

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION

[Delivered by Susana Greiss at the ATA Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, on November 6, 2002]

Editors' note: We take great pride in announcing that Susana Greiss is the 2002 recipient of the Alexander Gode Medal, ATA's most prestigious award, which is presented to an individual or institution for outstanding service to the translation and interpretation professions.

Our capable Administrator, Nora Favorov, has asked me to give you a rundown on how the Slavic Languages Division started and how it came to be the vital component of ATA it is today. I am delighted to oblige, since many of you were not there at the beginning, and I think it is very important that you be aware of how this baby of mine was conceived and born into this world, because lessons can be learned from this story.

I look around me, particularly at these annual conferences, and what do I see? I see friends, friends everywhere. I have long thought that, as we rush through life, we may be taking things for granted, we may be feeling that everything we have is owed us, that our family loves us because we are family.

Reflecting on this one day I decided that perhaps my friends don't really know how I feel toward them. So I thought I should tell them, just in case. And the expressions on their faces, the smiles and the warmth, told me that it is really important to tell people how you feel about them. So now I want to tell you, my friends, that the affection and warmth you have shown me is something that I cherish, and that this Division is very special to me, it has given back to me tenfold whatever I gave to you.

So now that I got all that off my chest, let's go back to how it all started.

Several years ago I had a very famous client, Malcolm Forbes, a multimillionaire who was the founder of the financial journal, *Forbes*. Mr. Forbes was a colorful personality who loved to ride motorcycles, collect Fabergé eggs and castles in France and other places. He also loved to sail the oceans in his latest yacht. One time he assembled a few of his closest friends—some 200 people, I believe—and took them on a cruise of the Scandinavian and Baltic countries. When they cast anchor in the port of Leningrad, he thought it might be a good idea to visit some government dignitaries; after all, his friends were all industrialists and CEOs of the largest and richest corporations in America! (Which, just between us, didn't prevent them from being very

naive about the rest of the world.) Anyway when they got to Leningrad, they thought they would mix business with pleasure and see if they could interest the Soviet government in some possible business with American companies. After all, Gorbachev was in power at the time, and Russia was showing signs of opening up to the West, so why not get in on the ground floor?

Well, they were in for a great disappointment: since they had not made an appointment six months before their arrival, they were unable to get past some minor apparatchik, who gave them some perfunctory answer and sent them on their way.

This incident was reported in a Russian newspaper, and Mr. Forbes wanted to know what it said. He gave the clipping to me. I didn't usually translate Russian, but he was used to giving everything to me, after which I would arrange to have it translated. However, I was about to catch a plane to New Orleans for the ATA Annual Conference, so I promised that the translation would be done just as soon as I got back.

On the flight to New Orleans I took out the clipping and read the story. At the time, Russians were leaving the Soviet Union and settling in the United States. Many of them were translators, or aspiring translators. But I kept hearing complaints about their work: they didn't deliver on time, they started a translation and then demanded more money, the work was sloppy, and so on. It bothered me to hear these stories. I wondered how I could identify the good translators, and show the negligent ones how to deal with clients and how I could explain to them what was expected in the American market. I decided to explore the matter further.

At the time, Leslie Willson was president-elect of the ATA. I approached him and asked if he would be willing to get me a room, assign us a date and time, and announce at the opening session that there would be an impromptu meeting of Russian translators.

He did so, and we met that same day at 5:00 pm. I wondered if anyone would show up. Well, we had twelve people (plus me) I explained my concerns and said that I felt I was the best qualified person to run a Russian translators group: first, I was of Russian origin myself, I was a member of ATA and I had many contacts. I lived in a large city and could probably get a room for regular meetings free of charge, and I was at an age (between 65

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FALSE FRIENDS WANTED

For a dictionary of Russian-English ложные друзья /cognates/ now in preparation we would be very grateful for any of your suggestions or favorite false friends. Please send to either Natasha Yefimova (yefimka@imedia.ru) or to Lynn Visson (lvisson@aol.com). Many thanks!

LEGAL TRANSLATION CONFERENCE

Hyatt Regency · Jersey City, New Jersey · May 2-4, 2003

Join your colleagues in the New York City area from May 2-4 for in-depth sessions on legal translation.

FRIDAY: Legal translation sessions will be presented in English.

SATURDAY & SUNDAY: Specialists will present language-specific sessions.

Conference organizers will be sure to have language-specific presenters for Saturday for any group well-represented in pre-registration. They must make their decisions by early March, so sign up early. Early bird registration ends March 7 and costs \$245. The more people sign up for a specific language, the more sessions there will be in that language.

OFFERS OF WORK FROM EMPLOYERS AND CLIENTS ARE PUBLISHED FREE

SLD MATTERS: FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

Nora Seligman Favorov

Every year the SLD experience at the ATA annual conference has a chemistry all its own. Depending on who shows up, what kinds of moods our members are in, how things go logistically—each gathering, each session takes on a spirit of its own. At least from my perspective, this year's meeting in Atlanta was an exceptionally high-spirited one. In addition to the tremendous pleasure we obviously took from our interactions with one another, I was impressed by the division's overall presence within ATA. First of all, despite some very impressive competition, our own native daughter, Laura Wolfson, was elected to the board of the ATA. It is comforting to know that as Ann Macfarlane prepares to leave the dais and Tom West enters the last year of his ATA presidency, we'll still have one of our own sitting at the head of the room during ATA meetings. Second, Susana Greiss, who tells the story of the founding of our division on page 1, was named the 2002 recipient of the Gode medal. Third, we have a new (for all practical purposes) and very lively branch of our division. Where in the past translators and interpreters of Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian were only rarely encountered at SLD-related conference events—and were little heard of within the ATA—they were a major presence at this year's conference (see articles by Paula Gordon and Marijan Bošković in this issue). Our members were shining stars throughout the constellation of conference events (see *SlavFile Lite* for a description of our towering presence at the Literary Café). And as it has since its inception in 1998, the Susana Greiss Lecture contributed to our division's stature in Atlanta. Michael Henry Heim drew many from outside our division, but still the lecture, as in the past, had a very intimate and personal tone to it. I'm not sure whether or not this is part of the series' design, but every Greiss lecturer has shared a very personal story of a life journey shaped by fascination with some aspect of Slavic language and/or culture.

