнаружения, сил охраны, персонала объекта и т.п. *о попытке или проведении несанкционированных действий*

A situation caused by the receipt of information from detection equipment, security forces, or site personnel, etc. regarding *unauthorized activities that have been attempted or carried out*

Relative adverbial clauses

Среднее время пребывания лиц *в зоне возможности совершения* несанкционированных действий

The average time an individual is present *in an area where it is possible to commit* an unauthorized activity

Passives & Quasi-Passives

The last major grouping entails the use of passive or quasi-passive constructions depending on whether or not the underlying verb is transitive. That is, they represent the nominalization of a SUBJECT–VERB–DIRECT OBJECT sentence or a SUBJECT–VERB–[ADVERB] sentence.

*утверждение, разрешение* какой-либо деятельности **высшей инстанцией**

**SVO sentence.** **Высшая инстанция** *утверждает* [или] *разрешает* какую-либо деятельность

*approval* or *permission* for an activity issued by a **higher authority**

*проникновение* **нарушителя** на территорию охраняемой зоны

**SVAdv sentence.** **Нарушитель** *проникает/проник* на территорию охраняемой зоны

*penetration* of a secure area by an **adversary**

As is true with Russian passive constructions in general, sometimes the best English rendition reverts back to the active structure from which the passive originated:

Установленный порядок *рассмотрения* разделов ТЭО СФЗ **ЯО экспертными органами**

The established procedure for **expert agencies** *to review* sections of a feasibility study for [the design of] a physical protection system at a nuclear site

Any Russian>English translator is continually faced with complex noun phrases that began life as verbal structures; it is the editor who must clean up the mess and remove the verbal debris that has been strewn about the translated text. It is my experience that most translators attempt to render source text nominalizations with noun phrases in the target language. Editors, however, know how stilted and awkward the resultant translation can sound.

The session ended with a lively discussion of the quality of the language in Russian texts, especially when they are based on and heavily influenced by documents originating in America.

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# SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

SLD member, Ed Wright, has written to correct my interpretation of the beer brand name “Michelob” in last issue’s column. I thought it might be a corruption of “мышелов.” [Note: So far as I know, this erudite correction does not apply to the name of our acquaintance, Ian Mishalove, which started me on this etymological train of thought.]

“Sorry to burst your bubble (a foamy one, at that),” writes Ed, “but **Michelob** comes from *Mittelhochdeutsch* (Middle High or Medieval German). **Michel** means **MUCH** and **Lob** means **PRAISE** and the double L may have been collapsed to one in keeping with the medieval custom of collapsing double letters into single ones to save space in manuscripts.”

Thank you, Ed. Readers please note that we are delighted to publish any substantive criticism and/or correction of material in this column. Among other things, such contributions fill up the column, allowing me more time to sit around eating low fat bonbons and reading novels.

It is true, I acknowledge, that I am prone to sit around reading novels. I have been addicted to novels ever since I learned to read, and once calculated that I must have consumed an average of two per week since I was 7 years old. I came across the following passage in a very good one I read recently, *Choices* by Mary Lee Settle (San Diego: Harcourt Brace; 1995). The Mr. Prince referred to is an ex-sergeant and a teacher in a black rural school in Mississippi in the 1950s or 60s; the speaker is one of his students. The initial quotation is something the newly assigned teacher has hung on the wall of the classroom.

*“Write how this young man squeezes the slave out of himself, drop by drop, and how, on waking one fine morning, he feels that the blood coursing through his veins is no longer that of a slave but of a real human being....”*

“...Mr. Prince said that was written by a Russian called Anton Chekhov. He said Anton Chekhov was the grandson of a slave just like our grandmamas and grandpapas. They didn’t have black slaves in Russia, they had white slaves....”

“...He told us there wasn’t much to do in the army for a lot of the time and how he got to readin. He said he read everything he could get his hands on and one day he found this book called *The Letters of Anton Chekhov*. He said he didn’t know Anton Chekhov from a hole in the wall. He found that saying in one of his letters. He told us how it was like a sign unto him out of the Bible. After that he read everything Anton Chekhov wrote. He said Anton Chekhov might have been white but he saw like we do, from outside lookin in, and he had another thing about him that was like us, he had this kind of compassion for people who you would think would have been his enemies — poor silly ladies and men who never had any get-up-and-go.

