

## 2003 Susana Greiss Lecture

### Genevra Gerhart: The Trials and Tribulations of Categorizing the Obvious

Including a review of *The Russian's World*

Lydia Stone

Lamentably, I am too old to have had the benefit of Genevra Gerhart's delightful and pioneering book, *The Russian's World*, during my formal study of Russian. Indeed, in spite of everything I had heard about it, I had not read or even browsed through it until this fall. However, when I heard our Greiss lecturer speak at the ATA conference in Phoenix, I was both inspired and galvanized: I literally rushed over to the person to whom I had assigned this review and rudely grabbed it back, wanting it for myself.

In her lecture Genevra described how she got the idea for *The Russian's World* (TRW)—and its sequel *The Russian Context*—and, after many “trials and tribulations,” overcame the resistance of the academic and publishing establishments in order to publish. TRW, for those of you who don't know, provides a 400-page 17-chapter overview of what its author calls culture with a small c, the stuff in which all our knowledge of language and Big C culture must be grounded if it is not to float away into the clouds. A (possibly not politically correct) idea that kept coming into my mind during this engaging and down-to-earth talk is that this was, in some sense, quintessentially a woman's project: I would not claim that a book this useful, practical, and (dare I say it?) domestic could never have been written by a man, particularly an up-and-coming academic from a major university. However, it is singularly appropriate that it was written by a woman, and one who, as she described herself in her lecture, “had the luxury of a husband who could shelter and feed [her],” was clearly more interested in learning and sharing answers than covering up ignorance, paid her informants for her book with “hundreds of [homemade] lunches,” and who defines even capital C culture as “the kind of [thing] you need [in order to] laugh at Garrison Keillor.”

Gerhart described her first realization of the need for little c culture as occurring in 1950, when she was required to spell her name to a French official in his language and, despite all her years of study, was unable to do so. None of her teachers or professors had ever thought it important to teach the names of the letters. Here are some quotations from her notes to the talk, which provide some idea of her attitude, the state of

affairs when she started her project, and what she was trying to do. “One of the joys of Russian was indeed constantly discovering something that all the natives knew, and despite years of study and attention, I didn't.” “Big C culture was pictures of Pushkin and Tolstoy, the ability to find Moscow on the map, and maybe a short Lermontov poem. While little (and obviously much less significant) c culture was *pirozьhki*, *borsheb*, and maybe a peasant blouse. The little c stuff was supposed to be fun for what were hopefully called learners, while Big C was obviously good for them. Either of the c's could be eliminated from the curriculum with very little harm done to final grades. After all, Americans cannot be graded on their willingness to eat vegetable soup or raw fish eggs, nor could they be asked actually to memorize poetry (inane conversations were memorized, however).” “[I realized that there] was a vast amount of information [about little c culture] evidently obvious to any Russian native speaker, much of which was either unwritten or difficult to find. Maybe other people would like to know [about this] too.” “As you can see, I was attempting to

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SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION

**Officers**

Administrator: Alex Lane  
63 N. Pagosa Boulevard, Suite B-3  
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147  
Tel.: 832-444-4555 Fax: 209-391-9931  
words@galexi.com www.galexi.com/alex

Asst. Administrator: Nora Seligman Favorov  
100 Village Lane, Chapel Hill, NC 27514  
Tel.: 919-960-6871 Fax: 919-969-6628  
norafavorov@bellsouth.net

**Membership**

\$15 addition to ATA membership fee and designation of Slavic Languages Division membership on application or renewal form provides full membership.

Write to ATA, 225 Reinekers Lane  
Alexandria, VA 22314

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Editor: Lydia Razran Stone  
1111 Westmoreland Road  
Alexandria, VA 22308  
Tel.: 703-768-5441 Fax: 703-768-1889  
lydiastone@verizon.net

Associate Editor: Nora Favorov

Associate Editor (Russian and Technical Material, Layout and Typesetting): Galina Raff  
Tel.: 704-849-8200 Fax: 704-841-2797  
galena\_raff@att.net

Contributing Editor (Ukrainian): Vadim I. Khazin  
Tel.: 212-650-8094 Fax: 732-866-4372  
vadkhazin@cs.com

Contributing Editor (Polish): Urszula Klingenberg  
Tel.: 651-649-0277  
vaukling@msn.com

Contributing Editor (South Slavic Languages):  
Paula Gordon  
Tel. & Fax: 836-236-7591

Copy Editors:  
Jennifer L. Guernsey and Christina Sever

Subscription to *SlavFile*  
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## FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

*Alex Lane*

As I write this, there is a scant half year or so remaining until the Conference in Toronto. And it makes sense for time to be whipping by at breathtaking speed, as I can't recall a more busy period in my office. As a result, Division business has not been occupying the "foreground" of my attention span, though I have found ten minutes here or an hour there to attend to SLD affairs.

Frankly, it's not been enough. The promising suggestions that were put forth at the post-conference forum in Phoenix remain floating in limbo. Some ideas—such as the mid-year conference—will have to wait until next year. The honeymoon is over, and it's time to get something going.

Unfortunately, "getting something going" is not the kind of thing that lends itself to the talents of one or two individuals, even given copious quantities of time. Unfortunately, too, printed appeals for volunteers have limited impact. So, if you haven't been called or otherwise contacted by the time you read these lines, don't worry: you're on my list. :^)

This issue's recommended resource (all suitable disclaimers apply) is David Johnson's weekly CDI e-mail newsletter that, in its own words, "carries news and analysis on all aspects of today's Russia, including political, economic, social, military, and foreign policy issues. With support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and from its readers, the CDI Russia Weekly is a project of the Washington-based Center for Defense Information (CDI), a nonprofit research and education organization." The newsletter relies heavily on both US and Russian sources, and its Web page (with archive) is located at <http://www.cdi.org/russia>.

Among the many excellent ideas that have been proposed as resources for the Division is a facility by which members could collaborate in discussions of terminology. Practically speaking, implementing this idea is fraught with pitfalls and potholes, not the least of which is selecting an appropriate mechanism to enable such interchanges. I think I may have stumbled across a medium that is ideal for such an endeavor: the Wiki.

For those of you unfamiliar with the Wiki concept, you might wish to visit the Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)), an open-content encyclopedia that's being developed in several languages. To date, nearly a quarter million articles have been created, supplemented, edited, and "refactored" for the English version of the project pretty much by ordinary people like you and me.

The idea of a Wiki, you see, is a web site that's editable (and expandable) by users, and therefore conducive to the creation of a collaborative atmosphere. This has an advantage over e-mail messages or threaded discussion groups in that (a) you don't have to keep quoting what other people say to continue a discussion, and (b) it's a lot easier to find things when they're on a web page instead of in your inbox. (And let me here note that my effort is not intended to replace other resources such as the Russian Translators Club on yahoo.com, but to complement them.)

To that end, I'm devoting a section of a web site I've developed primarily for my translation business (<http://www.gwiki.com>) for use by SLD members to discuss terminology (or anything else, for that matter). If the idea takes flight, we'll see about transferring the Wiki software (and the data) to the main SLD Web site provided by the ATA.

Getting started is fairly straightforward. Once at the site, click on "Registration" and provide the required information (please use real names and a valid e-mail address). Links to how-to-use documentation and the SLD page(s) can be found by clicking on "Home Page."

As always, I welcome any comments or suggestions you may have.

## FROM THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

*Nora Seligman Favorov*

Below you will find the minutes of our Division meeting in Phoenix. Thanks to the enviable fact that our newsletter has had a wealth of submissions lately, we were not able to fit them in the previous *SlavFile*. If you attended this meeting, let us know if you remember anything differently (or if you remember something we have left out), and if you weren't there, take a look at what was reported at our annual gathering.

The meeting did accomplish a few things. Lydia's call for proofreaders for the *SlavFile* was answered. In the last issue you were introduced to Jen Guernsey and this issue has been copyedited by Christina Sever, (who also recorded the minutes you find below). Thanks to their keen eyes the *SlavFile* is already looking better. Also in this issue you will find the first submission by Judith Yeaton, our new editor for Czech and Slovak (see Letter from Prague, page 10)—another positive outcome of Lydia's *SlavFile* report. And by the time you read this, I hope you will have received and completed our division's survey of its membership, results of which will be published in a future issue of *SlavFile*.

### Call for Articles

Although the *SlavFile* has had plenty of great material lately, you potential contributors out there should not sit complacently by, withholding whatever riches you have to share with the rest of the membership. The only reason we do have such a wealth of materials is the constant talent scouting of our editor. Now that I have officially been named associate editor, I will see if I can flush out some latent journalism for our publication.

Sometimes, usually in the shower, I think of articles I'd like to see somebody submit to the *SlavFile*. Most of these passing inspirations are soon forgotten, but below you will find a couple that have not faded from memory. Please e-mail Lydia or me if you'd like to take on any of these topics (or others).

- Do you own a PDA, and if so, do you use it in your work? Do you have bilingual dictionaries on it? Would you be willing to share your experience—positive or negative—at turning a palm-held device into a substitute for 200 pounds of dictionaries?
- More than verbal translation is needed when you cross geographic and cultural borders; a certain amount of culinary translation also becomes necessary. How have those of you who are Slavonates (Lydia's coinage, which somehow has failed to make it into Microsoft's spellchecker) or have lived extended periods in Eastern Europe adapted Slavic recipes to the American kitchen and grocery store? I, for one, have a couple of recipes that have evolved partly from necessity, partly from misunderstanding, into dishes I can still present as "Russian cuisine" to Americans, but are not exactly the real thing (анчоус под шубу anyone?). Culinary translation is closer to the far periphery than to the

core of this newsletter's mission, but if you have an interesting story to tell (and a tasty recipe to share), I, for one, would be glad to read it.

- Lastly, Lynn Visson, UN interpreter, author, and the SLD's 2000 Greiss lecturer, recently sent me a copy of a very interesting new publication: *Мосты, журнал переводчиков*. I have been reading it with great pleasure. It may be a bit battered by the time I'm done with it, but I would like to pass it on to someone else to review for the *SlavFile*. It includes an article by Lynn about terrorism-related terminology, an Анализ практики column by Pavel Palazhchenko on citations in translation, and interviews with and articles by working translators, mostly in Russian. Although the publication's stated topic is translation/interpretation between Russian and all other languages, English seems to be the second language of the maiden issue (two of the articles are written in English). Let me know if you'd be interested in reviewing it.

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## Minutes of the Slavic Language Division Annual Meeting

Phoenix, Arizona, November 6, 2003

*Recorded by Christina Sever*

The meeting was called to order by division administrator Nora Favorov. The minutes from the 2002 division meeting and the agenda for the current meeting were approved.

Nora explained that ATA headquarters has not provided her with a printout of the state of the 2003-2004 budget, but said that we seem to be staying on budget.

Editor Lydia Razran Stone reported that things were going well at the *SlavFile*. There had been only three issues this past year instead of four, so the latest issue was a combined one, totaling 28 pages. Lydia asked for volunteers to help with proofreading the newsletter. Jennifer Guernsey and Christina Sever volunteered. Lydia also asked for a Czech and Slovak editor. She is looking for a minimum of two articles per year, which can be written by the editor or solicited from other writers.

Paula Gordon spoke about the effort to add South Slavic languages to the certification program. She was glad to report that the ATA requirement of 50 signatures had been met for 3 of the language pairs (Croatian>English, Serbian>English and English>Croatian). A Croatian work group has been formed and members will be engaging in several activities at this conference, including a grader training required by the ATA

*Continued on page 5*

write on a topic *because* I didn't know the answers." "What I wanted to do did not fit anywhere in the academy. Under no one's aegis could I gain access to the granting system."

When I said above that TRW is, in some important way, a woman's book, I did not mean that it is useful primarily to women, any more than dinner and clean clothes are useful primarily to women. Indeed, I was tempted to skip the chapter on transport, since, as a typical female in some ways, I am not much interested in such a "masculine" topic. Rather the book speaks to me of "women's work" in that it presents, in an easy to assimilate and well organized manner, all the details on which real life (real Russian life in this case) is based. These details are absolutely essential, but may well be neglected by those whose minds are on loftier or more publicly visible matters.

The 2001 edition of TRW (its third) is organized into 17 chapters: Conduct, The Human Being, Names, Clothing, Housing, Food, Medicine, Work and Money, Shopping, Communications, Transportation, Education, Speech, Nature, Numbers, Holidays and the Church, and Play, as well as several appendices. Each chapter provides a detailed and readable discussion of its topic as manifested in real life in Russia, with the appropriate words in Cyrillic embedded in the discussion (exactly where words are most comfortable). Most of the Russian words are directly or indirectly defined in the text, and longer passages are translated in endnotes. Nevertheless, I would think a reader who knew no Russian would find the book quite difficult to read. Chapters are enriched with many illustrations, of which the line drawings are very useful and the photographs quite poor technically (undoubtedly the fault of the originals).

I see this book as evoking cries of delight from the following classes of readers, assuming all have a decent working knowledge of Russian: students and scholars of the language, literature and culture (at any level from high school up), non-Russian-native translators and interpreters of Russian, travelers to Russia and the former Soviet Union, particularly those who will be living there or staying for a longish time, and people working with recent immigrants from Russia. I myself belong to yet another class, Americans brought up by Russian, or in my case Russian Jewish parents,<sup>1</sup> who have never been quite clear about which aspects of their upbringing were cultural and which idiosyncratic. In just the last few weeks, TRW has provided me with a variety of insights, for example:

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<sup>1</sup> I very much like TRW's treatment of Russian anti-Semitism and other racism, presenting it as a fact and usefully describing its particular features without elaborate disclaimers that the author deplors such opinions. However, the force with which the point is made that, to a Russian, a Russian is a Russian and a Jew is a Jew may mislead readers. The fact is that, except for the chapter on holidays and the church, more than 99% of this book applies equally to the vast majority of Russian Jews, with the possible exception of the extremely religious. Considering how many students of and travelers to Russia, and recent and past immigrants to the U.S., are Jewish, probably this latter point should be made in the book so those whose interest is primarily the Russian Jews will not be dissuaded from reading it.

1) Over the years, I have read innumerable works set in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century peasant huts, aka *rural dwellings*, but never before have I had a clear idea of their layout (pages 99-100); 2) I have always explained my idiosyncratic procedure for tying bows by saying that my father taught me in the Russian way; however, I was never really sure this was true. On page 78 of TRW my conjecture is confirmed and I was able to show the paragraph to my husband, who has been ridiculing my bows for decades. 3) For a translation I was working on of the philosopher Bakhtin, I needed to know how old someone referred to as an учащийся was likely to be. This I found on a chart on page 222. I could go on for quite a while with other examples, but you get the idea!