The banquet was a blast. Every year we seem to have some misadventure associated with our banquet. Last year we became terribly lost on the way there. This year the late addition of ATA's Town Hall Meeting on Terrorism—something that drew huge crowds and the national media—led us to move the banquet back and created some confusion about our departure time. The terrorism meeting ran 45 minutes over, and in the end, we departed without some of our group. We drove many miles from downtown Atlanta to a little strip mall and the distinctly un-Slavic sounding *Amore Pizza*. That night, however, no pizza was served, and we pretty much had the place to ourselves. Once inside we found a marvelous feast—a classic *праздничный стол*. Soon the band (Sveta and Zhenya) had a wild, animal mass of usually staid translators and interpreters gyrating, jumping, undulating, gliding and snaking across the dance floor. Toasts were pronounced and mounds of delicious food were consumed—I think if our fridges had been closer at hand many of us would have gladly loaded up doggie bags. We also managed, with backup from Sveta and Zhenya, to reinstitute the recently-dormant tradition of the Russian Sing-along. Our distinguished

Susana Greiss speaker, prolific literary translator and UCLA professor Michael Heim, joined right in and our Polish contingent good-naturedly participated in this very Russian (with hints of Ukrainian) nostalgia-fest. Three cheers for SLD's Atlantans Rita McGrath and Elena Goldis for finding this marvelous “hole in the wall” and arranging the dinner and transportation. I'm not sure we can top this in Phoenix, but we'll try.

We have already arranged for next year's Susana Greiss lecturer. I had come to the conference with the thought of suggesting a particular speaker to Laura Wolfson, who is in charge of the series. Before I got around to discussing the subject with her I was walking with Lydia Stone through the common area of the conference level of our hotel when ATA President Tom West came up to us and very enthusiastically launched into the story of his recent encounter with the book *The Russian Context: The Culture behind the Language*. This book, which is a wide-ranging exploration of Russian language and culture, had kept this busy lawyer, translation company owner and ATA president (who does not even work with Russian) up way past his bed time and caused his wife to cast puzzled looks his way. I was very pleased to hear his enthusiastic endorsement of *Russian Context* as this book is co-edited by the very woman I was planning to propose to Laura as our next Greiss lecturer.

Ever since I started studying Russian in 1975 *The Russian World* by Genevra Gerhart has held a place of honor on my bookshelf. This volume (whose 3rd and much expanded edition came out in 2001) fascinated me as I was first learning the language and culture of Russia. At a time when I was beginning to develop an intuitive understanding of some of the differences between American and Russian culture, behavior, traditions and psychology, this book spelled out these differences, providing anecdotal examples, historical background and a bounty of related information that I was hungry for at the time. Over the years its role in my collection has changed. In 1988 I took it with me to the hospital for the birth to our second child, for whom we had not yet come up with a name. The useful chart of Russian names, complete with diminutives and *ласкательные формы* is all marked up in my copy with the notations my husband and I made as we narrowed down the choices (in the end Julia/Юлия won out). Now this book serves as a valuable translator's reference guide. Both of Genevra's books, *World* and *Context*, are invaluable guidebooks to Russian cultural literacy. Genevra Gerhart has, indeed, agreed to be our next speaker and for me, personally, it will be a thrill to have her with us in Phoenix.

In addition to lining up our Greiss lecturer already, we have another accomplishment in the getting-ready-for-Phoenix column. Susana Greiss had what I consider a brilliant idea for a session. Her idea was that a native Russian speaker should lead a workshop on common mistakes made by Anglophones attempting to speak Russian and a native English speaker should lead a workshop for Russians on their common mistakes in English. Elena Bogdanovich (whose review of the legal terminology

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FROM THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

Alex Lane, Pagosa Springs, Colorado

An incident from my engineering days made a very deep impression on me. It was the day after the 1984 Academy Awards and Milos Forman's film *Amadeus* had walked away with the Oscars for Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Actor. Exchanging morning pleasantries with my boss, I jokingly noted that there was still hope for the cultural redemption of the country.

"What do you mean?" asked my boss.

"Well, if a film about Mozart can win an Oscar, then anything is possible," I said, light-heartedly.

"Who?" asked my boss.

When it became clear that neither the name "Mozart" nor the film title *Amadeus* meant anything to him, I was thunderstruck, to say the least. In my world view, being out of touch with what was popular at the box office was forgivable, but it was inconceivable that one could be so narrowly focused in one's life as to not have picked up the name "Mozart" from somewhere - if only by a kind of social osmosis - and placed it in the general context of classical music (even if one never listened to the stuff).

Having a narrow focus is not a malady unique to techies, but many techies suffer from it (indeed, some even boast of it). For as long as I can remember, though, despite a natural technical inclination, I've striven to develop my "weak side." By this I mean I've worked at learning something about the nontechnical world: languages (of course), art, literature, and so on.

Not too surprisingly, this "broadening" has paid benefits to me in the interpretation and translation end of the world. (I have no doubt that some technical "rounding" would benefit many nontechnical translators.)

For some time, however, I'd noticed that the "Russian" side of my life lagged behind, from both a cultural point of view (a common shortcoming among Americans, it is said) and that of non-technical vocabulary. So, early last year, I decided to do something to remedy this defect.

The first fruit of that effort was the translation of the lyrics to the song *Ваши благородие* from Vladimir Motyl's popular Russian film *Белое солнце пустыни*. Those of you who attended this year's Literary Cafe at the ATA Conference in Atlanta heard me read it out loud (and those that didn't can read it on the back page of this issue).

An interesting piece of lore about the film is that it is an obligatory part of a cosmonaut's ritual on the eve of a trip into space. (I seem to recall someone telling me that this tradition dated back to Gagarin's flight, but as the film was shot in 1970, I have my doubts. Nonetheless, somewhere along the line, it *did* become a tradition.)