“Then Mr. Prince opened a book. He said, ‘Sometimes, though, Anton Chekhov got mad and when he got mad he turned it into a story. I’m going to read you a story like that first thing we do, and you will see just what I mean.

“It was a story about a coachman whose son had died, and he

tried to tell people who rode in his sleigh, but nobody listened because they didn’t even see him or hear him, and finally he had to tell his horse about his grief. Mr. Prince read it to a bunch of kids who had never seen snow, and never heard of Russia and didn’t know what a sleigh was, not then, and the whole room was completely still, so still that when a bird sang way outside, it seemed to be right in the schoolroom with us.”

I recall having read any number of English or American novels in which one of the characters has been strongly influenced by some work of Russian literature. I regret that I never thought to start collecting such references until now. However, it is never too late. Please readers, if you remember specific instances of such references let me know what they are. You do not have to pinpoint the exact passage, just tell me the English work of literature and I will do the searching. All gems will be published in the *SlavFile*.

I remember the first time I read «Тоска», the story referred to in the quotation above I think it was in third year Russian. I did not know the word *rocka* at the time but did not trouble to look it up, assuming it was a reference to the opera *Tosca*. I became so engrossed in the story that I forgot to wonder what it had to do with the opera, and only learned the meaning of the word in my next class. I mention this youthful error because something exactly analogous just happened to me again. I recently finished translating a book of poems by Irina Ratushinskaya. One of the poems starts off: “Смейся, мальчик, у края Эреба:” and ends, “Из всех, что любили и пели - Ни один не достался Аиду!” In spite of the fact that the initial reference to Erebus (a term for Hades) should have tipped me off, I was misled by both my ignorance of how Greek mythological names are rendered in Russian and by the singing and loving in the penultimate line (certainly key characteristics of all opera suitors). I assumed that this was a reference to the operatic heroine, rather than simply one of the ways that Hades was spelled in Russian. While I was disabused of this notion early in my translation process, my (non-Russian-speaking) editor had a copy of my initial literal translation and kept asking me to retain the original reference to Aida, forcing me to own up to my mistake.

We have had a young woman from Nizhny Novgorod staying with us for the last few months. Though we have had many Russian-speaking dinner guests over the years, and others who have stayed for a weekend or a week, we have never had one for such a long period. I am struck by how many details of her domestic habits, beliefs and preferences remind me of what I had thought were my father’s personal foibles. I am not talking about such obvious things as removing your shoes at the door, but about, for example, the belief that if you have even the slightest cold or sore throat, it is hazardous to wash your hair or have an iced drink, or the habit of eating preserves with a spoon to accompany your tea. These commonalities persist despite some major differences between Oksana and my late father: he was a Jew born in the late 1890’s in a *местечко* (*stetl* or small Jewish town) near Minsk, while she is half ethnic Russian and half Tatar, and was born in the late 1960’s in Nizhny. Their personalities are as divergent as their genders. To

*Continued on page 13*

# The Slovist Rides Again

Raphy Alden

Last year I had an unexpected opportunity to edit translations (not my favorite pastime, I must admit) and to watch others interpret. (I was present as a “standby” interpreter). Following are the results of the above mentioned activities as well as my personal observations:

-**Недоделанный!** (people are called this for various reasons in Russia), and the poor interpreter struggled with this word trying to come up with the English equivalent. Eventually, she said, “He’s a little cuckoo!” Well, maybe...

-Через неделю они **благополучно** забыли про скандал. The word **благополучно** was interpreted as *easily*. I do think that we can come up with a better word. What would you think of “fortunately”?

-**Видит око да зуб неймет.** The interpreter could not remember *The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak*. I always translate this idiom this way and it works, but I am sure there are other translations. (I did not look it up in the Dictionary of Idioms by Sophia Lyubensky.) *Editors note:* Lyubensky translates it as “so near, and yet so far.”