The copyright page of the 2001 edition of TRW I bought in Phoenix states that this edition is a corrected version of the 1995 second edition. I do not know the extent of the corrections but suspect they were more concerned with eliminating actual errors than with updating information as conditions changed in Russia. Clearly, this is a huge problem with the book, each edition of which remains static, as the world it deals with changes tumultuously. It should be said, however, that all three of the valuable insights I mentioned in the above paragraph, as well, as far as I remember, as the others I gained and did not mention, were of the type that required no updating. I would suggest that anyone reading the book who wishes to point out a specific correction or to volunteer in general to work on updating contact Genevra Gerhart at [ggerhart@comcast.net](mailto:ggerhart@comcast.net).

Gerhart's second book *The Russian Context*, which deals with capital C culture, was also touched on in her talk, although more briefly than its predecessor. It is briefly reviewed by Tom West on the following page. One can learn about both books at her website, [www.genevragerhart.com](http://www.genevragerhart.com).

Finally, I think it is clear that this lecture had more than the usual personal meaning to me. I wrote in my first paragraph that I was inspired, and this is an accurate description. Genevra Gerhart and her books are a clear demonstration that there are still good and useful ideas out there for the taking, and that if one is persistent enough and interested enough, one can actually implement them, provided one is not overly concerned with money, academic prestige, or fame. Buoyed by this revelation, I myself have recently been moved to start work on an English idiom dictionary for translators, which is briefly described in this issue's Lite column. Thank you, Genevra!

# **The Russian Context: The Culture behind the Language**

edited by Eloise M. Boyle & Genevra Gerhart. Slavica Press, 2002 \$49.95.

*Thomas L. West III*

*На свете счастья нет, но есть покой и Воляво!*

If you saw this ad for Volvo in a Russian magazine, would you understand the play on words? A Russian would. If you're a Russian-to-English translator, *The Russian Context* is the book you've always wanted (even if you didn't know that you wanted it). Its aim is to help nonnative speakers learn many of the things that they would have known if they had grown up speaking Russian. It is a sequel to *The Russian's World*, also by Genevra Gerhart, but whereas *The Russian's World* focused on things like how a samovar works or what Russians call the different playing cards, this new book focuses on the knowledge of history and culture that a typical educated Russian would likely have.

The book is broken down into chapters indicating what Russians know about history, what poetry they are likely to have memorized, what famous lines from Russian prose and children's literature they can recite by heart, what proverbs they are likely to quote, what they know about geography, science, music, art, theatre, dance, and popular entertainment. These chapters were written by nine different authors, including the editors.

We all know that educated Russians can recite Pushkin by heart, but did you know that if you drop by a Russian's house for a very short visit, your host or hostess will probably say "Ну, ты как мимолетное виденье!" (quoting Pushkin's famous poem "Я помню чудное мгновенье")? The marvelous thing about this book is that it not only tells

you what Russians know, but also gives you examples of how that knowledge is drawn upon in advertisements, jokes, word play, etc. For example, an article in *Ogonek* was entitled «Папа Римский о времени и о себе». This is a veiled reference to a line in a poem by Mayakovsky.

One of the best chapters in the book is devoted to proverbs and frequent sayings. Not only does it translate them, but it also explains where the saying comes from and when it is likely to be used. The chapter on films not only describes the movie, but also lists famous lines that Russians are likely to quote. Of great interest to translators is the chapter on scientific vocabulary, which shows how scientific vocabulary in Russian is made up of prefixed and suffixed roots. Also useful for translating government documents is the chapter explaining the various Russian agencies, the branches of the military. In short, it is hard to imagine how a Russian translator or interpreter can get along without this book. It is worth dipping into over and over again.

*Tom West is the immediate past president of ATA, an attorney at law, and the owner and head of Intermark Language Services Corporation in Atlanta, Georgia. He is accredited in French, German and Spanish into English and a faithful member of SLD, who plays the piano for our sing-alongs. He may be reached at tom@intermark-languages.com.*

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## **SLD ANNUAL MEETING** *Continued from page 3*

certification process, and sessions involving evaluating potential exam passages. They hope by next year to have active Serbian and Bosnian language work groups. There will be a book fair Friday night at which interested members can compare, sell, and swap books. Perhaps next year this book fair can include books useful for people working in Slovenian, Macedonian and Bulgarian as well. A bibliography of reference books for Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian has been compiled by committee members and will be sent by request (dbaplanb@aol.com). Nora reports that there WILL be a membership survey this coming year and admits that this is the third year that she has predicted same. We may be able to use the same software ATA used to distribute the continuing education survey—"Survey Monkey"—at virtually no charge.

This year ATA flew all division administrators to its Alexandria, Virginia headquarters for a meeting. Nora discovered that other divisions have members-only listservs, while we have an open-membership Yahoo club. She asked if anyone disagreed with this. No one at the meeting

expressed any disagreement with the current situation. If you have comments on this please contact Nora or Alex.

The 2003 SLD elections were uncontested. Alex Lane has agreed to serve as division administrator for the coming two years, and Nora Favorov has agreed to serve as assistant administrator. Our bylaws do not require holding an election if the offices are not contested.

It was suggested that we form a continuing education committee to develop ways to obtain credits under the new system going into effect in January 2004. Volunteers interested in serving on this committee should contact Alex Lane. The membership is asked to think of ideas and submit them to Alex. We agreed to discuss this further at Saturday's SLD Post-Conference Forum at 3:30 p.m. One suggestion was a university-based Internet class. It was asked whether a trip to a target or source language country would count for the requirement. It was agreed the answer was: Possibly, if you submit a proposal ahead of time, and it is approved.

Next year's sessions are to be discussed at Saturday's post-conference forum. (The post-conference forum was summarized in the previous [Winter] issue of *SlavFile*.)

# Regulatory Documentation as a Source of Most Rigorous Terminology

Igor Belyaev's ATA-Phoenix Presentation

*Reviewed by Vadim Khazin*

Igor Belyaev, an experienced English-Russian technical translator, made this presentation to prove his point that, in spite of the multiplicity of general and specialized dictionaries, when translating in a field for which regulatory documentation exists, the best way to find the proper equivalent term is to compare the appropriate regulatory documents. In this country, such documents are nongovernmental but produced by globally recognized institutions, such as ASTM, ASCE, etc., while in Russia (and in the former USSR), their counterparts are (and were) the governmental standards, the most well-known and important of which are multiple GOSTs (i.e., Государственные Стандарты).

Most of the existing dictionaries do not meet the rigorous criteria that Igor sets up for them. He says that of the 650 dictionaries he possesses, only some 30 are trustworthy, credible and comprehensive. The 9 dictionary criteria on which he based this harsh judgement include requirements concerning the authors, the terminology, and the dictionaries themselves. I have no objections to these criteria other than the fact that, unfortunately, we do not live in a perfect world, and it is ultimately the translator's task to choose a term using whatever resources he has available.

But what if there is no "ideal" dictionary in a particular area, or the available dictionaries provide 4-5 different target equivalents for a source term, asks Igor; his answer is: rely on regulatory terminology. Prior to giving practical examples, he described his approach to the procedure of technical translation. Although he emphasizes that he in no way wants to impose his views on other translators, I think it would be useful to tell readers about his method. First, he suggests, you should read the entire source text without pausing at difficult or obscure points, but making notes on the margins when something "suddenly" comes to mind. I agree that this is more productive than translating phrase by phrase, because the explanation of a difficult term or expansion of a difficult abbreviation may well appear at the end, after you have spent a lot of valuable time trying to decipher the puzzle(s).

The next stage would be to read an appropriate regulatory document, highlighting the Russian terms you recognize as equivalent to the English ones encountered in the source text. The problem is, of course, finding the "right" regulatory document. Igor provides some insight into the system of such Russian (and former Soviet) documents, of which, he states, there are some 40 types.

Igor illustrated his approach with examples (case studies) taken from two different areas of technical knowledge for which regulatory documents exist: soil properties and the handling of explosives. Since I happen to be a specialist in the first area (and even the author of a trilingual dictionary in the field), this part of his presentation was of more interest to me. And generally I was not disappointed. Igor recounted in detail

how, by comparing definitions and dimensions of various English and Russian terms given in regulatory documents, he could establish such "rigorous" bilingual pairs as *plastic limit* = *граница раскатывания*, *liquid limit* = *граница текучести*, *water content* = *влажность [грунта]*, *plasticity index* = *число пластичности*, *coefficient of permeability* = *коэффициент фильтрации*. If, however, he had relied solely on dictionaries, Igor indicates, he would have found 3-5 renderings for each term without knowing which of them was correct.

Even more renderings would be found for some common words, which, although not technical terms, require a specific translation in a specific context. As an example, Igor provided a sentence that on the surface appears not to contain any technical terms: "Roll the mass into a thread of uniform diameter throughout its length..." How would you translate *roll*, *mass*, *thread* here? Each of these words has 10-40 renderings in the dictionaries, and the correct equivalent for this area (testing soil plasticity) may or may not be among them. Igor found these equivalents (*раскатывать*, *паста*, *жгут* respectively) only by comparing testing descriptions in regulatory documents in the two languages.

I have three comments to make here:

1. Not all the dictionaries and regulatory documents Igor chose were relevant. For example, *Англо-русский гидрологический словарь* or *Англо-русский почвенно-агрохимический словарь* may and do contain terms not used in soil science. I do not blame Igor, however, because the very term "soil science" is ambiguous: in Russian it may mean two different things. One is «грунтоведение» and deals with *грунты*, or soils in civil, hydraulic, or other branches of engineering; the other is «почвоведение» and deals with *почвы*, or soils in agriculture and related areas. The latter science (also called "pedology") uses terms that mostly do not apply to the kind of soil science that was the subject of Igor's research.
2. On the other hand, Igor missed what is probably the main Russian regulatory document dealing with engineering soils, namely «СНиП II-15-74 Основания зданий и сооружений», which has a chapter directly related to the terminology for which he was searching: «Номенклатура грунтов оснований». There (as well as in textbooks) Igor would have found Russian equivalents for some English terms he mistranslated: *semi-solid state* = *полутвёрдое состояние* (not *твёрдое* as he suggested, which is *solid*) and *semi-liquid state* = *текучепластичное состояние* (not *текущее*, which is *liquid*).
3. Some terms whose equivalents Igor was unable to find (*[soil] activity* = *коллоидная активность [грунта]*, *Atterberg limits* = *пределы пластичности* or *пределы Аттерберга*) may be located in some specialized dictionaries, such as

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# Newcomer Report: The ATA Conference of 2004

Irina Markevich  
Brookline, Massachusetts

*Editors' note: In our continuing effort not only to encourage newcomers to attend our conferences, but also to meet their needs once they get there, we frequently ask conference first-timers to write a brief review. This year Irina Markevich volunteered.*

I was truly looking forward to attending my first ATA conference. And yet I did not really know what to expect and was feeling somewhat nervous. I knew several people from my local translators' association were going to be there, but I was not even sure if we would end up running into each other. Prior to attending the conference I contacted Mary David (Chapter and Division Relations Manager) at ATA Headquarters. I was moved by how eager she was to help me in spite of the fact that we had never met before. She gave me various useful pieces of advice, introduced me to the Slavic Division and, best of all, helped me meet the best mentor anyone could wish for, Elana Pick. I would strongly encourage all newcomers to be proactive before attending a conference. Do not hesitate to contact ATA Headquarters prior to the conference and ask questions. Make sure that you have selected the right seminars for yourself and inquire about the mentoring program.

ATA had chosen a wonderful location for this conference—Phoenix, Arizona. The weather was beautiful there in the fall. Every event was nicely arranged. I attended a number of very informative and helpful seminars and met many interesting people who gladly shared their experiences with me and answered my questions about trends in language

services. I also acquired much useful information about various kinds of translation software at the conference's Exhibit Hall. I found that one of the best places for meeting people and getting useful advice was the outdoor Jacuzzi and heated pool downstairs at the conference hotel, where many conference attendees would relax and chat with each other after a busy day. (Editors note: ATA cannot promise that such a venue exists at every conference.) In spite of all this, I met a number of first time attendees who felt somewhat lost throughout the conference. I thought it would be a good idea if ATA would assign "conference mentors" to each newcomer who asked, to help guide them through their first conference.

It was a real pleasure meeting members of the Slavic Languages Division. I found every one of them to be warm and friendly, and right from the first moment they made me feel very welcome. It was interesting to me to meet people who represented almost every Slavic language. We had interesting business and social discussions and shared our backgrounds and devotion to our profession.

I returned home with many positive impressions from the conference and look forward to attending more of them.

*Irina Markevich was born and grew up in St. Petersburg, Russia. She is currently a freelance Russian->English interpreter/translator, specializing in the areas of medicine and law. She also works as a Spanish medical interpreter. She can be reached at [imarkevich@hotmail.com](mailto:imarkevich@hotmail.com).*

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## REGULATORY DOCUMENTATION *Continued from page 6*

*Словарь по геотехнике* (С. Сомервилл, М. Пауль, пер. с англ., 1986). Again, I cannot blame Igor for this because, not being a specialist in this area, he could not have known which dictionaries and regulatory documents were the best to use.

In the second part of his presentation Igor compared terminology on handling explosive materials that appeared in a translation he edited and in the respective American (CFR) and Russian (ГОСТ) regulatory documents. It appears that certain definitions and shipping labels in this area, if translated literally, may not distort the meaning but do not correspond to the terms found in the appropriate target language regulatory document and thus may not be recognized for what they are supposed to be by the end user. Some of the examples he gives are quite interesting:

[Взрывчатые материалы,] *не представляющие значительной опасности* = ... *that present a minor explosion hazard*, rather than the obvious ... *not presenting a major explosion hazard*; *extremely insensitive* [explosives] = *чрезвычайно низкой чувствительности*, rather than the obvious *чрезвычайно*

*нечувствительные*; *Не кантовать* = *Do not tumble*, not *Do not turn over*; *Штабелировать запрещается* = *Do not stack*, not *No stockpiling is allowed*. The last two examples of not incorrect but not precise equivalents in the real world were from the translation Igor edited.

Some other non-obvious equivalents are: *Fragile: Handle with care* = *Хрупкое, осторожно*; *Keep dry* = *Бережь от влаги*; *Sling here* = *Место строповки*; *Use no hooks* = *Крюками непосредственно не брать*.

In conclusion, I can only commend Igor Belyaev for his thorough and research-based work, and wish him a successful completion of the English-Russian Pipeline Glossary he has been working on for 5 years. I further wish all of us enough time and perseverance to adhere to his commitment "to the perfect, ideal translation."