When I had an opportunity to watch the film, I was struck by the melody of *Ваши благородие*. Unfortunately, between my deficient non-technical Russian vocabulary and my poor skills at deciphering sung lyrics in any language, the only words I could make out were those of the refrain in the last line: *He везет мне в смерти, повезет в любви!* The line intrigued me, so I resolved to get hold of the lyrics and translate them.

I'll not bore you with the details of the consultations, false starts, and dead ends involved in attempting to fashion a workmanlike translation that I felt was true to the original. What I will tell you is that the experience of working outside of what you normally do makes you, in my opinion, a stronger translator.

Try it yourself. Develop your weak side. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

SLD MATTERS *Continued from page 3*

session at ATA appears in this issue) has agreed to lead the session for Anglophones. We are still looking for her native-English-speaking counterpart. Any volunteers? Some background in the linguistics or at least grammar of both languages would be helpful. Please let me know if you're interested, or would like to contribute a text representative of the errors non-natives make in either language.

At the Division's annual meeting I announced that I would like to step down as administrator next year (although I will be willing to act as assistant administrator, if no one else wants the job). I also joyfully announced that current assistant administrator, Alex Lane, is willing to take my place. The election process begins with the appointment of a nominating committee at the end of April. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you would like to run for administrator or assistant administrator (or serve on the nominating committee). In the event of an uncontested candidacy, thanks to newly approved ATA bylaws, no election will be necessary.

At the meeting Paula Gordon introduced herself and her South Slavic accreditation initiative and Vadim Khazin updated members on the progress (or relative lack thereof) of the effort to add Ukrainian to ATA's accreditation program. Please contact Paula or Vadim if you would like to support their efforts.

Finally, thanks to increased membership and the discontinuation of ATA's practice of charging \$4 overhead per member, our division is finally in reasonable financial shape (after several years in the red). In my proposed 2003 budget our new largesse is to go toward increased honoraria for the *SlavFile* cornerstones (Lydia Stone, editor and Galina Raff, layout and Russian-language and technical editor) and an increase in our Greiss Lecture budget (which in the past has not been able to afford bringing in people from any great distance) and as yet undetermined conference activities. I hope to post the meeting's minutes on our web site in January. Photographs from the banquet should also be posted by then.

U.S. Legal Terms: How to Say it in Russian and Ukrainian

ATA Conference Presentation by Vadim Khazin and Boris Silverstejn

Reviewed by Elena Bogdanovich-Werner

I always look forward to attending ATA conferences and so far I have not been disappointed. It is a rewarding experience for me to get in touch with colleagues, learn something new from them and discover new perspectives on areas of knowledge with which I am already familiar.

As a legal interpreter, this year I was especially interested in the presentation by Vadim Khazin and Boris Silverstejn. Their presentation, a kind of workshop involving active audience participation, addressed one of the challenges of legal interpreting: U.S. legal terminology. Since the legal systems of the U.S. and Russia and other New Independent States are so different and are based on very different sets of values and approaches, it is a very daunting task to find the exact term in Russian to cover a complex U.S. legal concept in its entirety. One can always provide a detailed and accurate translation of the term's definition from one of the legal dictionaries available, but this approach is not typically feasible in court when the time factor is crucial and an interpreter cannot indulge in long and precise definitions. In this situation formulating a term may be the best solution but only after thorough research using existing bilingual dictionaries to make sure that the newly coined term can be integrated into existing legal terminology. At this session, it was obvious that the presenters had done their homework and conducted substantial research on each term using one monolingual and eight bilingual dictionaries they list in their bibliography. They had selected legal terms that they considered most difficult to translate and provided their suggestions for translations into Russian and Ukrainian.

Their solutions were well thought out and useful. Several of their proposals gave rise to some discussion and exchange of opinions, and the open-minded presenters agreed to replace some of their suggestions with alternatives from the audience. However, the majority of the terms Vadim and Boris provided appeared to be approved by audience consensus. Thus, many of us agreed that the best way to translate "unsafe, careless driving" (an infraction) was «неосторожное вождение», while reckless driving (a misdemeanor) should be translated as «безответственное вождение», «вождение, подвергающее риску безопасность окружающих». I liked the suggested Russian version for DUII (driving under the influence of intoxicants) as «вождение в состоянии алкогольной/наркотической интоксикации», which renders the meaning of the English term more precisely than «вождение в нетрезвом состоянии» or «вождение в состоянии опьянения». Some suggestions seemed so simple that I wondered why I had never thought of them myself. I guess that the proverb "Two heads are better than one" might apply here. Since all the terms the presenters provided will be available on the SLD website, I will not discuss each term. I will simply summarize by saying that I found this workshop both enjoyable and professionally beneficial. I would like to acknowledge the time and effort of all the participants and express my special gratitude to Vadim and Boris for making this session possible.

The differences of opinion among experts on how to translate/interpret any one term can be attributed to the variability in background knowledge and experience of different individuals. I would like to share an experience I had. Once, at the beginning of my career, I interpreted at an arraignment. The defendant was accused of Assault IV. He was a new immigrant from Russia who had been arrested and was appearing in court for the first time in his life. (I learned all these details about him later while interpreting at the sessions between him and his attorney.) He looked very frightened and confused in the court room. The charges against him were read and I interpreted: «Вас обвиняют в совершении нападения на...». When he heard the word «нападение» he got even more frightened and started to explain that he didn't attack anybody. I diligently interpreted everything he was saying and the judge suggested that he should explain everything to his attorney. But the defendant burst out sobbing and kept on saying; «Я никого не трогал..». I believe I could have spared him emotional stress if I had been more attentive to the fact the legal concept of assault is complex and covers a number of actions including an attack. I, certainly, was aware of this, but since I was interpreting and had to do it quickly I used the word «нападение», which is always the first to come to my mind for assault.