-Don’t mess with him. He is a real **brainiac**.” I had a problem interpreting **brainiac**. The first thing that came to mind was the association with **maniac**. So I just interpreted it as У него голова хорошо варит. Not the best interpretation, I must admit, so I am hoping that someone may come with a better translation.

-Банк **сыграл на опережение** и выпустил новые акции - The interpreter came up with “The bank decided to play a preemptive game and...” Do you agree with this interpretation?

-**Не обошлось без** тостов за здоровье и упокой was translated as: “As always there were toasts...” Suggestion from the editors: How about inserting the words “the obligatory?”

-На совет директоров собираетесь; а как же, **святое дело**. This was a tough one. The interpreter hesitated, not knowing how to interpret **святое дело**, looked at me for help, and all I could come up with was *This is a thing not to miss*. I do not like this inter-

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*Continued from page 12*

me there is something touching, almost inspirational, in the persistence of these humble domestic customs, especially against the background of the cataclysmic events occurring in that part of the world during the twentieth century.

Having Oksana stay with us has been highly beneficial for my Russian. (Please, however, don’t expect me to speak like a native when you next see me.) Often Oksana asks me for the translation of one or another common colloquial English phrase, and I find that I do not have a Russian version readymade to offer her. One such example is, “It’s about time...” Nothing we came up with seemed quite right. I wrote to Raffi Alden, author of the column, “Slovist,” published in this newsletter, and he finally solved the problem by suggesting “вообще-то пора” or “пора уж.” “Jerk” was another difficult-to-translate word. After going through every pejorative name in the book (Katzner’s, of course), we finally settled on “зануда” as the most satisfactory equivalent. However, if you have something better, please send it along. Some questions are still unresolved. For example, does anyone have a good Russian word for texture, not in any technical sense, but referring to everyday things, such as a cake or a fabric?

pretation and hope to hear a better one from you. *Editors’ suggestion:* I wouldn’t think of missing it; board meetings are sacred.

-Не хочешь, не пей - **мне больше останется**. I interpreted this as *all the more for me*. Any suggestions?

-**В одну реку два раза не войдешь**. If there is an English equivalent of this saying, I am not familiar with it. *From the Editors:* Although this quote from Heraclitus is not used as frequently in English as in Russian. It is known and is translated as “You cannot step into the same river twice.”

Finally, some very interesting suggestions that came from Irene Reiser. I liked them and hope you will too. Here they are:

quality time — I believe that there is no equivalent phrase in Russian. The sentence may be translated as: «Родители должны проводить больше времени со своими детьми/уделять больше внимания своим детям/». *Note from Editors:* To the contrary, it is a justification for not spending more time with children—that the little time one does spend is “quality,” whatever that means.

I’m impressed! — may be translated as «Потрясающе!», «Впечатляет!»;

поиздержавшиеся олигархи — impoverished might be a little strong, but close to the original meaning of the phrase;

доигрался — I never obeyed the traffic rules, passed other cars left and right, until it finally caught up with me.”;

зажимают — “The state (country, government) has plenty of bread, they just won’t let it out of their grasp.”

*team player* — I realize that the word «коллектив» is loaded with negative Soviet era overtones, but it best describes the concept behind the word “team”. Thus, team player is «настоящий член коллектива».

Talk to you again soon.

Raphy Alden (RaffiAlden@aol.com)

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It has come to our attention that some of you have been sharing your issues of *SlavFile* with people who are not SLD members, subscribers, or even blood relatives. I bet you think that we are going to admonish you, don’t you? Wrong! We renounced our belief in the benefits of exclusivity back when we were in junior high! All respectable publications worth their ink have a “pass-along” readership that is much larger than their subscriber list. We encourage you to continue sharing with all who might find our newsletter of interest. However, we would not object if you happened to mention that a subscription costs a piddling \$10 a year. Also, have you considered a gift subscription to *SlavFile* as a solution to your gift-giving quandaries? It isn’t for everyone of course, but some of you may have a Russian teacher on your gift list who would be thrilled to receive it.

Overheard by one of our correspondents in a Russian emigre community: -«Зачем я должен ездить на юзанной машине? Я вполне могу афордить новую и, думаю, что я ее дезерв.» Editor’s note: we wonder about the third person form of the final coinage, would it be: «Он дезервит?»