## FROM THE POLISH EDITOR

The article by Danuta Kierzkowska on the status of Polish court translators and interpreters, which appeared in the Summer/Fall 2003 *SlavFile*, has touched a nerve with some translators and organizations in Poland. In this issue we are publishing a response to the article by the director of the Center for Modern Translation and Interpretation Studies in Łódź. *SlavFile* welcomes the exchange of viewpoints and hopes that presenting diverse perspectives on the issue of professional qualifications will help our fellow translators in Poland—those that read our publication, that is—sort out their opinions on proposed legislative changes. And the process should be edifying for the rest of us. At any rate, it is strangely reassuring to realize that controversy is not the exclusive domain of ATA members.

In the meantime, the changes in Poland are going into overdrive. A draft of the legislative act on “public translators,” referred to in both articles, is being studied in the Sejm and may be passed, along with a number of other laws, in time for Poland’s accession into the organizational structures of the European Union. That is one change whose ripple effects are already being felt on the other side of the Atlantic. For the sake of our colleagues who have the good fortune/misfortune (depending on the point of view) of participating in this historic moment, we hope that the opportunities and benefits that come with this accession are more numerous than the challenges.

Last but not least, as the person responsible for translating Danuta Kierzkowska’s article, I would like to take it upon myself to correct several renditions of organization names from the article’s text. The corrections suggested to me by both Danuta and Jim Hartzell and by other careful readers are the following: First, the name for “Polskie Towarzystwo Tłumaczy Ekonomicznych, Prawniczych i Sądowych” was used inconsistently and differed from the officially accepted version—Polish Society of Economic, Legal, and Court Translators. Second, “Polskie Stowarzyszenie Tłumaczy” is the Association of Polish Translators and Interpreters, and not the Polish Translators Association. Finally, the appellation of Republic of Poland has a broader official currency than the Polish Republic, which, however, can be used in other historical contexts.

Thank you for your suggestions and contributions to our publication.

*Ursula Klingenberg, SlavFile’s contributing editor for Polish, can be reached at [vaukling@msn.com](mailto:vaukling@msn.com).*

## A Response to “The Status of Polish Court Translators in 2003” by Danuta Kierzkowska

*by James Hartzell*

Ms. Kierzkowska, author of “The Status of Polish Court Translators in 2003,” which appeared in the Summer/Fall 2003 edition of *SlavFile*, is identified as, *inter alia*, “(former) Deputy President of the Polish Translators Association, chairperson of the Sworn Translators’ Division of STP, founder of the Polish Association of Business, Legal and Court Translators (TEPIS), President of PT TEPIS, and Editor in Chief of TEPIS Publishing House.” A great deal of her article is devoted to the past, present, and future planned activities of TEPIS. As President thereof, it is fair to assume that she is speaking authoritatively on TEPIS’s behalf, yet at various points throughout the article she also seems to be speaking for the Council of Polish Translators (“the Council of Polish translators maintains that...” and “despite pressure exerted by the Council of Polish Translators...”), STP (“STP and TEPIS have always argued...”), and at times even the entire translation community (“Translators continue to have many serious objections...” and “Translators object not so much to the harsh penalties...”).

Thus, before assessing the merits of Ms. Kierzkowska’s comments and postulates concerning the present status of Polish translators, some attempt should be made to determine the circle of persons on whose behalf she is speaking. At a minimum, it would seem that Ms. Kierzkowska, as the person in the best position to know, should offer concrete data on the total number of sworn translators registered in Poland and the number of sworn translators who are members of TEPIS (and/or STP). Logic would seem to dictate that she could not claim to be speaking on behalf of sworn translators not registered in her organization.

More importantly, however, if the circle of persons on whose behalf Ms. Kierzkowska claims to be speaking is going to be broadened to include “translators” generally, then some thorny and interrelated definitional issues arise. The following list is by no means exhaustive:

1) Who is a translator? Is this “title” restricted to sworn translators, or does it include persons translating full-time, part-time, or in-house; persons presenting themselves as translators; any person earning money by translating; persons who have completed and met specific educational requirements; persons belonging to specific (voluntary) organizations, etc.? Does the term include interpreters, community interpreters, etc.? What is a translation? Does it include verification, revision, consultation, etc.? The proposed draft of the new Polish law creates a new category—“public translator”—and contains provisions that very broadly define those tasks that a “public translator” is authorized to perform (Art. 17) and verify, using an official stamp. This set

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## BEGINNER'S LUCK

*Liv Bliss (perennially novice translator)  
Lakeside, Arizona*

One problem that I think we all—not just those thoroughly jaded individuals among whom I intend never to number myself—experience from time to time is how to keep our craft and our approach to it fresh. The Joint Publications Research Service (a sister of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service and arm of the CIA. Travelers beware; we are now entering the thickets of the great state of Bureaucratia) used to, and for all I know continues to, urge its translators to avoid RUTs. *Really Unimaginative Translations*. But we all know that's easier said than done. Once you've settled into your areas of specialization, it sometimes seems an awful lot of trouble to move out of that safe place. Once a corpus of renditions that feels comfortable and is adequately multivalent has been established, it's so hard to discard it for something less musty. After all, only sharks need to keep moving if they want to stay alive, right? Wrong.

There are, of course, any number of areas in which variety, far from being the spice of life, is a truly bad idea. Were I in Prague right now and rolling on the floor in exquisite pain, I would not enjoy waiting while the interpreter searched for a livelier way to say "acute appendicitis." But for most of us, keeping it fresh is an issue and—let's be honest, now—a welcome challenge. As soon as that very first check has been banked and you realize, perhaps to your surprise, that disciplining yourself to meet those deadlines without a boss slobbering down your neck isn't really a problem at all, the temptation to slide into a stupefying linguistic routine comes sneaking out of the closet and winding around your feet.

Some of us had the foresight, or simply the dumb luck, to marry into our source language/culture. That's got to help. But I didn't. Still, relatives, friends, colleagues and strangers can be veritable fountains of information and new perspectives that might not be available in cold, hard pixels; everyone has experience, hobbies, and expertise that we don't. Not long ago, while struggling with whether to bestow a shotgun or a carbine upon the hero of a novel I was translating, I was able to tap, with great relief, into my husband's extensive knowledge of firearms and other items that make loud noises

You will find a solid constituency in favor of regular visits to your motherland (in my case, it would be my foster-motherland, since I was born in the UK but found myself at home in Russia). Some colleagues are convinced that they would not survive without at least an annual dictionary safari on their home (source or target) turf. Others hardly ever go back, but compensate in other ways—which, in our ever-shrinking global village, are legion.

Then there are those of us who have a job other than translation and do our translating part-time (I've read often enough that you're not truly professional if you're not full-time: arrant nonsense!). That automatically freshens one's focus and is surprisingly energizing (I did it for years), although it can carry a price tag of serious sleep deprivation. Enjoy it

while you're young, I say. A colleague of mine has a full-time job with a prestigious publisher, is a full-time wife and mother, and somehow also manages to run a thriving translation business. (Yes, I know that adds up to a 72-hour day.) That girl is so fresh, she squeaks.

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*My nature is subdu'd  
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand  
Pity me, then, and wish I were renew'd*

William Shakespeare (Sonnet 111)

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I imagine that interpreters and interpreter/translators sometimes dream of sitting in front of a computer all day, surrounded by silent, obedient dictionaries. Not that I'm recommending taking up interpretation just to get out of the office. All I'm suggesting is that staleness might be less of a threat to someone who's forever racing off to the supreme court downtown or a building site half-way across the world. I'm ready to stand corrected on that, though. Interpreters: do you need to work at keeping it new, and, if so, how do you do it?

Now, a show of hands, please, from all those who have never left an ATA conference feeling excited and invigorated (although perhaps mildly anxious after having blithely volunteered for so many things in the heat of the moment). No, I didn't think so. I happen to live in a rather remote rural area, which makes getting to conferences, seminars, division or chapter meetings, and other get-togethers strategically problematic, since I'm not an intrepid traveler, and sometimes rather costly (although the US taxman, at least, still looks kindly on legitimate business trips). But whenever you are reasonably able to get some face time with colleagues, do it. You'll thank me later.

Mentoring? Community outreach? A chalk-talk at the Senior Center? Whyever not? Surely you've been asked, on a plane or in line at the supermarket, what you do for a living. You confess. "Oh, how interesting!" your interlocutor says. And you know what? Some of them mean it. Besides, there's nothing like people who want to learn something from you to make you question almost everything you thought you knew. *But I'm just a beginner!* I hear you cry. So are we all, in our own ways, yet there's no better way of testing the boundaries of knowledge than having to marshal and convey that knowledge. And it is at the boundaries where progress happens.

I just spoke rather dismissively of cold, hard pixels, but it would be insane not to make the most of the fellowship available in cyberspace. Over time I have acquired a select group of e-pals who are also in the business and with whom I correspond fairly regularly on just about anything except work

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# Czech and Slovak Representation at Last

Judith Yeaton, Prague, Czech Republic

SF Czech and Slovak Editor

Češi a Slováci!

We've been offered a place of our own, here in *SlavFile*. A place for translator profiles (unless you're in Prague, don't count on the major media outlets offering you time on the air), dictionary reviews, points of view on the possibility—or advisability—of a certification exam, the fate of the jers in Czech and Slovak, the language-teaching innovations of Jan Amos Komenský, etc. The *SlavFile* official languages are English and Russian, so while contributions in Czech and Slovak are welcome, they will have to be translated before being published. The Czech or Slovak text can be published on the Slavic Languages Division web site.

To get things started, here's a letter about living as a translator in Prague today.

## Letter from Prague

Saw-sharpening activities just weren't helping anymore. They usually don't by the time you're ready to throw the saw away, I discovered, a point not considered in *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.<sup>2</sup> For 15 years I'd been translating Czech, Slovak, and Russian, and on the days my son learned to stay away from home, Hungarian. During this period I'd forgotten how to speak the Russian I'd worked so hard on in college and grad school and the Slovak the Army had thought it a good idea for me to learn. Czech I'd never spoken—in fact, since I'd acquired my reading knowledge on the basis of Slovak, it's possible I'd never even heard it spoken. As for Hungarian, I'd heard it during class at Indiana University, but that was a very long time ago. It seemed that the more I translated, the less of any language I could use for any purpose besides decoding chemical patents and Environmental Impact Analyses.

It was obviously time for a change, so I packed up and left for Prague.

This past year has been many things—exhausting, discouraging, scary at times, frustrating in ways I'd never imagined possible. But never boring!

Russians—of whom there are thousands in Prague—will tell you how powerful and beautiful their language is; Slovaks speak of the sweetness of theirs. The Czechs tell you, with a certain pride, how impossible Czech is. They glory in the “i-or-y” problem, the “ř” that not even all Czechs can pronounce, in the extravagance of their declension and conjugation paradigms (57 for nouns, 56 for verbs—and they've still got the dual) and never fail to point out, once you begin to make progress with all this, that nobody actually speaks that way. You *can* speak spisovná čeština (the written form they teach in school), of course, but it makes people feel uncomfortable, as

if they're taking an oral exam, and is not considered either tactful or very friendly. If nothing else, I've disproved the hypothesis that it's relatively simple to learn to speak a language you can read. Early results indicate it's very easy to learn to read much better, moderately easy to learn to understand the spoken language, and that it is impossible to learn to speak only by reading and listening.

The original idea was to teach English while I got settled in and then, eventually, to return to part-time translating. The market for teachers of English as a foreign language is probably not actually infinite, but it is very, very large. Not only are there all those ambitious businessmen and potential European Union bureaucrats, but high school graduates who don't pass the university entrance exams the first time can retain their official student status by enrolling in a *jazykovka* for a year. “Official student status” means, among other things, paid health insurance, reduced admission to the movies, and their families' continued receipt of child benefit payments. It no longer means exemption from the draft, but that's because the draft has been abolished.

Teaching English can be interesting—does any native speaker of English realize how complicated this language can be, looked at from the outside? Fortunately, since most private students want practice in conversation rather than grammar, the problem of the usual native speaker's inability to explain his own language doesn't arise as often in somebody's living room as it does in the language schools. In these schools the American teachers spend more time preparing their grammar lessons than the students do taking them. Grammar lessons are a review for most of the Czech kids anyway, who complain that all they ever did in school was study grammar, that their teachers had horrible accents, that they never got to speak, and so on. But they'll tell you all this in perfect, if slowly spoken, English.

Teaching can even be fairly remunerative, if you stick to private lessons. Working for a Czech school is not remunerative and can be exhausting (classes are given at businesses all over the region, either before or after working hours, and travel time is not compensated). It can be instructive, however, with regard to all the ways in which Czech and American world views differ. The Czechs view the smallest business as a bureaucracy, where the lowest member of the official staff—the kid who drives the car and makes the coffee—outranks the “hired help”—the British/Americans/Australians who are actually doing the teaching, in this case. One administrator, an American himself, told me that Americans, used to a more team-oriented approach, tend to depart early; the Brits and Aussies have a better reputation for finishing out their year-long contracts.

Teaching English is a hard way to make a living and not a good way to learn Czech. One semester was interesting, but

<sup>2</sup> Editor's note: This book encourages its readers to keep themselves (their saws) sharp, renewing themselves physically, spiritually, mentally and socially/emotionally, rather than trying to cut down trees with a dull saw.

sufficient. After that I went back to translating, which is a great deal more rewarding when you only need to do it part-time and can count time chatting with the waiters at the local eatery, or browsing in the mysteries section at the library, or listening to the radio, as work-related activities. (To be absolutely honest, the waiters are Arab, but they're learning Czech too, and we foreigners have to stick together.) In such a relaxed atmosphere, I've even been inspired to seek out other translators to talk to.

As you might expect in the world center of Czech translation, there are a number of Czech translators around, many of whom participate in the active CzechList and CzechEd Yahoo Groups started by Melvyn Clarke, a Brit who's been living and translating in the CR since the 1980s, permanently since 1990. In December he was interviewed on the Radio 6 Program, "an informal interview show, where listeners have the chance to meet some of the most interesting figures in Czech life today." (A full-scale interview of a *translator*!) The talk is archived at <http://www.radio.cz/en/article/48298>.

If you translate from or into Czech or Slovak, these sites are a great place for help with terminology questions. Resources are stockpiled at <http://www.geocities.com/CzechEd/> (check out the one on occupations for those day-wasting birth certificates). People at the site are friendly and helpful, and questions are answered with surprising promptness. It's a good size group—259 (vs 119 in the Russian Translators group—just for the sake of comparison). There are occasional get-togethers in Prague, which I've missed so far but plan to attend next Monday, the translator's traditional day off.