I, for one, think that it is not always enough to provide only one alternative for translation of a legal term. For example, the use of the word «нападавший» as a Russian equivalent for the term "assailant" doesn't cover its meaning completely and cannot be used in all contexts. Merriam Webster's Dictionary of Law, 1996 (p. 33) gives the following definition of the term: assailant (n): a person who commits criminal assault. The same dictionary defines "assault" and describes its etymology as follows on: [Old French *assault*, literally, attack, ultimately from Latin *assultus*, from *assilire* to leap (on), attack] 1: the crime or tort of threatening or attempting to inflict immediate offensive physical contact or bodily harm that one has the present ability to inflict and that puts the victim in fear of such harm or contact – compare BATTERY 2: the crime of assault accompanied by battery. The verb derived by conversion from the noun is defined on p. 34 of the same dictionary as: to make an assault on; *specif.*: to subject to sexual assault, etc. The alternatives for translation of the term 'assault' (n) suggested by bilingual dictionaries are: «нападение», «оскорбление действием», «словесное оскорбление», «угроза физическим насилием», «покушение на нанесения удара либо угроза таковым». Since Boris and Vadim in their presentation suggest only «нападавший» they cover only the meaning of «нападение». This might be the best translation in legal situations when an attack, in fact, occurred and assault was not limited to the threat of attack. In cases where there was only a threat to inflict bodily harm the suggested translation does not work at all. And

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SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

From a *Washington Post* article, November 16, 2002, about an award given to Tatiana Kudriavtseva, translator of “some of America’s finest literature into Russian:” “[Norman] Mailer... told everyone that the warm, inquisitive Kudriavtseva is a rarity among translators, most of whom are ‘bitter, secretive people.’” I have never considered Norman Mailer to be an arbiter of truth, but nevertheless I am surprised that his opinion could differ so wildly from my own, the latter formed on the basis of acquaintance with literally hundreds of translators. What would Ol’ Norm have thought if he had seen SLD members boogying at our banquet at the recent ATA conference, enthusiastically participating in the silliness of our game show, greeting friends and colleagues with embraces and cries of delight, or sharing years of hard-won expertise during and between presentations?

Another *Washington Post* article that caught my attention dealt with a Philadelphia professor who has written a paper on the use and function of the word *like*, which is so infuriatingly ubiquitous in the speech of American adolescents and preadolescents. (Once, my husband killed two birds with one stone, parodying this trend in the speech of the only one of our four children to indulge heavily in “teenspeak,” as well as the suburban bumper stickers bragging that “My child is an honor student at such and such an elementary school.” When this same child was inducted into a national honor society, he made her a bumper sticker that read: “Like, our daughter is, you know, like, this Phi Beta Kappa...”) At any rate, Professor Muffy(!) Siegel identifies one of the most consistent uses of *like* as that of a hedge or qualifier: “When someone uses ‘like’ they are saying, ‘I’m about to say something, but I’m not sure I have the words for it quite right.’” According to Professor Siegel there were ‘discourse qualifiers’ (terms inserted to indicate the speaker’s attitude toward what he is saying) with similar functions in ancient Hittite and Sanscrit. How to translate *like* in this usage into Russian? Basing my answer on a very useful little book by A.N. Vasilyeva called *Particles in Colloquial Russian* (Progress, undated), which I think I bought at a used book sale somewhere, I would suggest *вроде, как будто, как бы*, or perhaps *похоже*. In the other common teenspeak use of *like* as a substitute for the word *said* or sometimes *thought* as in “I’m, like ‘I’m out of here,’ the same sort of hedging function operates. The speaker is not saying that these were the exact word or thoughts, but that this was their tone. On this usage, my helpful little book is mute. Perhaps the trusty Russian «мол», could be used as a translation here. Please, native speakers of Russian, send me your suggestions, and while you’re at it, how about a Russian rendering of “teenspeak?”

A story told by Greiss lecturer and literary translator Michael Heim illustrates the pitfalls of mixing up one’s Slavic languages. As a graduate student, Heim specialized in Russian and Czech in the Slavic department at Harvard. Returning to school after a summer in Czechoslovakia, he encountered his Russian teacher who said: «Я перед вами виновата», referring

to some papers of his she had neglected to return. The young man replied politely in Czech, “Proč,” literally please, meaning something like, “why so?” Unfortunately this polite Czech expression is homonymous with the Russian «прочь!» meaning “back off, get away from me.” Needless to say, the chagrined instructor promptly complied.

Here is a bilingual anecdote from my remote past, long-forgotten and undoubtedly brought to mind by the fact that, in my recent efforts to translate Pushkin’s “Lines on Insomnia,” I have been thinking long and hard about the exact range of meanings covered by the Russian word «трепетание». While I was pregnant with my first child I was studying for my Russian literature comprehensive exams and immersed in 19th century poetry in which said word figures heavily, to say the least. Thus when I first felt my baby moving around, it was perhaps natural that this was the first word I thought of to describe this hard to classify fluttering sensation. At my next doctor’s appointment I asked if it was too early for me to be feeling “life.” He responded judiciously, “Well, what does it feel like?” Realizing that I had no ready English description and not yet adept at producing instant translations, I blurted out the first similar sounding word that came to mind. “Trepidation,” I said to his amazement.

Some months ago a non-Russian speaking friend, a prize-winning poet, and someone whose judgment I greatly respect suggested to me that I would like the book *Everything is Illuminated*, by Jonathan Safran Foer. She told me she had read excerpts from it in the *New Yorker* and it featured a character who, to extremely amusing effect, spoke English as if it were literally translated from Russian. I immediately went out and bought the book. I believe it spent some time on both the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* best seller lists. Its cover features high praise by Joyce Carol Oates and others of her ilk, using such phrases as “told with unwavering charm and wit.” I read the book and found it unwaveringly irritating, although undoubtedly it has some points of worth. Why? For one thing, it portrays the profession of interpreting (although, admittedly its lowest rung of escort interpreting) as one that can be filled by any fool with a couple of words of the second language who is available to be dragooned and implies that as long as said fool’s heart is in the right place it doesn’t matter a whit if all his interpretations are made up whole cloth. However, this was just a minor irritation, after all, I am a translator not an interpreter. What drove me up the wall was that the main character’s speech, which was indeed apparently meant to appear to be literally translated Russian (or actually perhaps Ukrainian), was not anything of the kind. It is difficult to believe that the author had ever heard how Russian native speakers speak English, much less knew enough Russian to know what literally translated Russian might be like.