## EXCERPTS FROM THE RUSSIAN TRANSLATORS CLUB ON YAHOO

As announced in the last issue of SlavFile, Jim Walker and Galina Raff have started a Russian translators club on Yahoo to serve as an on-line forum. If you have Internet access, joining the club costs nothing, results in no junk e-mail and does not require you to divulge personal information. While membership is by invitation only, you can receive an invitation simply by contacting Jim Walker at [perevod@ellijay.com](mailto:perevod@ellijay.com) or anyone else whom you know to be a club member. The editors have decided to include excerpts from "Klub" interchanges as a regular feature in these pages. Perhaps, some of our readers will find them so interesting that they will be moved to join: others may be moved to join out from a sense of public service in order to raise the tone of the club. Olga Antimonova of Kiev, Ukraine has volunteered to compile this feature for us in the future.

4/3 Vadim Khazin's creative solution to an enigma.

From Gregory Rayner: Help, what is марендоид? Does anyone have any idea what the English for this would be? The context is popular/political Asian symbols-инь-янь- etc.

From Vadim: I suspect you missed one letter - «В» before «И». If this is the case, the English I think would be "Star of David".

3/17 Jim Walker vents:

Why I hate reference files. I received a job yesterday, fairly straightforward, no? But the agency insisted on sending some reference files - 70 pages of reference material for a 20-page job! Am I expected to read them?

Then I came across a slight difficulty: товары собственного производства. It was in a small cell in a table, so I wanted to come up with a snappy one-word solution. All I could think of was "self-produced," but that was no good, so I decided to check the reference material. I searched the Russian and found this sentence: «Оценка объема выпущенных и отгруженных товаров собственного производства осуществляется по ценам франко вагон станция отправления.» Here is the "reference" translation: "The volume of the put out and the shipped commodities of the own make shall be estimated by the free to the point of destination prices." This is not reference; this is sick.

Two things are very depressing here. First of all, that the client considers this translation worthy of emulation. And second, how is it supposed to make me feel? If such trash is not only acceptable, but held up as a reference, why should I bother trying to write a good or even a decent translation? Why not just write down the first thing that comes into my head? That's just my opinion. I could be wrong.

3/21 Brand Frenzt asks a question poses a phrase for which no one has yet provided a thoroughly satisfactory translation

In an article about legal disputes between Russia and foreign investors, when the court appeared to rule that the investors should be paid but left it unclear who was supposed to pay them, the author wrote: Дети в таких случаях говорят: «С Пушкина получишь!»

*Continued on page 15*

## Новинка! Бесплатно!

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Jim Walker

[perevod@ellijay.com](mailto:perevod@ellijay.com)

Russian Translators	
Клуб русских переводчиков	
254	<a href="#">Re: Liability coverage (Auto Insurance)</a>
253	<a href="#">Re: networking</a>
252	<a href="#">Re: networking</a>
251	<a href="#">Re:</a>
250	<a href="#">humor</a>
249	<a href="#">Re: Liability coverage (Auto Insurance)</a>
248	<a href="#">Liability coverage (Auto Insurance)</a>
247	<a href="#">Re: Better Business Bureau</a>
246	<a href="#">Re: Better Business Bureau</a>
245	<a href="#">Re: networking</a>
244	<a href="#">Re: Better Business Bureau</a>
243	<a href="#">"networking" in Russian</a>
242	<a href="#">Re: председатель городского суда</a>
241	<a href="#">"trade leads" in Russian</a>
240	<a href="#">Re: Better Business Bureau</a>