I haven't encountered any Russian-Czech translator groups yet, but with the passage of time—and the realization that the St. Petersburg-Moscow market alone is twice that of the entire Czech Republic—the bitterness towards all things Russian is fading. My Russian teacher says that for the first time since she began giving lessons five years ago, she has more work than she can handle. It's still considered something between tactless and deliberately provocative to read Russian on the Metro, and when we meet at a restaurant for a lesson, Vera insists I speak English—not one of her languages—to the waiter. It may be a plea to show him mercy, since I'm apt to pause to consider the grammar in the middle of a sentence, but she says we get better service when the staff are not sure of "our" nationality. Russian dictionaries are available, although I haven't seen anything exciting yet. I've heard that in the early 1990s piles of those big Russian<>Czech and Russian<>Slovak dictionaries were discarded in the streets; but now that people are beginning to look for them, they're rare even in the second-hand bookstores.

As an example of the helpfulness of the Yahoo groups, I can cite the results of a request for information I sent out about living and working in your source-language country. Some people replied personally; some posted answers. James Kirchner—currently teaching back in the States—had

especially extensive comments, which are available at CzechList in message 19782.

A problem mentioned by more than one CZ>EN translator (the EN>CZ people were too polite to be drawn) was working with "native speaker" editors living abroad, for example, the freshly-graduated Americans who come to Prague for a year abroad and have inadequate knowledge of formal English, or those who have lost touch with the home country and current usage of the language—for example, Czechs who left in 1968 and concentrated on learning English. As Jamie points out, brand-new American BAs in English "can get jobs in the CR that they'd have to work 10 years for in the US." Since the chances of their knowing any Czech are virtually nil, there are no constraints placed on their imaginations, and the results are sometimes quite strange. As one very nice young editor told me, she tended to assume some bit of weirdness produced by translators meant something, but that she just didn't understand the topic and let it go. Apparently she'd become accustomed in college to studying material that she didn't quite grasp and assumed this was more of the same. As I wander around Prague trying not to wince at translations that clients have paid top dollar to have "edited by a rodilý mluvčí" (one of these "native-speaking" innocents), I have to fight the urge to offer to do *pro-bono* editing of this year's output of into-English translations. People who have been away from home too long tend to fight recent changes in language use—the reviewer in the US who fought the use of the term "akcionár" would be truly shocked by today's sports page with its description of the "souboj o hokejovou extraligu" (s + boj = battle, duel). (The Communists—the second-largest party here—are so shocked they've proposed a law to clean up the language, starting by removing the Americanisms.) Renata Korpak, a UK-based translator, mentioned an example of the problem: the translators who graded the test translations for the first members accepted by the ITI for translation into-Czech refused to accept such terms as "marketingový" which is as common in Czech now as "marketing" is in English.

The solution would appear to be simple: Czechs in the CR, or in frequent contact with it, should do translations into Czech, whether needed in Prague or the US, and Americans/Brits/etc. should do translations out of Czech into their own version of English. With the Internet, this doesn't seem to be an unworkable solution. The only problem is matching up work and translator.

At a recent talk sponsored in Prague jointly by the ATA and the JTP, the Union of Translators and Interpreters, a translation agency with association-like features, ATA's Jiří Stejskal mentioned that ATA membership was once again open to non-US citizens. When I asked (at CzechList, naturally) if people here would be interested in joining the ATA and perhaps setting up a certification exam, I got my first answer in the affirmative in about 15 minutes.

This could mean more efficient work for everybody, with the possible exception of the non-Czech speaking American editors. At the talk, Jiří said there hasn't been any sign of

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# SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

In the fall 2003 issue of SlavFile, I asked for readers to suggest a name for translation situations where some word or term seems abstruse or difficult and then turns out to be an old friend (or at least acquaintance) from one's native language. Misha Ishenko, in an interesting letter published in our Winter 2003/2004 issue, suggests "false foe." I like this simple solution but cannot decide between it and my own candidate "foe in friend's clothing." Meanwhile, an even more intriguing and complicated translation friend-foe situation was described in last month's Yahoo Russian Translators' Club.

Does anyone know the translation of *lograngovyi*? It [is] used in a sentence about statistical calculation of medical data. Thanks. –Christina

Could *lograngovyi* be a typo for "LaGrange" (adj.) -- or "Lagrangian," if you prefer? That could work in the mathematical/statistical context. Best to all, Liv

Liv, thanks, but doesn't Lagrangian apply mostly to physics? This word was used in the context of determining statistical results of a medical drug study. –Christina

Yes, but the good Count, in addition to his contributions to mechanics, was primarily a mathematician and something of a groundbreaker in algebra and statistical analysis. Check out his bio on the Internet or try "lagrange multiplier," for instance. Just don't ask me to explain any of it! ;-) Best, Liv

Christina, what you are probably looking for is this: log-rank test. In survival analysis, a log-rank test compares the equality of *k* survival functions... This definition can be found on this website: [http://www.basic.nwu.edu/statguidefiles/sg\\_glos.html](http://www.basic.nwu.edu/statguidefiles/sg_glos.html). To confirm it, I have also seen "two-sided log-rank test" translated as "dvustoronnii lograngovyi kriterii" in a similar context. Apparently, in Russian, "k" has somehow turned into "g", hence *lograngovyi*. Please don't ask me why, I did not translate it :-)). Good luck! Raisa

Who would ever have thought that a technical Russian term would differ by exactly one letter from the correct transliteration of not one but two equally technical English terms? Now all we need is to come up with a name for this phenomenon, which reminds me of the plot lines of certain sitcoms and family movies in which identical twins pretend to be each other in order to create mischief. This interchange also makes me wonder if there ever was another field that daily required such erudition on the part of its practitioners in such a wide range of fields as does translation.

In my paragraph on renderings of Russian book titles on e-bay, I neglected one. Someone keeps trying to sell Dostoevsky's novel, *The Insulated and Injured* (?!).

Regular readers of this column may have noticed that recently I have been growing more and more obsessed with the intricacies of the English language. Part of the reason for this is that I am teaching Advanced English as a Second Language without a textbook on grammar, syntax, or usage (having chosen to have my students buy a decent dictionary instead). If all your knowledge of English grammar, etc., is, as mine is, implicit, this is something akin to walking a tightrope without a net, since one has to derive the answers to questions on the spot.

However, I think there is also another reason, perhaps even more important. Having reached the ripe old age of 60 this year (not all bad, ATA gives you a discount on membership), I have begun to contemplate the truism, "you can't take it with you." This never struck me as particularly tragic when it comes to possessions. After all your millions of ненужные и как бы нужные вещи (just so much excess baggage after all) gets left behind and can be disposed of cleverly, so that much of it gets used. It is the loss of all the knowledge a person carries that seems to me the real waste. And my head is absolutely stuffed with linguistic knowledge, which occupies its own space plus what other people allot to information relating to physical procedures, competitive sports, financial affairs, and popular culture dating from after the Beatles disbanded. Probably it would take me more than the rest of my natural lifetime to get it all out there in usable form, but I have the urge to make an effort.

To put this another way, some 5 years ago I wrote in this column: "When I am translating from Russian to English, I see the English language as an enormous hardware store that carries absolutely anything anybody would want or need (as well as some things not in this category) but is extremely disorganized. The good translator then is a kind of old geezer salesclerk who has been working in the store for decades and is (or thinks he is) the only person who can immediately put his hands on the exact gizmo that someone needs for a repair or project." The question here is, what does the geezer salesclerk do when he starts to contemplate retirement. Well, if he is a conscientious old fellow, he thinks of organizing the shelves, or at least, if that is forbidden by management, of creating a map or guide to help the young whippersnappers hired to replace him locate what their customers need." So I have started writing a dictionary, or perhaps what could better be described as a series of glossaries, inspired by the realization that even frighteningly proficient non-Anglonate translators and interpreters may appreciate a guide through the cluttered aisles of English idiomatic usage. In this enterprise, I would like to enlist help from readers of this column.

Several weeks ago I sent the following email (slightly revised here) to some of my Russonate SLD buddies who I thought might be interested. It describes my proposed project in somewhat more practical and less metaphorical detail.

Dear friends and native speakers of Russian,

I am increasingly spending my time on things I find interesting and entertaining rather than on commissions from others. I have recently started working on a very amusing project that, to reach full potential, requires participation of native speakers of other languages. Strangely, I thought I'd try to start with Russian. I wonder if some of you would be willing to participate. What I have been doing is making lists of groups of idiomatic terms that somehow fall into the cracks between straight English and slang, secondary and idiomatic usages, colloquialisms, literary and cultural allusions, etc. (i.e., terms that non-native speakers might have some trouble with). The terms in each group (or list) share either formal, e.g. a "famous pairs" list consisting of terms connected by *and*, *but*, or *or* [e.g., *smoke and mirrors*, *so and so*, *some (thing, one, place, how)...or other*, *song and dance*, *sooner or later*, *sound and fury*, *spare the rod and spoil the child*, *spick and span*...you get the idea) or semantic features (e.g., idioms using color terms). I then define the terms in as clear a way as I can, providing the most illuminating examples I can come up with of their use in context.

I thought I would make one or more lists for publication in the *SlavFile*, but the trouble is I can't stop. I already have lists containing about 7,000 terms with only minimal repetition. I have definitions written for almost 2,000. But I would like to go farther and have the words translated into Russian, and maybe subsequently other languages. For this I would need the help of native speakers; what I am looking for now is people who would like to take part, or all, of one or more lists and come up with Russian equivalents or at least something that can be used in translating or interpreting. I would love the help of Anglonates as well, to help me think of new categories, terms to fit in them, editing and correcting and adding to what I have done and vetting the Russian translations.

Because of the way these lists are organized, I think something like this may never have been done before and I am fairly sure it is publishable. I talked to ATA and they are potentially interested in publishing it (them?), but I am beginning to think a CD would be better since it would take care of the indexing problem. Like all my ideas, I doubt if this would make any significant amount of money, but I would certainly share whatever it did make with everyone who helped and everyone would of course get full credit. It might well also be argued that

participation in this project is worthy of continuing education credit.

I would expect anything we did to be made available to SLD or ATA members on our website. As for time frame to get this done, I do not have one. However, as Boris Silversteyn and I have found, this kind of activity is addictive, and so progress so far has been pretty rapid. Please, if you are interested and have some time to give to this, let me know.

One of my lists appears as a separate article in this issue entitled "Funky, Feisty АНГЛИЙСКИЙ." Raphy Alden has devoted his Slovist column to a translation of the first 50 or so words on this particular list. Meanwhile, the number of words and English idioms I have already classified and listed exceeds 20,000.

All this talk about the chaotic nature of English reminds me of the chronic chaos on my desk and of a related anecdote. I have never considered sharing this in a public forum but I seem to have matured beyond embarrassment, and furthermore, would like to have something amusing with which to end this column.

During the decade I worked for Lockheed doing biomedical translations for NASA Headquarters, I was the beneficiary of a policy of benevolent neglect on the part of my Lockheed supervisors. They, quite understandably since they tended to be engineering types, had no idea how to evaluate or manage my work, and so left me alone as long as I filled out my timecard, arrived more or less on time, kept churning out the pages and satisfied the NASA clients. They did not even remonstrate with me about the atrocious mess on my desk and surrounding surfaces as long as I kept my door closed. However, the career Lockheed type in the office next door (I don't exactly remember, but I have the impression he was the supervisor of the support staff.) unavoidably caught glimpses of my office and was appalled. He used to harass me about it in a jocular and friendly way, asking me if I wasn't ashamed to be associated with such a mess (I nobly forbore to ask in turn if he wasn't ashamed to be associated with such a paunch) and asserting that he was sure that my work space at home was not in a similar state (little did he know!). Now it should be noted that this was before our children relinquished their rooms, so my work space was still in a corner of our largish master bedroom. Not only was my desk just as filled with a clutter of dictionaries, papers, etc., but it frequently also collected the debris associated with the multiuse space of a bedroom cum office. Once, my husband came to the office to pick me up, and we encountered my co-worker in the hall; after introducing the two, at a loss for some topic of small talk, I told my husband that this co-worker kept asking me if my desk at home looked anything like my desk at work. With all appearances of taking this seriously, Ned stuck his head back into my space, looked around, and then said judiciously and with a straight face, "Well, no, here at Lockheed, there is no brassiere draped over the dictionary."

## ON TRANSLATING DAMN PUSHKIN INTO BLOODY SPANISH. A DELIGHTFUL NIGHTMARE

By Sergio Viaggio, United Nations Office at Vienna

It all began back in September 1966, as I was struggling with the Russian language at the *podgotovitelnyj fakul'tet* of the *Universitet Druz'by Narodov imeni Patrisa Lumumby* (where, incidentally, I was lodged at the *vtoroj blok*, recently gone up in smoke). We had nothing but phonetics the first couple of weeks, but then the whole weight of grammar was thrust upon us. It took me four months and two Russian girlfriends, but by the end of the year, I could proudly order *kotlety s makaronami*, thus gloriously inaugurating my command of the last plural case in the book. The following semester, we were introduced to Pushkin with—you guessed it!—*Ja vas ljubil*. I fell in love at once with the great Russian bard, who, to this day, remains my favorite poet in any language. *K Chadaevu*, *Prorok*, *K moriu*, *Bakhibeskaja pesnia*, *Pamiatnik* and a few others ensued, and I made a point of reading on my own *Skazka o Tsare Saltane*, since I had a recording of Rimsky-Korsakov's wonderful opera. The problem was that there were simply too many words to look up, which prevented me from really enjoying my reading. Whereby hangs this tale!

One evening—one *Winter Evening!*—as I was treading laboriously through Lermontov's *Borodino*, I had an epiphany of sorts: what if I copied the poem on the even lines of my *tetrad* and wrote a literal translation on the odd ones, so as to have the music on top and the lyrics underneath, as it were? What I ended up with was a dictionary miraculously open to the right page under each word – a Nabokovian monster of sorts. It worked marvellously: the second time around I could enjoy the poem on its own merits, without having to cheat and look at the line below.

And then it dawned upon me, my second epiphany: I could use my interlinear translation, it was exactly what I needed, but I could also read the original. As a matter of fact, I needed my interlinear translation in order to be better able to understand the original. I did not pursue or expect any aesthetic effect, just a walking stick (nor do I with the literal translation into English that I am adding for the benefit of those readers who cannot read Spanish with the sole purpose of letting them see the semantic back of my own tapestry). But how could I convey this wonderful and completely new poetry to my fellow Spanish speakers so that they too would be moved the way I was? Definitely not by providing them with an *ad hoc* dictionary! So if I wanted Pushkin to sound *poetic*, I had to forego the dictionary. The problem was not so much in making him sound poetic, as it was in making him sound poetically like himself, i.e., in re-writing his poems as close to how I imagined he might have written them had his language been Spanish. This was, then, my first theoretical stand. But then I realized that, had he been a speaker of Spanish, he would not only have written differently – he would have written *other* poems, not the ones he had actually penned. This led me to modify somewhat my theoretical outlook. But, in the meantime, another problem had leapt out: Pushkin was a modern poet—in his time! Should I use as a virtual model the

methods and lexis of his Spanish contemporaries and make him sound ex-modern, or bring him lock, stock and barrel into the second half of the XXth century? The first alternative posed a second problem: the first half of the XIXth century is a bad time for Spanish poetry (no Pushkins or Hugos or Coleridges or Heines or Leopardis to show off in either Spain or her former colonies); in order to sound as great as he was, Pushkin ought to sound greater than his Spanish contemporaries—which is, of course, much more easily said than done.