Some examples: “An American in Ukraine is so flaccid to recognize, “ (page 28), “Mother dubs me Alexi-stop-spleening me!” because I am always spleening her, it is because I am always elsewhere with friends and disseminating so much

currency and performing so many things that can spleen a mother,” (page 1). “When his train finally arrived, both of my legs were needles and nails from being an upright person for such a duration. I would have roosted but the floor was very dirty, and I wore my peerless blue jeans to oppress the hero,” (page 31). I usually love linguistic humor of all kinds but for some reason I do not find this the slightest bit funny. It certainly suggests nothing authentic about the nature of English or an East Slavic language; if the idiosyncratic language pattern (referred to as “sublimely butchered English” on the book jacket) is meant to suggest something about the nature of the character or his ethnic group I have no idea what. It is inconceivable to me that anyone would try to reproduce the speech patterns of Ukrainians speaking English without having troubled to learn what Ukrainians speaking English sound like, but the author seems either not to have done so or to have ignored what he learned. Despite the emotional power of some of the other aspects of his book, it is difficult for me to accept any of it as authentic. I would love to hear the opinions of other Slavists who have read this book and would be happy to lend my copy to anyone who wishes to read it and then expound on it.

The following comes directly from a document I translated the other day: *проведение программ по «наблик рилейшнз» с целью позиционирования предприятия, как привлекательного партнера*. It seems to me that contemporary Russian, at least business Russian, is becoming so saturated with borrowed English terms and calques that pretty soon (if that point has not been reached already) a speaker of classical pre-revolutionary Russian, or perhaps even Soviet Russian who had not been exposed to developments in his native tongue over the last 15 years would have to ask an English speaker what was being said. Those of you who remember your high school chemistry will recall that after the point of full saturation, comes supersaturation, at which time the saturating substance begins to precipitate out, a process I always pictured as the formation of hard little nuggets, like acorns, that drop to the ground. I do not want to be around, at least without my hard hat, when the acorns of business English start falling out of the supersaturated atmosphere of Russian and hitting the ground.

I have attended the ATA Literary Division’s late night poetry reading and café every conference since its inception (in Colorado Springs, I believe, in 1996) and always love it. This year the SLD came into its own at this event. Despite the vastly greater numbers of Spanish speakers at the convention, this year there were more readings by members of our relatively small division than by any other. Larissa Kulinich started off the event with a dramatic flourish by presenting her English translations of Josef Brodsky produced for a friend who had set the Russian originals to music and wished this work to be more accessible to English-speaking audiences. She provided added pleasure by singing the first one *a capella!* Laura Wolfson shared some passages from the memoir excerpts published in the summer issue of *SlavFile*. Paula Gordon read an excerpt from her translation of *Sahib*, a new novel by Nenad Veličković, just

published in Serbia and in Croatia. This novel, which could be called a fictional Bosnian analogue to *The Ugly American* was described in a review as capturing the hilarity and desperation of post-Dayton Bosnia. Alex Lane delighted listeners with a wonderful English translation of «Ваше благородие, госпожа разлука» from the film «Белое солнце пустыни». (See Alex’ column elsewhere in this issue for further description of how he came to work on this song.) We are publishing this song and Alex’ translation of it on the back page of this issue. I read a few of my own things and the author’s translation of an untitled poem by Nina Kossman. With her kind permission, I reproduce this poem in Russian and English below:

Бомба—городу: «Падаю.»	A bomb said to a city: “I’m falling.”
Город—бомбе: «Ты на чьей стороне?»	The city asked: “Whose side are you on?”
Бомба: «Ни на чьей. Я падаю.»	The bomb said: “I take no sides. I’m falling.”
Город: «Погляди вокруг.»	The city said: “Look around you.”
Бомба: «Некогда.»	The bomb said: “Too late.”
Ничего не ответил город.	The city did not say anything.

Poem and translation by Nina Kossman.

U.S. Legal Terms

Continued from page 5

why «нападавший»? If this is a courtroom situation, the alleged attack would already have taken place. Might «напавший» not be a better choice? Actually. «совершивший нападение» sounds better to my ear. Other versions might be «лицо, угрожавшее применением физической силы», «угрожавший нападением», «лицо, нанесшее оскорбление». Though I have to admit that for the sake of saving time in court while interpreting simultaneously I might simply say «напавший», «угрожавший», «оскорбивший», depending on the situation.

The point that I am trying to make here is that in order to provide an accurate translation of a source-language term one has to consider alternatives appropriate to all possible contexts. As for dictionaries, I have to confess that my dream is to have some kind of universal, but pocket-sized dictionary that has entries for everything I need, that I could simply retrieve from my purse when I needed it in the courtroom. Is such a thing possible? I wonder.

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Translator's Profile: Dov Lederman

Bnei Brak, Israel

Editor's Note: I was well aware that we have SLD members who are both engineers and translators, however, Mr. Lederman is, to my knowledge, the only regular SF reader who, in addition to the above, is also a rabbi.

Some time ago I was suddenly inspired to produce a translation of the Uspenskiy poem that appeared in the spring issue of *SlavFile*. Upon receiving it, Lydia Stone suggested that I submit an article on professional issues/problems that face a translator of Russian living in Israel. I did some thinking and came to the conclusion that I would instead present *SlavFile* readers with my Translator Profile, with Lydia's request treated toward the end. So here I go.

I was born in 1931 into a Jewish Orthodox family in Warsaw, Poland, where I managed to attend first grade. We (Mother, my only sister and I) were luckily able to escape from the city after the Germans occupied it in the autumn of 1939. We made it, illegally of course, to Bialystok, which was at that time under Soviet occupation. Some time in the autumn of 1940 we (like close to a half million other refugees) were picked up on a Friday night by representatives of the Big Father in the Kremlin, loaded into the (in)famous locked boxcars and taken to the frozen (in the winter) and swampy (in the summer) expanses of the Komi Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic.