Russian Translators	
Клуб русских переводчиков	
Web Sites and Descriptions	Posted By
<a href="http://www.anklot.ru">http://www.anklot.ru</a> - анекдоты и юмор (на русском)	galina_raff
<a href="http://www.agama.com/inf/">http://www.agama.com/inf/</a> - Брокерия on-line	galina_raff
<a href="http://risk.fici.ch/glossary.htm">http://risk.fici.ch/glossary.htm</a> - Dictionary of Financial Risk	galina_raff
<a href="http://www.netlingo.com/">http://www.netlingo.com/</a> - NetLingo-Internet Language Dictionary	galina_raff
<a href="http://www.agama.com/inf_items.htm">http://www.agama.com/inf_items.htm</a> - Толковый словарь Обергса	marina_savitsch
<a href="http://briefcase.yahoo.com/galina_raff">http://briefcase.yahoo.com/galina_raff</a> - SlavFile library and reference files	galina_raff
<a href="http://www.medialingua.ru/english/russian/Multimed...">http://www.medialingua.ru/english/russian/Multimed...</a> - Иллюстрированный А-П словарь	jm_walker02
<a href="http://www.jump.net/~fifete/glossary.htm">http://www.jump.net/~fifete/glossary.htm</a> - All the glossaries in the world	jm_walker02
<a href="http://www.stb.ru/inf/ctc.htm">http://www.stb.ru/inf/ctc.htm</a> - on-line Russian bilingual dictionaries	jm_walker02
<a href="http://www.kire.com/push/wsl/ib/c/frica/inf/ra/c...">http://www.kire.com/push/wsl/ib/c/frica/inf/ra/c...</a> - Cyrillic converter	galina_raff

## С НАДЕЖДОЙ НА ГИПОТЕЗУ УОРФА-СЕПИРА<sup>1</sup>

Леонид Лойтерштейн

«В начале было слово...»

Что происходило с этим самым словом в России за последние 15 лет (а именно таков, как говорят, возраст нашей демократии)?

В тоталитаризме понятие «язык публичного выступления» сводился к канцелярско-деловому стилю: докладная начальнику, директива сотрудникам, доклад к очередному съезду... Каким был язык Генерального секретаря ЦК КПСС или секретаря горкома — мы не знали. Все «причесывалось» редакторами и озвучивались великолепной советской школой дикторов радио и телевидения, Школой с большой буквы.

Потом наступил 1985 год, случилась перестройка, казалось — всего, в том числе и языка публичных выступлений.

Сколько же доставалось тогда умнице (как впоследствии путем сравнения выяснится) Горбачеву за его «*начать новое мышление*» и «*вот где собака порылась*»!

Потом случился съезд народных депутатов, на котором стало ясно: эти люди в лучшем случае при помощи междометий могут пытаться объяснять свои мысли, но вот говорить... У каждого из них был *свой плюрализм мнений*.

Все это были цветочки. Затем в политику ринулись секретари горкомов, а ведь политика предполагает публичные выступления. Пока все они вещали с танков и баррикад, все выглядело убедительно и, в целом, неплохо.

Затем начались экономические реформы, которые не захотели кончаться, и *народ потребовал ясности в этой ситуации*.

В эфир хлынули рубленые фразы с одними инфинитивами от военных всех мастей, невразумительно-безличные и зачастую односоставные предложения от прячущего глаза чиновничьего люда, по сравнению с которыми армейские шуточки вроде: «*копать от меня и до следующего столба*» казались очень даже правильной речью. Потом была Государственная Дума — апофеоз различных (и лингвистических тоже) странностей — и тоже в прямом эфире. Юмористы не успевали записывать, в газетах и журналах открывались специальные рубрики для записи лексических уродцев — материала хватало на всех. Скоро и сами журналисты заметно перешли грань гротеска, и конструкции вроде «*встреч за закрытыми дверями*» сделались телевизионной нормой.

Шилова и Кириллов, Познер и Молчанов постепенно исчезали, уступая место ремесленникам от журналистики.

К такому положению вещей скоро все привыкли. Кроме того, выяснилось, что народ просто не понимает немногих умеющих выражать свои мысли людей. Явлинского, Гайдара, Собчака называли «демагогами», а вот Лебедь стал народным героем.

Эта статья задумывалась давно и должна была стать плачем по умирающему, растворяющемуся в тарабарщине языку, но...