Whence my third epiphany: You cannot start to translate without a theoretical outlook—any theoretical outlook, even if an implicit, or unconscious or contradictory one: all the matters that I had to resolve in my mind before committing pen to paper were strictly “abstract,” purely “theoretical.” It was my own theoretical view that led me to try to respect rhyme and meter, for instance, since I considered them carriers of aesthetic meaning, and aesthetic meaning was, in my book at the time, the name of the game. In other words: no translation practice without translation theory—i.e., without a theoretical concept of what practice—i.e., **good** practice—should be. Given a specific translator, in other words, his work is bound to be better the better his theoretical outlook.

And this led to my fourth epiphany: I thought that I had the theoretical devil firmly grasped by his tail, except that it was far from enough. It is the **practice** of a theory that counts in the end: readers will not read my theory, but my translations. It is through them that they will understand—to a higher or lesser degree—what Pushkin *said* and will be affected—one way or another—by such comprehension.

Now the moment had come to put my money where my hand was and start translating. The version of *Ja vas ljubil* below was my first such stab. I chose it because I loved it, but also because I could easily convert its iambic pentameters into Spanish hendecasyllables (Iambic tetrameters, on the other hand, which are rife in Russian poetry, pose a dreadful dilemma: change the metre—into what?—or go for an extremely unusual, and therefore inordinately marked, verse that, to boot, sounds rather unnatural in Spanish.). Rhymes posed their own difficulties: it is much easier to rhyme intelligently in Russian than in Spanish, where homomorphemic rhyme is rightly considered childish (no room for *mozhet/trebozhit*, *sovsem/chem*, *beznedezhno/nezhno*, i.e., three out of four pairs!). As you can see, I did not quite manage to practice what I preach.

Am I happy with the fruit of my *nezrelyj plod moih zaban*, *bessonitz*, *legkih vdobnovennij nezrelyh i vyjadshih let*? As a first stab by a twenty-year old newly come to Russian, Pushkin and poetry itself, you bet I am! But, forty years later, as a translator, scholar and theoretician... hmmm. Indeed, there is nothing really wrong from the purely *translatological* viewpoint: barring some inevitable discrepancies—and, above all, the *robkost* that I could not fit into the 88 syllables at my disposal—my

translation says what the original says. As a translator, that is, I cannot really be taken to task. The real problem is not that it is a bad *translation*, but that it is not a good *poem*. And in my book, the translation of a good original that is not good as a target-language text is, to that extent, a **bad** translation, no matter how extenuating the semantic, syntactic and philologic circumstances. Readers of poetry—and of literature in general—do not primarily pursue either the *poznatel'naja* or the *vospitatel'naja* functions of art, but its *esteticheskaja* one. One reads to be moved by what one understands or learns, not to understand and learn and, if all goes well, to be moved by it. Not **my** model reader, in any case, and I, for one, translate for readers such as myself (I guess we all do, don't we?). My regret is that I would not be altogether satisfied with translations such as my own: they are not good enough as poetry.

Os he amado

Os he amado. Tal vez aquel amor  
arde aún en el fondo de mi alma,  
pero podéis perder todo temor:  
no quiero perturbar ya vuestra calma.

Os he amado, sin fe, sin luz, silente,  
por los celos el alma torturada.  
Os he amado tan dulce y tiernamente  
como os dé Dios por otro ser amada.

I have loved you

I have loved you. Perhaps that love  
Still burns in the bottom of my soul,  
But you can put at rest all fear:  
I do not wish to disturb your peace any longer.

I have loved you, without faith, without light, silent,  
My soul tortured by jealousy.  
I have loved you so sweetly and tenderly  
As God may grant you to be loved by another.

#### BEGINNER'S LUCK *Continued from page 9*

and other matters mercenarily linguistic—not that those kindly folks aren't willing to help me out with language issues (and that, of course, cuts both ways). It is important to me that these people are linguophiles; that allows us to talk about things that my “non-linguist” friends would find stupendously uninteresting. But I am careful not to include clients in that group; all those warnings about not mixing work and pleasure didn't come out of nowhere. [Pause for a chorus of “But our work *is* a pleasure; why else would we do it?” You know what I meant.]

There are also a number of refreshing, supportive, informative, eccentric, and sometimes just plain ornery e-communities out there, but I'm going tackle those another time. (Oh yes, there will be another time!) That will give you the opportunity to e-mail me in the meantime about the message boards, chat rooms, forums, and so forth that you've found worthwhile and those whose virtual doors you'd never darken again.

And, on a more strictly and practically linguistic note, there are various techniques involving the print media and the use of “parallel” texts to spruce up, expand, and even possibly demolish the Comfort Zone that I will also save for later.

Have you ever had that dream where you go to a dance, a lecture, or an examination and you are stark naked? And, unfortunately, you're the only one there who is? Well, I

haven't—probably because I live that scenario day in and day out. In the sense (settle down, you in the back!) that so much of what I do is embarked upon with the minimum preparation, and my journeys of a thousand miles often begin with a single step in the opposite direction. I don't know why I am so comfortable with that *modus operandi*, but I can just picture all the psychology majors going “hmmmm.” (At least I'm not alone: there was even an article by Betty Howell, in the ATA 2001 Conference Proceedings, entitled “A Distinctly Absurd Proposal,” in which she substantiated her method of **NOT** reading a text through before beginning to translate it. Huge can of worms. Let's move on for now. If you'd like a copy, though, let me know.) Not surprising though, what has happened in this column is not the subject matter I originally intended to cover. But it's been challenging. And I can feel my envelope stretching as we speak.

You can reach me at [bliss@wmonline.com](mailto:bliss@wmonline.com). And if you don't hear from me and/or your message comes wandering back to you unread, just try again. Cybertopia can be a skittish and unreliable realm.

## Funky, Feisty Английский

Lydia Razran Stone

Russian translations suggested by Raphy Alden

This is the word list that started me on the path to writing the dictionary of idiomatic English I mention in my *Lite* column. The immediate impetus for generating it occurred when a Russian-born translator I was chatting with at the ATA conference in Phoenix, one who has an outstanding command of English, did not understand a word I had used—either *grungy* or *grubby*, I can't remember, but since they are near synonyms, I don't suppose it matters. I had never thought about it before, but, as it happens, English has a surprisingly large set of adjectives ending in *-y*, ranging in style from informal/colloquial, e.g., *slighty*, *tawdry*, to downright slang, *cruddy*, *geeky*, to babytalk, *nummy*, *bitsy*. With the exception of *savvy* and *petty*, none of these, at least the ones I identified, appear to have direct ties to the learned Latin/Greek substrate of our language. With the exception of two of clearly German origin, *cranky* and *kitschy*, and a handful from Yiddish, they look to my unexpert eye to be indigenous to English. Of course, by this time any number of them may have been borrowed into other languages. In any event, it seems reasonable that some or many of these words might remain mysterious, or at least confusing, to some of our non-native English speaking members. And so I decided to compile a list of these words, take a closer look at them, and attempt to explain their usage to non-native English speakers.

My criteria for inclusion were that the words be *-y* adjectives from the registers noted above, and that their meaning not be transparently derivable from a corresponding standard English noun. I thus ended up with three classes: 1) adjectives with clear standard English nouns (or occasionally verbs) as roots, but meanings that, though related, cannot easily and unambiguously be derived from the meaning of the root, e.g., *batty*, *breezy*, or; 2) adjectives with no discernible noun root, e.g., *daffy*, *feisty*, *finicky*, *grody* etc.; 3) adjectives with corresponding nouns that are also slang and may in some cases be secondary derivations from the adjectives, e.g., *funky*, *grouchy*, *spunky* and so forth. Many of the words seem to me to straddle the border between these classes. I also included a few words that did not meet my criteria but, to me at least, seemed to belong with the others, words like *paunchy* and *sulky*. I excluded reduplicative terms of the *wishy-washy* type, as well as words containing more than one morpheme and words ending in *-ly*, unless the *l* was part of the previous root. One has to draw the line somewhere.

A majority of the listed words (and arguably all of them) can be described as having a meaning with a strong emotional or evaluative (expressive) component. Several largish meaning clusters emerged. A fair number of the adjectives describe the quality of being anywhere from charmingly eccentric to downright certifiable: A sublist that would start alphabetically with *batty* and end with *zany*. A similarly sized cluster contains words meaning dirty, messy, disgusting, worn out, or generally of poor quality. A much smaller number describe the opposite

qualities, and only a very few—like *stodgy* and *stuffy*—carry a connotation of sanity, and in such cases sanity is associated with boredom and convention. Finally, there is a group of words referring to rude, irascible and generally objectionable behavior or character, viz., *grouchy*, *crabby*, *rowdy*, *snippy* and so forth; one describing the unattractive, overweight, or unfashionable—*tubby*, *frumpy*, *gawky*, etc.; one, which shades into the eccentric category, that refers to being high energy and spirited, and in particular having a disproportionate amount of “*spunk*” for one's inherent size or power, *feisty*, *plucky*, etc. (hobbits can be plucky, but the term would not be applied to superheroes). Last, there is a class of these words denoting the spurious, ostentatious, and overdone, *flashy*, *glitzy*, etc., as well as words like *cutesy* and *folksy*. It is difficult to provide a further generalization of meaning, but I would venture to say that a great many of them are used to characterize the forces of entropy.

I have no idea what conclusion can be drawn from all this, but it does strike me that a great many of these words seem to have been generated through a mechanism that an old psych textbook of mine called the “poo-poo” theory of the origin of language. This theory postulates that language arose from natural verbal expressions of surprise, disgust, delight, etc. I myself clearly remember coining words of this type when I was in high school and there just did not seem to be a pre-existing descriptor adequate to convey the noxious qualities of certain of the boys in our class.

It would also seem that the *-y* adjective ending has undergone some cross-contamination with the *-y* diminutive ending, as very many of these words have the connotation of smallness: thus there are numerous words meaning simply small, small and cute, small and frivolous and/or trivial, small and annoying, words with a strong patronizing connotation. Great and serious good and evil are described by words of another family. Thus, Picasso is not *artsy*, nor is Mother Theresa described as *churchy*; Bin Laden is neither *feisty* nor *grumpy*, though my irascible but harmless grandfather may be so characterized. Be all this as it may, I hope you have fun with my list. If anyone has anything to add or considers certain terms interlopers, please let me know. If anyone would like to take a stab at translating some or all of these into Russian or another Slavic language we would be happy to publish your contribution. Translations of the first 50 terms have already been suggested by Raphy Alden and his renditions are given below. As much of the rest of the list as we can fit in is also included. The list in its entirety of 419 words can be found on the SLD website.

1. airy—(aside from basic meaning): illusory, speculative, impractical; light, delicate; haughty; light-hearted, пустой, легкомысленный; ветреный, заносчивый, беззаботный



2. antsy—impatient and restless, possibly from anxious but more likely from ants in the pants, беспокойный, дерганый
3. artsy—affecting or exaggerating the trappings of an artistic lifestyle, artsy-fartsy is even more negative, вычурный
4. baggy—of clothing, loose and ill-fitting, мешковатый
5. balky—given to stopping and refusing to go on, difficult to operate or start, упрямый, норовистый, с норовом
6. balmy—fragrant, mild, and soothing; also eccentric (confusion with barmy?), ароматный, душистый, успокаивающий
7. ballsy—very, even recklessly, tough, courageous or audacious (from balls=testicles), напористый, пробивной; энергичный
8. bandy—bowed or bent in an outward curve; *bandy legs*, кривой, кривоногий, изогнутый
9. barmy—eccentric, mildly crazy (British), тронутый, сумасбродный, спятивший
10. batty—crazy, eccentric, often used with a touch of affection, спятивший, сумасшедший, тронутый
11. beady—of eyes, small, round, and dark, not complimentary, как бусинки/горошины
12. beefy—fleshy to or just before the point of obesity, раскормленный, тучный, упитанный
13. bitchy—malicious, spiteful and domineering, virtually always of a female or homosexual male, озлобленный, стервозный, разнузданный
14. bitsy (bitty)—tiny, from bit, 1. крохотный, крошечный, малюсенький, 2. незначительный, пустячный
15. bleary—blurred or dimmed as if by tears; indistinct; exhausted; bleary eyed, мутные глаза, тусклый, расплывчатый, затуманенный, неясный, смутный
16. blotchy—covered with discolorations or blemishes, пятнистый, покрытый пятнами/кляксами
17. blowsy—disheveled, slatternly, coarse and ruddy faced, неряшливый, растрепанный, толстый и краснощекий
18. blustery—swaggering; задиристый, буйный, хвастливый
19. bonny—physically attractive or appealing, миловидный, цветущий
20. bosomy—of a woman, having a large chest, с пышной бюстом, грудастая
21. brassy—(aside from basic meaning) cheap and showy, brazen, insolent, вызывающий, наглый, бесстыдный, претенциозный
22. breezy—brisk, informal, offhand, бесцеремонный, оживленный, проворный, юркий; борзый; отрывистый
23. bristly—quick to show anger or irritation, touchy, ошестинистый, колючий, жесткий
24. broody—moody and depressed; of chickens, etc., disposed to sit on and hatch eggs, задумчивый, молчаливый, подавленный, погруженный в раздумье
25. burly—strongly built, крупный; здоровый, дородный, плотный, крепкий
26. bubbly—metaphorically: effervescent, full of high spirits, игривый
27. bully—excellent, splendid (not to be confused with the noun/verb bully), блестящий, отличный, первоклассный, великолепный, превосходный,
28. bushy—thick and shaggy, especially hair or beard, густой, лохматый
29. busty—bosomy, грудастый, грудастая
30. busy—(aside from basic meaning) undesirably cluttered with detail, e.g., of a wallpaper pattern, назойливый
31. cagey—wary and shrewdly protective of one's own interests, уклончивый, скрытый
32. canny—careful and shrewd, осторожный; практичный; себе на уме; хитрый
33. catchy—likely to attract the attention and stay in memory, of a slogan or tune, легко запоминающийся
34. catty—sharp-tongued, spiteful and gossipy, злой; злобный; язвительный; хитрый; коварный
35. chancy—uncertain as to outcome, risky; random or haphazard, рискованный неопределенный
36. chary—very cautious, wary; sparing, осторожный, скупой, бережливый
37. chatty—prone to chatter (not necessarily negative), болтливый, болтушка
38. cheeky—bold and impudent, нахальный; наглый, дерзкий
39. cheesy—cheap and of poor quality, also cheap and shabby in behavior, дрянной; никуда негодный, дешевый
40. chesty—bosomy, полногрудая; грудастая
41. chintzy—cheap (said of an item or stingy person), дешевый, мещанский
42. choosy—highly selective (less negative than picky), разборчивый; привередливый
43. choppy—marked by abrupt transitions, physical or metaphorical, часто меняющийся
44. chummy—intimate, friendly; frequently inappropriately so, дружелюбный; общительный
45. chunky—short and stout, sometimes a euphemism for fat; also as applied to jewelry and other fashion accessories, blocky and un-delicate, but stylish – ???????
46. churchy—very involved with one's church, conforming rigorously to church practices and standards, преданный церкви; елейный; ханжеский
47. cinchy—extremely easy - ?????
48. clammy—damp, cold, and sticky or slimy; *clammy hands*, липкий; холодный и влажный
49. classy—high class, elegant, of good quality, admirable; typically used without irony, первоклассный; шикарный, классный
50. clingy—adhering closely to the body (as a garment), resisting separation, wanting to be held (as a small child), emotionally dependent on another, липкий; цепкий