During our four-year sojourn in this most hospitable place (-25°C in the winter with occasional lows of -35°, and even -45°C on one occasion, high humidity—a “commodity” unknown in Poland—and record-size swarms of mosquitoes in the summer) I went to school like everybody else. We were taught the required subjects in Russian, with Komi as a second language. I must confess that I found the teachers to be of a much higher caliber than those in my exclusive private school in Warsaw. (I am not sure how to explain this fact—these wonderful teachers were all Komi natives, middle-aged women, to the best of my recollection. They appeared to be more intellectual and more interested in presenting the subject at hand than my Warsaw teachers who taught by rote. However, given that it has been nearly 60 years since then my recollections may not be completely reliable.)

In keeping with an agreement between the Polish Communist government in exile and the Soviet government, we were picked up in 1944 and transported to a town in the vicinity of Voronezh where I continued my schooling. As our return to Poland became imminent, an afternoon school was opened where we were taught Polish language and literature.

The boxcars (no longer locked) arrived in the winter of 1946 and took us back to Poland. It was rather obvious that there was no future for Jews, particularly religious Jews, in postwar, Communist Poland. The country's borders, however, were sealed by the Iron Curtain. By special arrangement a children's transport was allowed to leave the country in the autumn of 1946 and my sister and I joined it. We went to France, whence, in February 1948, I arrived in New York on the *Ernie Pyle*, a former troop ship.

In New York I enrolled in a major Rabbinical school which, after I had studied diligently for a good number of years, ordained me as a rabbi. In the evenings I took high school courses by correspondence and then, after passing equivalency exams, entered first Brooklyn (pre-engineering) and then City College (mechanical engineering). I interrupted my studies to go to Israel, where my parents lived, in 1959. I got married there, returned to the US in 1960, resumed my studies and graduated with a B.M.E. in 1963.

As my entry into the employment market neared, I became increasingly aware that I was facing a dilemma. On the one hand, I had to make a living. On the other, I did not wish to relinquish the rabbinical school lifestyle, which is incompatible with the 9 to 5 (in the US) or 8 to 4 (in Israel) workday. Then, one day I came across an article in the *Vector*, CCNY's engineering magazine, concerning the need for Russian to English translation, and in a short time found myself hounding translation agencies for freelance work.

This occurred right around the time America discovered Russian science and the American government became interested in Russian engineering. As a result, there were agencies interested in one or both topics. During this period, I worked for two private agencies and for the government agency JPRS. For the latter I primarily translated newspaper articles, both from Russian and Hebrew. Of the two private agencies, one was a government subcontractor charged with translating Russian engineering texts. I have no idea what anyone gained from these translations because the Soviets were very careful not to give away any secrets. Most of the information was standard and whatever was not, consisted of data about Western equipment, processes, etc.

The other agency sent me a mix of government and private work, which I found much more interesting. After a while they sent me a major assignment: a translation of the two-volume (from Russian to English) *Physics of Shock Waves and High-Temperature Hydrodynamic Phenomena* by Zeldovich and Raizer.

We moved to Israel for good in 1965. This meant the end of work from JPRS and the government subcontractor. The other agency still sent me work, but in those days (before faxes and e-mail), long-distance work presented problems that could not always be overcome. However, there was abundant work in Israel. The Israel Program for Scientific Translations, again a US government subcontractor, had a great number of scientific and engineering books waiting to be translated. The work was a mix—some of it very interesting and important, some of it worthless and extremely boring—of the same genre as my previous work for the government. I believe that I translated at least thirty books for this organization and some of these found their way to commercial American publishers.

When this activity was discontinued, I found work translating books and papers for Russian-speaking immigrant professors. However, this too did not last, and I was again out of work. Fortunately, I was able to find employment as production engineer with a small company or plant that manufactured laboratory equipment, where I stayed until I retired in 1996. All this time I took whatever translation work came my way.

Now we come to the professional issues/problems of a translator of Russian living in Israel. First, there are no issues, just problems. Major assignments from Russian (or Polish) into English are virtually nonexistent. There may be more work in the other direction, most probably translating newspaper articles, originally written for the Hebrew-language press, into Russian, but this is not for me. First, I am unable to do H-R translations and second, the subject matter is highly incompatible with my background. Specifically, the moral standards of today's press are incompatible with my upbringing (after all, I was born 71 years ago when things were different) and with my rabbinical background.

The only work available involves translation of documents—birth or death certificates that have to be translated from Polish (or Hebrew) into English, and sometimes also in the other direction. At times, I am given recently drawn up Polish contracts to translate into Hebrew. Work into Hebrew presents a problem because I am not sufficiently familiar with the Hebrew keyboard to touch type. I usually wind up writing out the translation by hand. Then the agency types it and returns it to me for corrections.

There is very little demand for R-E document translations, which are limited primarily to school records and similar documents. On the other hand, Polish documents are needed to establish rights to property left behind in Poland, claims currently made against Swiss banks and insurance companies, etc.

Speaking of Polish, I had an interesting lexicological experience recently. I am currently working on an Aramaic-Hebrew-English dictionary for use by people who study the Talmud and are not familiar with Aramaic, which is used there side-by-side with Biblical Hebrew. Actually, the Aramaic-Hebrew part has already been completed and published, all we are doing is the English. The work is extremely difficult for two reasons. First, Rabbinical Hebrew is highly incompatible with English. Second, the man who did the original dictionary was a professor of Hebrew and not a Talmudic scholar and at times we do not agree with his Hebrew translation, which, however, we are not allowed to touch.

One day we came across a term for which we could not find the English equivalent in spite of extensive brainstorming and research. Suddenly, it dawned on me that this term exists, of all places, in Polish. I ran to my Stanislawski (two volumes, WP, 1988) and had its English equivalent in seconds! (The Aramaic word is *machtarta*. The Hebrew word is *machteret*. Don't be misled by the similarity. The two languages do not often correspond so closely. The problem is that *machteret* has long lost its Biblical Hebrew meaning and is currently used to denote *underground organizations*, which is nowhere near what the Talmud wishes to say. This presented a problem until I reminded myself that the Polish word *podkop* defines very precisely the intended meaning — to tunnel into or under.)