Прошли досрочные выборы президента. С самого появления Путина на политической сцене его речь отличали причастные и деепричастные обороты, особый, «немецкий» строй предложения, и даже некий «акмеистский» налет в интонации. С тех пор, как он стал президентом, в массовую, публичную политику возвращаются сложные предложения с придаточными всех видов. В моду входят не только горные лыжи, но и университетский язык. Журналисты вдруг стали «забывать» сленг, вернулось правильное смысловое и интонационное деление фразы.

Я не знаю, «who is Mister Putin», и, прямо скажем, он никогда не был «моим кандидатом», но, если верить гг. Сепиру и Уорфу, у моей страны — может быть — появился шанс.

<sup>1</sup> СЕПИРА -УОРФА ГИПОТЕЗА (гипотеза лингвистической относительности) — концепция, согласно к-рой структура языка определяет структуру мышления и способ познания внешнего мира. Разработана в 30-ч гг. 20 в. В США Э.Сепиром и Б.Л. Уорфом в рамках этнолингвистики. Согласно С. — У. Г., логич. строй мышления определяется языком.

Лингвистический энциклопедический словарь, М., «Советская энциклопедия», 1990

Our man in St. Petersburg, Leonid Loiterstein, wishes to acknowledge the help of his wife, Veronika Korotovskikh, who is a philologist, and works in the Pushkin Museum. Both Leonid and Veronika can be reached at leonid@translations.spb.ru.

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*Continued from page 14*

12/16 Galina Raff comes through for Steve Shabad.

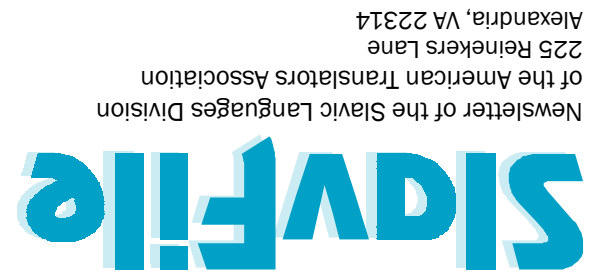
Steve wrote: The Russian term in question is профицит. In an interview about the Russian economy, the full sentence is: Но из-за отсутствия внешних и внутренних займов, а может из-за стремления повысить первичный профицит, дефицит бюджета оказался почти вдвое больше. This seems to be a new term; can't find it in any of my reference books. If any of you happen to find it, I would love to know the source so I can get it. Someone once explained the term to me, but stupidly, I didn't write it down. Can someone help?

Galina replied: Положительное сальдо бюджета. ( ... дефицит или профицит бюджета.)

4/2: Greg Rayner voices some criticisms of Katzner on CD.

Has anyone bought the CD-ROM version of the Katzner dictionary? I must say I was a bit disappointed. Of course, you are getting the good content that you'll find in the Katzner dictionary, but it may not be easy to find. I have three gripes with the CD-ROM version:

- 1) Only head words are recognized—The dictionary will give a listing for “phonetic” (adj) but not “phonetics” because “phonetic” is the main entry.
- 2) You cannot put in a word like “take” and get a global listing of everywhere it appears.
- 3) Omissions. I have the older print addition but I just cannot believe the new print edition omits things like “Costa Rica” and several other words I tried that were in the old edition.



Attention lexicography lovers,  
technical translators, terminologists  
and dictionary devotees!

The Slavic Languages Division will be holding its 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Susana Greiss Distinguished Guest Lecture on Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2000, at the American Translators Association conference in Orlando. This year's guest speaker will be **Patricia Newman**, past president, honorary member and secretary of the ATA, founder of the Science and Technology Division, Gode Medal laureate and co-author of the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of *The Callaham Russian-English Dictionary of Science and Technology*.

Her presentation, entitled "**The Good, the Bad and the Beautiful**," will have two parts. The first will describe the lexicographical process and the work involved in compiling *The Callaham Russian-English Dictionary of Science and Technology*. During the second part, listeners will hear a long-time user of translation and interpretation services discuss the good, the bad and the incredibly beautiful aspects of our work from the customer's perspective.

The Slavic Languages Division encourages all interested parties to attend. Further details of time and place will be published in the conference program. Please direct all questions concerning this event to Laura Wolfson, at [LauraEsther@cs.com](mailto:LauraEsther@cs.com).