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51. clumsy—badly coordinated, awkward in either the physical or metaphorical sense
52. clunky—large, squarish and awkward, the opposite of streamlined, not necessarily negative, for example of shoes
53. cocky—conceited, overly pleased with oneself, over confident
54. comfy—(very) comfortable, usually used for familiar and beloved items (shoes, chairs)
55. corny—banal
56. cozy—warm, comfortable, and welcoming, homey
57. crabby—irritable, bad-tempered and negative, either acutely or chronically
58. crafty—underhanded or devious
59. craggy—of facial features or personality, rugged, rough hewn
60. crappy—bad, horrible in any sense
61. creepy—weird, eerie, stemming from the sensation of insects crawling on the skin
62. cruddy—of poor quality or dirty, evidently from crud meaning dried semen
63. crummy—poor in quality
64. crunchy—crisp; loving nature, i.e., the kind of person who lives on granola
65. crusty—old and irascible
66. cuddly—either liking to cuddle (like some babies) or conducive to cuddling (like polar fleece)
67. cushy—soft, pleasant, undemanding, often describes a job that is a sinecure
68. cutesy—intentionally, self-consciously and/or excessively cute, always negative
69. daffy—silly, foolish, giddy, probably with a tinge of affection
70. dandy—fine, good, often used ironically; foppish
71. dewy—(aside from basic meaning) fresh, pure, and innocent
72. dicey—risky, dangerous
73. diddly—vanishingly small, insignificant
74. dingy—dirty, dim, and/or squalid
75. dinky—small and insignificant
76. dippy—foolish, slightly insane, eccentric
77. dishy—(of gossip) sensational; British slang: attractive, good-looking
78. dithery—nervously irresolute
79. ditsy—foolish, giddy, superficial
80. dodderly—feeble and shaky with age
81. dodgy—evasive; unreliable, unsuitable; requiring very skilled handling (British)
82. dorky—stupid, inept, lacking social skills
83. doughty—stouthearted and courageous, old fashioned
84. dotty—eccentric, mildly crazy
85. dowdy—lacking in style or taste or even slovenly, particularly of a woman's appearance
86. draggy—lethargic, unenergetic
87. drecky—of inferior quality, trashy (from Yiddish word for excrement)
88. dreamy—given to daydreams; soothing and serene; wonderful
89. dressy—elegant or formal in dress, an occasion requiring such dress
90. droopy—sagging in dejection or exhaustion
91. drowsy—sleepy, dull with sleepiness, of a time or location: dull and uneventful
92. ducky—excellent, fine; often used sarcastically; *that's just ducky.*
93. dumpy—short and stout, lacking grace, particularly of a woman
94. dusky—(aside from basic meaning) dark of complexion (generally used either euphemistically or ironically)
95. dusty—(aside from basic meaning) outmoded, stale
96. earthy—hearty, natural, uninhibited, unadorned and simple in style
97. edgy—original meaning: high strung, nervous, too easily irritated; new meaning: innovative, on the “cutting edge”
98. feisty—spirited and lively, especially of a small or elderly person
99. fidgety—with many nervous movements, habits or behaviors
100. finicky—overly exacting in one's demands or tastes, frequently with regard to food; also overly scrupulous
101. fishy—dubious, unconvincing, questionable (the reference is to the smell of fish no longer fresh)
102. fizzy—effervescent, either in a physical or metaphorical sense
103. flaky—foolish, silly, irrational; unreliable
104. flabby—lacking firmness; lacking force or vitality
105. flashy—ostentatious
106. flighty—volatile, capricious
107. flimsy—lacking in strength, substance, or value
108. flinty—unyielding, stern
109. flowery—(aside from basic meaning) full of ornate, grandiloquent expressions; highly embellished
110. fluky—dependent on chance; constantly shifting, uncertain
111. folksy—strikingly, artificially or exaggeratedly informal, friendly and familiar (may be positive, but more likely negative)
112. foxy—original meaning: sly and devious; newer meaning: sexually attractive of a female, originally African-American usage
113. freaky—unusual, weird, abnormal, even supernatural
114. frilly—overdecorated in a feminine way, as with ruffles
115. frisky—frolicsome, playful, playfully amorous
116. frizzy—tightly curled
117. frothy—cold in manner
118. frothy—playfully frivolous
119. frumpy—dull, dowdy
120. funky—cowardly; smelling bad; (in computer use) functioning inelegantly but functioning; out of the main stream, odd-ball (peculiar) but appealing; “strange but cool,” bohemian
121. fussy—ill-tempered or irritable; fastidious, paying excessive attention to small details; over-decorated

122. fuzzy—fluffy (like a plush toy or baby chick); indistinct in outline, vague (of a concept); (of thinking) confused, muddled; in the phrase “warm and fuzzy,” giving rise to feelings of pleasure, affection and coziness, but possibly not standing up to hard-headed analysis
123. gabby—overly talkative
124. gamy—having the odor of slightly spoiled game or mean, sordid, seamy, sexually suggestive, racy
125. gassy—(aside from basic meaning) boastful, bombastic (full of hot air)
126. gaudy—ostentatious, garish
127. gauzy—thin and transparent or semi-transparent
128. gawky—awkward, large and gangling
129. geeky—socially inept without being reticent, usually used of someone with an intellectual bent, especially someone with a technical orientation
130. giddy—overly exuberant and lighthearted, may also mean dizzy
131. gimpy—lame or crippled
132. girly or girlie—featuring nude or scantily clad women in provocative poses, e.g. girlie magazine
133. glassy—(aside from basic meaning) lifeless, expressionless; *glassy-eyed*
134. glitchy—characterized by a number of minor problems or bugs, computer slang
135. glitzy—ostentatious and shiny
136. glossy—with a smooth, shiny surface; superficially and often speciously attractive
137. gnarly—difficult and complex, hairy, knotty
138. goggly—having protuberant or rolling eyes
139. gooey—sticky and viscous; fatuously sentimental or romantic
140. goofy—silly, ridiculous (possibly intentionally so; used affectionately)
141. goony—foolish, dopey
142. goopy—gummy, syrupy
143. goosy—foolish or scatterbrained, skittish
144. grabby—grasping, over-obvious or aggressive in the pursuit of one’s interests, having roving hands
145. grainy—composed of many fine dots, as a photograph
146. greasy—unctuous, unsavory and unreliable
147. grody—disgusting
148. groggy—not fully conscious or focused from sleepiness, drugs, illness, etc.
149. groovy—wonderful, pleasurable, euphoric, slang of the 1960s and 70’s
150. grouchy—bad-tempered
151. grubby—dirty, soiled, possibly with a trace of affection, as for a small child
152. grumpy—bad-tempered
153. grungy—filthy, covered with ingrained dirt
154. gunky—covered with thick grease
155. gushy—marked by excessive displays of enthusiasm or sentiment
156. gusty—wind blowing in abrupt rushes, characterized by abrupt outbursts
157. gutsy—courageous and spirited
158. hammy—marked by overacting, affectedly dramatic
159. hairy—(in addition to primary meaning of covered with hair) difficult and complex, having numerous tedious and labor-consuming details that must be dealt with, e.g., a math problem
160. handy—skillful with one’s hands, readily accessible; useful, convenient
161. hardy—robust in health, courageous, audacious, of a plant able to survive unfavorable conditions (not the same word as hearty q.v.)
162. heady—intoxicating, exhilarating
163. hearty—expressed warmly and sincerely, robust, requiring or providing much nourishment (a hearty appetite or meal) do not confuse with hardy.
164. heavy—(aside from basic meaning and metaphorical meaning of serious) really fine
165. hicky—(do not confuse with hickey) rural and unsophisticated
166. hippy—having large hips or rear end (not to be confused with the noun hippie)
167. hoary—ancient, used jocularly
168. hokey—fake, spurious
169. homey—having the feeling of home, comfortable, cozy
170. honky—in the manner of a white person; African American slang
171. horny – desirous of sexual intercourse, either at a particular moment, as a general character trait, or because of prolonged deprivation
172. huffy—easily offended, touchy
173. husky – large and sturdy, may be used as a euphemism for overweight
174. icky – disgusting in any sense
175. iffy—hypothetical, uncertain; according to my mother, this word was popularized by President Roosevelt, who used to say, “now, that’s an iffy question.”
176. itchy—(aside from basic meaning) filled with restless craving, prurient, impatiently eager
177. itsy—tiny, from itsy-bitsy, babytalk for little bit
178. jaunty—cheerfully nonchalant in manner of appearance
179. jazzy—unrestrained, animated, flashy
180. jerky—moving abruptly and erratically, foolish and socially inept like a “jerk”
181. jiggy—cool, great
182. jiffy—instantaneous, done in a very short time; usually a noun but may be an adjective as in “jiffy lube”
183. jittery—nervous and restless
184. juicy—(aside from basic meaning) richly interesting; racy, titillating; rewarding or gratifying
185. jumpy—on edge, nervous
186. kicky—exciting and energetic
187. kinky—basic meaning is tightly curled; having some, possibly major, foible or peculiarity; associated with unusual or exotic sexual practices
188. kitschy—of a designed object, in poor taste, intentionally created to appeal to the lowest taste

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Continued from page 19

189. kludgy (klugey)—of a solution to a problem, clumsy or inelegant (computer slang)
190. knotty—difficult to understand and solve
191. kooky—eccentric, crazy, frequently with a tinge of affection
192. kvetchy—whiney and prone to complain, from Yiddish
193. lanky—tall, lean and loose jointed
194. leggy—having long attractive sexy legs, of a woman; of a plant, heavy on stalk and low on leaves, because of inadequate sunshine
195. leery—distrustful, suspicious
196. lofty—very elevated physically or metaphorically, included here because it is so often used ironically to mean pompous, overblown, and/or arrogant
197. logy—sluggish, lethargic
198. loony—crazy, irrational
199. loopy—crazy, eccentric, giddy
200. lousy—infested with lice; awful, terrible; followed by “with something,” having an abundance of; *the museum was lousy with tourists.*
201. lusty—full of vigor, robust, powerful; lustful
202. mangy—having bare, worn spots like a dog with the mange, rundown and dirty
203. matey—(overly) friendly and familiar in personal relationships (British)
204. mealy—(aside from basic meaning) unwilling to express facts or opinions directly and simply, used in the phrase mealy-mouthed
205. measly—poor, blighted, contemptibly or unacceptably small or trivial
206. meaty—(aside from basic meaning) prompting considerable thought, as a meaty theme for debate
207. minging—cheap, stingy
208. moby—enormous, unwieldy, a megabyte in computers (from Moby Dick)
209. moldy—musty or stale, as from age or decay, cf., moldy oldie
210. moony—abstracted or dreamy, particularly as a result of being in love
211. mopey—depressed, droopy
212. motley—having elements of great variety
213. mousy—drab, timid, and quiet, used particularly of a unprepossessing female
214. mouthy—annoyingly talkative, prone to bombast, insolence, or ranting
215. muggy—hot, humid and uncomfortable
216. murky—dim and foggy, metaphorically unclear
217. mushy—excessively tender, romantic or sentimental, mawkishly amorous, always used negatively
218. musty—moldy, mildewed, trite and old-fashioned
219. muzzy—confused, befuddled, groggy
220. nappy—fuzzy, kinky; used especially to refer to extreme kinkiness of some African-American hair
221. natty—fashionable and tidy in dress
222. naughty—disobedient or mischievous, especially of children; of adult actions, suggestive, risque
223. needy—either a euphemism for impoverished, or demanding or needing a great deal of emotional support and attention
224. nerdy—involved in scientific, technical, or other unusual or non-cool pursuits; socially inept or different and indifferent to the impression made on “cool” people
225. nervy—brazen, impudent, i.e., having a lot of nerve (U.S.); nervous, jumpy (British)
226. newsy—of a communication, full of described events or news, not necessarily important
227. nifty—great, clever
228. nippy—sharp or biting, especially of cold
229. noody—importunate and annoying, nagging, from Yiddish
230. nosy—prying or overly inquisitive
231. nummy—delicious, usually a baby word
232. nutty—crazy, eccentric, frequently with tinge of affection
233. oily—(aside from basic meaning) ingratiating or insinuating
234. ornery—stubborn
235. owly—disagreeable, negative, and uncooperative
236. palmy—(aside from basic meaning) flourishing, prosperous
237. paltry—trivial, wretched or contemptible
238. pasty—pale and unwholesome looking, suggesting lack of fresh air and exercise; *pasty faced*
239. patchy—uneven in distribution (patchy fog), quality or performance
240. paunchy—having a prominent potbelly or paunch
241. peachy—splendid, fine; often used sarcastically
242. peppy—full of energy and high spirits, somewhat trivializing
243. perky—sprightly, cheerful and energetic, used either positively or negatively
244. persnickety—excessively meticulous or fussy, of a task, requiring such qualities
245. pesky—persistent and annoying, especially of something small like a mosquito or younger sibling
246. petty—trivial, narrow minded, ungenerous especially in small matters
247. phony—not genuine, not honest, spurious, counterfeit, insincere (note ph is not of Greek origin)
248. picky—overly fussy or choosy, especially about food
249. piddly—insignificant (variant of piddling)
250. pissy—on the way to becoming drunk; also, irritable and overly critical
251. pithy—substantive, meaningful, forceful and concise
252. plucky—courageous, brave, especially applied to someone small or with little intrinsic power
253. plummy—choice, desirable
254. plushy—(aside from basic meaning) ostentatiously luxurious
255. poky—small and cramped, prim and prissy; lacking style, interest, or excitement; annoyingly slow
256. porky—fat