By the way, this is not my first lexicographic effort. I also compiled, in 1975, the *Russian English Dictionary of Suppositional Names*, published and distributed by the Guild of Professional Translators in Philadelphia.

I used to be a member of the ATA, accredited in R-E and Polish-E. I discontinued my membership because I could not convince the people in charge of such things that I am perfectly

willing to receive the *Chronicle* by surface mail instead of paying airmail postage. Because of my unique situation I obtained little benefit from ATA membership, aside from accreditation. I could not attend the Conference for religious reasons even if (and when) I lived in the States. The *Chronicle*, by virtue of the fact that it deals with a multitude of languages is most of the time irrelevant to my work. True, if I had a web site, I could parade my accreditation there (if I were not prevented from doing so as a non-member). However, I am far from being convinced that a site would be of much benefit.

By the way, in addition to my translations, engineering and religious work, I wrote a book about my family history, which is very much a picture of a historical period covering the years 1939-1952 and containing a more extensive description of my background than can be given in a Profile. It is called: *These Children are Mine* and was published by Feldheim (www.Feldheim.com), a publishing house that caters to the Jewish orthodox public. It contains the kind of details that are usually not widely known, but may provide uncommon insights into a number of historical facts. The rather limited reading public familiar with Feldheim publications very enthusiastically received this book; witness the fact that the first printing (3000) was sold out and the second printing is just about to be.

The book is an autobiography, but much more. To the extent possible I tried to emulate Jules Verne and put a great deal of historical and geographic background into the book. For example, I described the atmosphere in Warsaw just prior to the German invasion, I gave a highly picturesque description of a German air raid, an eyewitness report of the retreat of the defeated Polish army (supported by an actual photograph supplied by the German State Archives which matched my description 100% in spite of the fact that the description was written 2-3 years before I came across the picture). I also include an unusual description of the confluence of the Vychegda and North Dvina rivers. Since we lived (in Komi) in a highly inaccessible location of which no photographs are available, I commissioned two artists to draw pictures. It is my belief that this book may be of interest to a wide range of readers.

Finally, I would like to tell the readership that I have 40 years' experience in R-E (and to a lesser extent L-E) technical translation. The field in which I specialize is heat transfer and fluid mechanics, but I am familiar with many other aspects of engineering and physics. I am more than willing to assist any SLD member in finding English equivalents of Russian terminology. I may be contacted at lederov@actcom.co.il (note, the term following actcom, which is an abbreviation of active communications, is co., not com.). However, since I open my e-mail only once or twice a week, any urgent request should be transmitted to my fax 009723 579 0241, not on Saturdays and with the consideration that night here occurs between 3:30 PM and 12 midnight Eastern time (both daylight saving and regular, save for October, during which Israel has been spared this unwarranted imposition upon nature).

THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH SYNTAX ON NOMINAL AND ADJECTIVAL WORD-FORMATIONAL MODELS IN TECHNICAL RUSSIAN

ATA Conference Presentation by Dr. Michael Launer
Reviewed by Vadim Khazin

Michael Launer is well known not only as a highly experienced Russian-English technical translator but also as a Professor of Russian. This combination of professions gives him a rare perspective on current trends in Russian technical and scientific terminology, which he has been observing for a number of years. The trends he discussed at the recent ATA conference appear to have taken shape under the influence of Western (mostly American) scientific and technical terms that are being actively incorporated into the Russian language. This process, which might be called a linguistic invasion, has been going on spontaneously, with language specialists just passively observing it, hence the neologisms quite often seem bizarre to a scrupulous analyst.

Michael's presentation, which should ideally have been given much more than the 45 minutes allotted (luckily, its full version was published in the *Proceedings*), was interesting both for native English- and native Russian-speaking translators. He provided a taxonomy of word-formational patterns (WFPs), giving examples for each of them. Incidentally some of the examples he used were obviously taken from manuscripts (e.g. scientific/technical reports) that had not benefited from scrutiny by an experienced Russian proofreader.

The first class in his taxonomy consists of WFPs based on traditional norms. Within it he distinguishes the following subclasses:

1. Noun Phrase Collocations. Examples: *helium testing*, *helium sniffer*; these analogous English phrases are rendered by structurally different phrases in Russian: *гелиевый контроль* and *детектор гелия*.
2. Suffixation. Examples: *threats to information* = *информационные угрозы*, *glove box* = *перчаточный бокс*, *surface tension* = *поверхностное натяжение*, where Russian adjectives are formed by adding suffixes to the nouns corresponding to the English adjectival nouns.
3. Prefixation with foreign lexemes such as *micro*, *macro*, *gamma*, *alpha*, *infra*. Examples: *infrared* = *инфракрасный*, *microeffect* = *микроявление*, *gamma-spectrometry* = *гамма-спектрометрия*. [Reviewer's Comment: I disagree with one example of such a prefix given by Michael; *vent-*, as in *ventilation facility* = *вентарезат*, is not a prefix but rather an abbreviation, as *ком* in *компартия*.] Michael mentions such terms as *альфа-излучатели* or *гамма-сканирующее устройство* to prove his point that new terms may appear in Russian by way of analogy, even if the words they derive from are non-existent in the language. [Reviewer's Comment: this may be true for the first example if we accept Michael's presumption that *альфа-излучатели* was derived from the non-existent verb «*альфа-излучать*», not by just adding *альфа* to the existing *излучать*. But this certainly is not the case for the second one: the term *сканировать* had been in the language long before scanners appeared, being used in *сканирующий электронный микроскоп*].

4. Prefixation with the Russian HE, creating antonyms to existing terms. Examples: *non-nuclear state* = *неядерное государство*, *non-weapons grade material* = *неоружейный материал*. Sometimes, as Michael indicated, the Russian negative expression even lacks a positive counterpart: *неучтённый материал* (*material unaccounted for*) as opposed to *учтённый материал* – probably, as the audience opined, because the latter is not a matter of concern.