257. portly-comfortably stout, used euphemistically
258. potty—trivial, inebriated, silly or confused (British)
259. poufy—bouffant, puffed up
260. pouty—sullen, sulky
261. preachy—prone to tedious moralizing, didactic
262. preppy—characteristic of those who attend expensive Eastern boarding schools, a certain style of conservative clothes, accent, etc., clean-cut, conservative, and upper class, possibly snobbish
263. prickly—causing trouble or irritation; bristling, irritable
264. prissy—prim and precise; self-consciously proper; effeminate
265. prosy—matter of fact and dry; dull, commonplace
266. pudgy—short and plump
267. puckery—tasting so sour as to make the lips pucker
268. pukey—nauseating
269. punchy—groggy as if from being punched in the head, giddy because of fatigue or some other cause
270. puny—slight or inferior in power and size
271. pushy—over aggressive, especially in furthering one's own interests
272. quirky—full of eccentricity, frequently affectionate
273. rabbit—timid, shy
274. rackety—noisy, raucous, rowdy
275. racy—risqué
276. randy—lecherous, horny
277. rangy—long-legged and slender
278. raspy—rough, grating, in sound or sensation, like the voice of a heavy smoker
279. ratty—in bad shape, unkempt, tattered or of poor quality
280. raunchy—lewd, vulgar, sexually explicit, generally dirty and disgusting
281. reedy—long and thin, frail, weak; of sounds, like a reed instrument
282. rickety—shaky, wobbly, unsound
283. ritzy—ultrafashionable, ostentatiously elegant
284. rocky—(from the verb not the noun) inclined to fall over, in a metaphorical as well as physical sense, e.g., a rocky marriage (influenced by on the rocks), a rocky start; weak and dizzy
285. rowdy—boisterous, rough and unruly, as a crowd
286. ruddy—aside from basic meaning of reddish, used as an intensifier, euphemism for bloody (British)
287. rummy—odd, strange, or dangerous (British)
288. runny—inclined to run or flow, especially of something that is not supposed to do this, e.g., a child's nose (runny nose=slight cold) or a pie filling
289. runty—undersized
290. rusty—out of practice; *rusty skills*
291. salty—provocative, risqué
292. sappy—excessively sentimental, silly or foolish
293. sassy—fresh, impertinent, jaunty
294. saucy—impertinent, but in an entertaining way, almost exclusively of young women
295. savvy—in the know, shrewd, “street smart”
296. scanty—small in quantity, barely enough, lacking
297. scatty—absent minded and mildly crazy
298. schlocky—of poor quality, especially if passed off as high quality or expensive, from Yiddish
299. schmaltzy—excessively, mawkishly sentimental, from the Yiddish word for chicken fat
300. scrappy—argumentative, belligerent
301. scrawny—gaunt, with virtually no flesh on the bone
302. screwy—somewhat crazy, eccentric; with something wrong about it, fishy (but less negative)
303. scummy—contemptible
304. scurvy—mean, contemptible
305. scuzzy—disgusting, in any sense
306. seamy—sordid, base, as in the seamy side of life (from seams showing on the “wrong side of a garment”)
307. seedy—run down and shabby, squalid, weak or unwell; the reference is to plants going to seed
308. shabby—old, worn out, threadbare but not necessarily dirty or originally of poor quality; of behavior, ungenerous or dishonorable
309. shady—unreliable, likely to be dishonest or involved in crime
310. shaggy—bushy or matted, like a long-haired animal, unkempt and long-haired of a person
311. shifty—given to deception, evasion and fraud; furtive
312. shirty—ill-tempered (British)
313. shoddy—of poor quality
314. shrimp—undersized, very small
315. sissy—cowardly, devoid of daring, of a male, effeminate
316. skanky—disgusting, associated with whorish
317. sketchy—providing only the main points, without details; insubstantial and incomplete
318. skimpy—deficient in quantity or quality, meager
319. skinny—(aside from basic meaning of very thin) naked, as in skinny dipping (nude swimming)
320. sleazy—flimsy, of poor quality, shabby, cheap behavior, marked by low ethical standards
321. sleepy—(aside from basic meaning) dull and inactive: *a sleepy little town*
322. slimy—covered with slime, highly distasteful in any sense
323. slinky—sleek and sinuous, of a woman, having somewhat serpentine attractiveness
324. slippery—(aside from basic meaning) untrustworthy, as in a slippery character
325. smarmy—gushing, oily, insinuating
326. smutty—smudged as if with soot; obscene
327. snarky—ill-tempered
328. snazzy—fashionable or flashy
329. snippy—curt, snappish
330. snoopy—showing an inappropriate interest in other people's business
331. snooty—snobbish, supercilious
332. snotty—contemptible, showing unjustified arrogance or pride
333. snuggly—cuddly, q.v.
334. soggy—permeated with moisture, lacking in spirit, dull
335. soppy—wet and sloppy, mawkishly sentimental, foolish

*Continued on page 23*

## Translation of the Russian Nursery Rhyme “Сорока на Хвосте принесла”

*Katerina Korolkevich-Rubbo  
Avoca, Australia*

The idea for translation of Russian nursery rhymes into English came to me when my daughter Ellen was born. When children grow up in a monolingual environment, grasping language must be easier for them. The language flows and there is no interference. But what are you to do when you are a child living in a bilingual situation? You switch on and off and develop mechanisms for speaking and understanding both languages. We know that children can do this with amazing success when they are exposed to more than one language early in life. But surely one language becomes dominant over the other.

Thinking about this with regard to Ellen, I realized that no matter how hard parents try, their child chooses the language of the greater environment and develops her major communication skills in that language. Of course, the second or third languages will be present too, but still they will be weaker. English was the language of my daughter's greater environment, while she spoke Russian at home with me. She is bilingual. My nursery rhyme translations were a gift from me to her in her bilingual situation.

When this idea came to me, I did not attach a great deal of importance to it. I just wanted to play with the words and rhymes while my daughter was in her cradle. The verses seemed to be simple and playful. But after a while I realized it was quite challenging work.

First, I selected some of my favorite nursery rhymes, and then loosely translated them into English without thinking about rhyming. Then I searched for words that would convey the meaning and also the mood and playfulness of these poems.

I will show you how I worked on the text of one of the poems, which in Russian sounds like this:

***Пошел котик на торжок***

***Пошел котик на торжок,  
Купил котик пирожок.  
Пошел котик на улочку,  
Купил котик булочку.  
Самому ли съесть?  
Или деточке съесть?  
Я и сам укушу  
Да и деточке снесу.***

***Little Kitty Smart and Sly***

***Little Kitty, smart and sly,  
Went to market, bought a pie.  
Then he went out for a stroll  
And he bought himself a roll  
Shall I eat them all up? Maybe.  
But then what can I bring to Baby?  
I know, I'll have myself a bite.  
And save the rest for you, all right?***

First I described the “events” in the poem. Then I looked for translations that not only conveyed the poem's meaning, but also its atmosphere. After that I searched for rhymes.

***Пошел котик на торжок.***

***Котик*** means a small male cat, one not quite mature, kitty seemed suitable. Children like diminutive words. I imagined they make them feel powerful and help them empathize with the characters of the story.

***Торжок*** is an old-fashioned Russian word for the market.

***Купил котик пирожок.***

This one was easy. ***Went to market, bought a pie.*** I invented the first line: ***little kitty smart and sly*** because I needed a rhyme to ***pie*** and also because I wanted to suggest that this kitty was a smart one, even a bit

cunning. I guess, in this very first line, I found I had to add something, i.e. be creative.

***Пошел котик на улочку  
Купил котик булочку.***

The rhyme of ***a roll*** and ***a stroll*** seemed a good one to use here.

***Самому ли съесть? или деточке съесть?***

Here I played with the words till I got the right rhyme.  
***Shall I have myself a bit  
or shall I take it to the kid? A bit ... the kid.***

Then I rejected kid because it did not have the right diminutive tone. So I decided to find a rhyme to baby. Finally, I settled on this version:

***Shall I eat them all up? Maybe.  
But then what can I bring to Baby?***



This little couplet shows that the kitten is in a dilemma. He asks himself what to do with the pie and roll: to eat them himself or to save them for the child. Then the smart kitten makes a decision to share. We just hope his bite will not be a huge one so he will leave some for the child.

**Я и сам укушу  
Да и деточке снесу.**

**I know, I'll have myself a bite.  
And save the rest for you, all right?**

I decided to use the pronoun **you** instead of **the baby** to change the direction of the narrative, to make it more personal. I hoped the child who was listening would become personally involved. Will he get a bite of the goodies the kitten bought? Perhaps he or she will even get to see this clever kitten and make his acquaintance?

The phrase **all right** was a natural choice to enlist the child's participation and again emphasize sharing.

I hope children and adults will like my translations. I tried to be playful, creative and light in touch.

Two other nursery rhymes from this series follow below.

Ночь пришла  
Темноту привела.  
Задремал петушок,  
Запел сверчок.

Уж поздно, сынок,  
Ложись на бочок.  
Баю бай; засыпай.

Night has come  
To end the day  
Little rooster snores away  
Cricket starts his chirping song.  
Sleep my baby, sleep my son  
Turn, my baby, on your side  
Dream, my little one. Good night!

Петушок; петушок  
Золотой гребешок  
Масляна головушка  
Шелкова бородушка  
Что ты рано встаешь  
Деткам спать не даешь.

Oh, rooster with your scarlet comb  
Singing loudly to the dawn:  
Wobbly beard,  
Scarlet head  
Why rouse children from their bed?

*Katerina Korolkevich-Rubbo can be reached at [rubbo@idl.net.au](mailto:rubbo@idl.net.au).  
She also provided the illustration for this article.*

**FUNKY, FEISTY АНГЛИЙСКИЙ** *Continued from page 21*

336. soupy—having the consistency of soup, mawkish; *соупы*  
*fog*
337. spacey—vague and dreamy, absent-minded
338. spidery—resembling a spider's web, as spidery handwriting
339. spiffy—smart looking, splendid
340. spiky—acerbic
341. spindly—slender, elongated, and weak, as the legs of a newborn colt
342. splashy—highly publicized or attention getting, ostentatious
343. splotchy—having patches of discoloration or blemish
344. spooky—eerie, uncanny
345. spoony—in love in a foolish, sentimental way; feebly sentimental
346. sporty—(aside from basic meaning) flashy, jazzy; (of clothes) casual
347. spotty—inconsistent, uneven; pimply
348. spunky—spirited and courageous, especially of someone small and devoid of intrinsic power
349. squally—gusty; marked by commotion or disturbance; of a baby, tending to scream
350. squiffy—drunk
351. squiggly—of a mark on paper, wiggly, scrawled
352. squirrely—unpredictable, impulsive, jumpy, nervous
353. squishy or squooshy—soft and wet; sentimental
354. stagy—theatrical, artificial or affected

355. starchy—stiff, aloof and formal
356. steamy—(aside from basic meaning of hot and humid) marked by sexual heat
357. steely—(aside from basic meaning) hard (metaphorically) and relentless; when eyes are described as steely blue, this refers not only to color but to supposed characteristics of their possessor
358. sticky—(basic meaning) adhesive, glutinous; hot and humid, balky, disagreeable, and especially awkward to solve, as a sticky situation
359. stingy—ungenerous, miserly, cheap
360. stocky—compact, sturdy and relatively thick (more descriptive and less negative than other words with similar meaning)
361. stodgy—boring, pedantic, unadventurous, extremely old fashioned
362. stony—cold, hardhearted, unemotional; completely out of money (from stone cold broke)
363. straggly—growing or spread out in a disorderly, aimless way
364. stringy—of hair, straight, limp, thin, and probably dirty
365. stuffy—of a room, stale and close, of a person, narrowly inflexible in standards of conduct, self-righteous
366. stumpy—short and thick, possessing an artificial leg
367. sulky—moodily silent, morose
368. sultry—hot and humid; giving rise to or expressing sexual desire

*Continued on page 24*

# ESCAPE LITERATURE

*Poetic translation by Paula Gordon, SlavFile's Editor for the South Slavic Languages*

We are publishing a translation read to much amusement by Paula Gordon at the Literary Division After Hours Café at the recent conference. Paula provides the following information about the restless author of the original.

Nenad Veličković (Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina) has written numerous short stories, dramatic works and essays, and has published six books: three novels, one collection of short

stories and two bound selections of humor. Please see <http://www.nenadvelickovic.com> for more information.

The Bosnian version of the following poem was published in Nenad Veličković, *Izdržite još malo nećete jos dugo; Poezija remontizma*, Sarajevo: Omnibus 2003; ISBN 9958-777-11-8. The English translation is unpublished. Both appear by permission of the author.

## POLETARAC

Dok nisam sasvim izgubio nadu  
Oдох u Kanadu.  
Dok nisam sasvim izgubio meč  
Oдох u Beč.  
Dok nisam potonuo ko mornar na Kursku  
Oдох u Tursku.  
Dok još imam osmijeh na licu  
Oдох u Švicu.  
Dok sam još pametan, zdrav i mlad  
Oдох u SAD.  
Dok nisam dobio na život alergiju  
Oдох u Belgiju.  
Dok imam mozga još barem gram  
Oдох u Amsterdam.  
Dok se ne uščujem ko sir u mijehu.  
Oдох u Čehu.  
Dok nisam dobio veslo za galiju  
Oдох u Australiju.  
Dok nisu na mene stavili tačku  
Oдох u Njemačku.  
Dok nije podamnom pukla grana  
Oдох s Balkana.  
Dok još imam krila za let  
Oдох u svijet.

## FLEDGLING

While I still have a shred of hope to hang on to  
I'm off to Toronto.  
While I still believe less in losses than wins  
I'm off to Linz.  
While I still haven't drowned like a tot in a pool  
I'm off to Istanbul.  
While on my face a smile I still discern  
I'm off to Lucerne.  
While I'm still intelligent, strong and vivacious  
I'm off to Las Vegas.  
While I'm still not allergic to movin' and groovin'  
I'm off to Leuven.  
While of my brain there remains yet a gram  
I'm off to Amsterdam.  
While I still haven't turned rancid like cheese on safari  
I'm off to Karlovy Vary.  
While I'm still not in the galley under lock and key  
I'm off to Sydney.  
While they still haven't buried me in a white tunic  
I'm off to Munich.  
While the bough underneath me hasn't snapped like a tightrope  
I'm off, out of southeastern Europe  
While I still have wings to fly  
I'm off to give the world a try.

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### **FUNKY, FEISTY АНГЛИЙСКИЙ** *Continued from page 23*

369. sunny—(aside from basic meaning) cheerful and optimistic  
370. sundry—various, miscellaneous  
371. surly—ill-natured, abrupt and rude  
372. swanky—ostentatious, elegant, expensive, ritzy  
373. swishy—effeminate  
374. tacky—sticky in the physical sense; low-class in any sense, cheap, shoddy; marked by cheap gaudiness  
375. tardy—late, slow  
376. tatty—cheap, inferior  
377. tawdry—cheap and gaudy, tastelessly showy  
378. teensy—very tiny  
379. testy—easily annoyed, quick tempered, caustic  
380. tetchy—bad-tempered, extremely touchy (dialect for touchy)

381. thorny—(aside from basic meaning) painfully controversial  
382. thready—lacking fullness of tone, of a voice; weak and shallow, of the pulse  
383. throaty—of a voice, deep and husky, used of female singing voices to indicate an attractive, sexy quality  
384. tiddly—slightly drunk  
385. tinny—(aside from basic meaning of resembling the metal) empty, wordy, insignificant  
386. toasty—cozy and warm, from the expression warm as toast  
387. tony—elegant in manner or quality  
388. trashy—cheap and worthless, especially of a woman, behaving in a sexually cheap and immoral way  
389. treacly—cloyingly sweet or sentimental

*Continued on page 25*



# Translator Profile

## Introducing Our New Copy Editor

*Editor's Note: In our winter issue we featured a profile of one of our two new SlavFile copyeditors, Jen Guernsey. Now we "introduce" (although many of you undoubtedly know her) our second, Christina Sever, who has banished numerous typos and stylistic imperfections from the current issue.*

My name is Christina Sever, and I enjoy one of the privileges of being a freelance translator for the last 16 years, that of living in a beautiful place, Corvallis, Oregon. As a student at Monterey Institute of International Studies in the 1980s, I was told by one of my professors that membership and active participation in the American Translators Association would be not only enjoyable but beneficial to my career, especially as a beginner.

Since then, I have attended 10 ATA conferences and participated as actively as I could over the years. I am glad to report that the professor's recommendation was correct on both counts. I am happy to return to some involvement, as proofreader, in the SlavFile, which I had edited during the transition of our organization from a special interest group to a full-fledged division during the early 1990s.

Christina can be reached at [csever@proaxis.com](mailto:csever@proaxis.com).

## SLD MEMBER TIMOTHY SERGAY WINS PEN TRANSLATION FUND GRANT

(Excerpted from Press Release)

April 21, 2004, New York. The PEN Translation Fund was established in the summer of 2003 by a gift of \$730,000 from an anonymous donor. The Fund came into being in response to the dismayingly low number of literary translations currently appearing in English. Its purpose is to promote the publication of translated world literature in English.

The first call for submissions elicited more than 130 applications, which were evaluated by an Advisory Board that included Esther Allen (chair), Sara Bershtel, Barbara Epler, Lydia Davis, Michael Henry Heim, Will Schwalbe, and Eliot Weinberger. The Board has now selected the following ten translation projects, representing a remarkable diversity of languages and cultures, as recipients of the first round of PEN Translation Fund Awards:

.....

Timothy Sergay for his translation from the Russian of Aleksandr Pavlovich Chudakov's prize-winning "memoiristic novel" *A Gloom Descends Upon the Ancient Steps* (2000), set in northern Kazakhstan, which centers on the relationship between a Moscow historian and his grandfather, a titan of physical and intellectual rigor, and depicts many facets of daily life under Stalin in a new light.

In addition to providing grant moneys in support of these translations, the PEN Translation Fund will work to bring them to the attention of publishers, and help promote them once they are published.

### **FUNKY, FEISTY АНГЛИЙСКИЙ** *Continued from page 24*

- 390. trendy—the very latest style or fad, someone who slavishly follows styles and fad
- 391. tricky—characterized by trickery; requiring caution or skill
- 392. trippy—like a drug trip, weird, amazing, etc.
- 393. trusty—loyal and trustworthy (archaic), almost always used jocularly or ironically
- 394. tubby—fat, rotund
- 395. twangy—nasal in tone or intonation
- 396. tweedy—like an English country gentlemen or American academic
- 397. twitchy—marked by tics or nervous mannerisms
- 398. uppity—taking liberties or assuming airs beyond one's station
- 399. wacky—crazy, unconventional, frequently affectionate
- 400. waffly—evasive or vague in speech or writing
- 401. weedy—lean and scrawny
- 402. willowy—slender, graceful and tall, complimentary
- 403. wimpy—cowardly, weak, indecisive
- 404. windy—(aside from basic meaning) lacking substance, empty; annoyingly verbose; flatulent

- 405. wiry—(of hair) coarse and stiff; (of a person's build) sinewy and lean
- 406. wispy—insubstantial, frail
- 407. wobbly—moving in an uneven rocking motion, unsteady; wavering in one's real or expressed opinions
- 408. woody—(aside from basic meaning of like the woods [not the material wood]), somewhat patronizing description of people who live in a wild area or like the outdoor life

### **Have you been published?**

We would like to compile a list of all our members' publications to be included on the SLD website. Whatever the genre or subject matter, we'd like to hear what our members have in print. Please send author, title, publisher and date of publication to [norafavorov@bellsouth.net](mailto:norafavorov@bellsouth.net). In the area of literary works, please inform us of any translations you have completed, whether or not they have been published.

of permissible “translation activities” is broad enough to include virtually any type of translation and/or translator, and thus it would seem that the title of “public translator” should be available to anyone engaged in the profession, assuming it were possible to define the profession and agree on who is in fact engaged in it.

In light of the above observation, Ms. Kierzkowska’s claim that a 2002 survey found that “76% of translators are graduates of language studies programs, 18% hold degrees in other fields of study, and 6% are graduates of applied linguistic programs” deserves closer attention. While the results of the survey presented are not in themselves controversial, it would be interesting to learn how the translator/respondents were identified and selected. If the selection process was based on a list of sworn translators and/or members of TEPIS and STP, then we would know how Ms. Kierzkowska arrived at her definition of a “translator,” although it would not necessarily follow that those persons are representative of the entire translation community, nor that they authorized her to speak on their behalf, especially with regard to issues not included in the survey. If she used a wider approach in selecting survey respondents, that too would shed light on her definition of a “translator.”

2) The proposed law restricts the pool of potential “public translators” to those who, as Ms. Kierzkowska correctly points out, “have completed a course of University studies in a foreign language or a post-graduate translator training program.” In light of the fact that passing a written examination, prepared and administered by a specially created commission, is a prerequisite to obtaining the title of “public translator” (whether a fair examination can be created to accomplish this task is a separate question, not dealt with in this reply), this area studies restriction of the educational requirements of potential public translators do not seem justified. Not only does it eliminate all currently active translators who neither are sworn translators nor have completed a postgraduate program of translation studies (18% according to Ms. Kierzkowska’s data, but I suspect the number is considerably larger), but it will also eliminate a large number of potentially excellent translators in the future (such as lawyers with a good grasp of a foreign language—and often of a foreign legal system as well—who would be unlikely to enroll in a postgraduate translation training course). And then the question arises of who is able to speak on behalf of these “displaced persons” who have the potential to make such a valuable public contribution? Almost certainly not Ms. Kierzkowska, who obviously (and justifiably) is interested in protecting the interests of her organization and its members.

3) The words “Polish” and “translator” are juxtaposed in such a way that the main thrust of Ms. Kierzkowska’s article, and indeed the proposed statute itself, seems to indicate that there is such an entity as a “Polish translator.” But what does the term actually mean? Is it a translator with Polish citizenship (as the statute implies), or a translator with Polish in his or her language combination? If the former, then based on the nearly

universally recognized rule that a translator should translate into his or her native tongue (the situation is somewhat different with regard to interpretation), “Polish translators” should only engage in translations into Polish. If, however, a Polish translator is anyone with Polish in his or her language combination, i.e., deemed to include foreigners translating from Polish into their mother tongues (disclosure: such as this author), then it would cover translators working in both directions. The proposed law seems to be applying the former definition, but it includes provisions that muddy the waters. It first restricts the title of “public translator” to Polish citizens, but then adds a provision that EU citizens and foreigners whose countries have a reciprocity agreement may apply. Then it adds a special clause relating to foreigners: they have to pass a proficiency exam in Polish. If, however, foreigners have to pass a proficiency exam in Polish to translate from Polish into their native tongue, why shouldn’t Poles have to pass a proficiency exam in their working language(s) to translate from those languages into Polish? In the opinion of this author, this asymmetrical provision will not stand up to scrutiny under EU law (probably based on the freedom of movement or freedom of establishment provisions). What is certain is that Ms. Kierzkowska does not represent all translators—especially foreigners—with Polish in their language combination.

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Given the definitional thicket we enter when we try to determine who is a translator, who is a Polish translator, and who can and should be a “public translator,” it should not be surprising that the views expressed in the real-world active translation community (in the broadest sense of the word) are much more varied than may be inferred from the tone of Ms. Kierzkowska’s article.

This was most clearly demonstrated at an international conference organized by this author in June 2003 in Łódź entitled, *The regulation, vel non, of the translation and interpretation professions within the context of European Union expansion. (Vel non is “or not” in Latin. The phrase is used in legal contracts to indicate that the act of stating something—in this case “regulation of the profession”—does not mean that it should be accepted as a fact, i.e., that the profession should be regulated.)* Thirteen professionals, including Ms. Kierzkowska, offered presentations at the conference, and many more made their views known during the course of two lively discussion sessions. Ten of the presenters submitted articles that were included in the publication of the conference proceedings, and seven participants, mostly young translators just commencing their careers, offered commentaries. The materials contained in this publication reflect the wide range of views held by the translation community in the broadest sense of the word vis-à-vis the issue of regulation of the profession.

While the variations of possible regulatory schemes are exceedingly numerous, four basic models may be sketched out, as follows:

## A Regulatory Framework

Profession(s)	Degree of regulation	Educational requirements	Membership in professional organization(s)	Special legislative authorization	Relevance of collective bargaining	Definition of profession	Full or part-time	Exposure to anti-trust scrutiny	Degree of exposure to civil liability
<b>A. Doctor, lawyer</b>	Maximum	Established by professional organization	Mandatory	Enabling acts	None	Refined, but not always clear	Nearly always full-time	Usually exempted	High
<b>B. Teacher, university professor/lecturer</b>	Intermediate	Established by (state) employer	Voluntary	Framework provisions	Highly important	Not relevant-based on employment contract	Nearly always full-time	High in terms of voluntary organizations	Usually falls on employer
<b>C. Real estate agent, stock broker</b>	Minimum	Established by state	May or may not exist	Supervisory only	Maybe?	Clear	May be either	Intermediate in terms of voluntary organizations	High in some instances, intermediate in others
<b>D. Writer, artist, journalist, musician, politician?</b>	Practically non-existent	None	Not prominent	None	None	Unclear	May be either	Minimal	Low to intermediate

The positions set forth in Ms. Kierszkowska's article tend to place her proposals in the A category. Indeed, she specifically states that "translators officially can claim the right to establish a 'professional self-governing organization' analogous to such organizations of lawyers, doctors..." The proposed Polish legislation (which is not likely to be significantly amended prior to passage) primarily combines elements of the B and C categories. It is this author's opinion that the proposed draft concerning "public translators" casts the net too wide and pulls a number of tasks that should properly belong in the D category into its regulatory web. As a result, persons who may not desire to be "sworn translators" may feel compelled to become "public translators," thus submitting themselves to unnecessary regulation. There are many kinds of documents—articles, books, reports, advertisements, etc.—the translation of which is more artistic than scientific and not at all analogous to the practice of law or medicine. While the general public readily recognizes that these kinds of translations do not have to be done by a "sworn or court translator," they may not so readily recognize that neither do they have to be translated by a "public translator." Thus there is the real danger of creating "first-class" and "second-class" translators without any factual basis (i.e., quality of the end product). This injurious effect is compounded by the discriminatory treatment of potential "public translators." If combined with Ms. Kierszkowska's proposal to create a self-governing board, it would likely violate EU anti-trust law.

The whole issue of regulation of the translation and interpretation professions is one upon which reasonable persons may differ. Ms. Kierszkowska, who has been so active and engaged in the "Polish scene" for more than two decades, is certainly entitled to elaborate and voice her opinions on the subject. The main purpose of this response is a) to emphasize the need to clarify and delineate which is "her" opinion, the opinion of other organizations she names, and the opinion of

the translation community at large; and b) as regards the latter, in which this author must be included, to indicate that there are other contrasting opinions, such as that contained in this note. Although I have extensively discussed the proposed draft law with many active translators and with our own translation students, I cannot claim to be speaking on their behalf. Because the proposed law deals with so many diverse and important issues, it is nearly impossible to obtain a complete consensus on all points, and the best that can be obtained is the collection of various viewpoints vis-à-vis various provisions, of which this note is one.

*James Hartzell, J.D. (USA) serves at the University of Lodz as the Administrative Director of the Centre for Modern Translation and Interpretation Studies and as a Lecturer in translation studies and comparative EU and US institutions. He is also a translator and the author of several articles on translation studies. Mr. Hartzell can be contacted at [hartzell@uni.lodz.pl](mailto:hartzell@uni.lodz.pl).*

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### **CZECH AND SLOVAK** *Continued from page 11*

interest in certification in Czech and/or Slovak in the past, but there have been changes in the past 7 years, and agencies are going to be looking for clients and translators "over there" in both directions. The people working in the CR and Slovakia may help us make up the critical mass to make it happen.

*Judy Yeaton can be reached at [jsyeaton@operamail.com](mailto:jsyeaton@operamail.com); the discussion about ATA accreditation at CzechList is being conducted in the "ATA in the CR?" thread.*

# FIRST CLASS MAIL

Newsletter of the Slavic Languages Division  
of the American Translators Association  
225 Reinekers Lane  
Alexandria, VA 22314

# SlavFile

## FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

You may have noticed that the last two issues of *SlavFile* were late. Furthermore, the current issue is larger than usual and looks somewhat different. Well, we can explain. As they say when they put you on hold, we have been experiencing delays. The delay in getting out the Winter issue was caused by the printers and people who had contracted to mail out copies. This time the problem was with the supersaturated schedule of our layout editor, Galina Raff, who has been valiantly and efficiently performing this task for SLD since its inception. We were unable to find anyone with a knowledge of DTP to step in.

Rather than frustrate our readers, not to mention contributors eager to see their work in print, we asked one of the newest members of our staff, the intrepid Jennifer Guernsey, to lay out this issue in Word. We are filling it with virtually everything that we have accumulated to date, creating a double issue that, we hope, makes up in content for whatever deficiencies it may suffer in appearance.

For the next issue, to be published in plenty of time before the next conference, we hope to be back to business as usual. Meanwhile, we invite readers who have pronounced feelings on such matters as content vs. appearance, publication delays, and the acceptability of having only three issues a year if one is super-sized, to contact us at the address on the masthead.

*Lydia and Nora*