[Reviewer's Comment: Michael stated that having a negative word or construction in Russian when there is no positive counterpart is a rare exception; I would argue that there are many such words with HE without positive counterparts. Examples: *неряха*, *необходимо*, *неуклюжий*].

Other types of WFPs include:

1. Suffixation of foreign stems to produce adjectives. Examples: *бар-кодный* from *bar code*, *онлайновый* from *on line*, *доткомовский* from *.com*, and the ridiculous *инпошный* from the abbreviation *INPO* (*Institute for Nuclear Power Operators*).
2. Adverbs, prepositions, and quantifiers used as prefixes. Examples include words with such prefixes as *макро-*, *внутри-*, *сверх-*, *высоко-*. [Reviewer's Comment: Some of the Russian examples Michael cites do not follow the rules of how compound words are to be spelled: jointly, separately or hyphenated. For instance, *вне бюджетные средства* should be *внебюджетные...*), and this also goes for *трудно доступные места* (should be *труднодоступные...*) and *высоко вероятные события* (should be *высоковероятные...*). Some of his examples «режут слух»: e.g., *трудногорячий материал* or *низкодавленческий впрыск*. And *dirty bomb* is certainly *грязная бомба*, not *сверхбомба*. On the other hand, what «режет слух» in Michael's opinion sometimes seems acceptable to my ear: for example, *в почти реальном времени* of course sounds worse than *в близком к реальному времени* but to my sensibility is not beyond the norms of the Russian language].
3. Indeclinable morphemes functioning adjectivally. As Michael noted, these Russian compound words, unlike those like *диван-кровать* (with two independent nouns), mimic the corresponding English ones from which they derived. Examples: *тест-матрица* (from *test matrix*), *статус-отчет* (from *status report*), *эскроу-счет* (from *escrow account*). [Reviewer's Comment: In my opinion, this group will gradually develop into normal Adjective+Noun expressions. For instance, of the many types of accounts I specifically checked in a dictionary, only *эскроу-счет* still does not have an adjectival form in Russian, and this may have a simple phonetical explanation: it is against the phonetic rules of the Russian language to construct adjectives from nouns ending in *оу*. Even the "Brighton-Beach lingo",

while readily constructing Russian words from English roots (*юзать* from *to use*, *пушуть* from *to push*, etc.), until recently resisted doing this for the verb *to tow*, at least in the newspapers; however, recently I saw «оттормозили» for *towed away* so I guess, to quote Gorbachev, «процесс пошёл»!

4. Foreign proper nouns acting adjectivally. For this group, which is similar to the previous one, Michael gives such examples as *дизель-генератор*, *рентген установка* (should be hyphenated), and also instances when *коми* becomes an adjective, like *коми язык* (should also be hyphenated).

[Reviewer's Comment: Here again I think phonetics comes into play: Russian nouns ending in *и* in the singular (*виски*, *такси*) resist both declension and formation of adjectives.

5. English lexemes left in English as adjectives. Here the “new Russians,” undoubtedly finding it too much effort to translate or find a Russian equivalent, just leave the English term or abbreviation. Some examples Michael gives include: *IP multicast group* rendered as *IP-широковещательная группа*; *TCP/IP stack* rendered as *TCP/IP стек*; *public synonyms* rendered as *public синонимы*. An interesting case is *MOX-fuel*, where the abbreviation stands for “mixed oxide.” As Michael observed, this term has several renderings: a calque (*смешанное оксидное топливо*), a descriptive equivalent (*топливо из смеси урана с плутонием*), and two abbreviated versions: *MOX топливо* and, probably to make certain nobody would read this as Russian acronym, a Russified phonetic equivalent — *МОКС топливо*.

The adventures of the word *Internet* in Russian earned Michael's special attention. He found six (!) different renderings of this neologism: 1) a fully Russian adjectival calque, as in *Internet protocol (IP) = межсетевой протокол*; 2) a traditional-type borrowing, as in *Internet connection = интернетовская связь*; 3) a declinable-noun borrowing, as in *Internet based = основанный на Интернете*; 4) an indeclinable noun left in English, as in *direct access to the Internet = прямой выход в Интернет*; 5) a term treated as a proper noun, as in *commercial Internet carriers (CIC) = поставщики платных услуг в сети Интернет*; 6) a left-posed, indeclinable noun left in English, as in *connection with an Internet provider = связь с Интернет-провайдером*.

Somewhat similar types of WFPs were given for the Russian rendering of the term *bar code*.

6. A “productive WFP” (Michael's term), in which compound, two-stemmed Russian adjectives derive from English terms that may contain just one word (*neutronics = нейтронно-физические свойства*), two words (*research institute = научно-исследовательский институт*), three words (*liquid metal reactor = жидкометаллический ядерный реактор*), or even four words (*low-head safety injection = низкодавленческий впрыск*). **[Reviewer's Comment:** in the last example, the form *давлен-ческий* seems too “neologistic” to me, but maybe I am far behind these rapidly developing processes in Russian; also, *safety* has somehow vanished en route from English to Russian]. This model includes instances when these two-stemmed Russian adjectives

undergo a two-stage development. Examples: *sabotage and terrorism: диверсия и терроризм, диверсионно-террористический акт*; *air intake and exhaust: приток и вытяжка воздуха, приточно-вытяжная вентиляция*.

7. While the previous model is considered traditional, here is the “new” one: any two related concepts may form a compound Russian adjectival construction. Examples: *emitter-coupled logic = эмиттерно-связанная логика*; *neutron emission spectroscopy = нейтронно-эмиссионная спектроскопия*; *cost-effective system = стоимостно-эффективная система*. **[Reviewer's Comment:** the last one is obviously a regrettable example of ugly Russian combined with an attempt at literal translation (or, in other cases, just transliteration) of English terms].
8. Another “new” and “productive” model (in Michael's view) is best illustrated by this example: *world market (мировой рынок) + market price (рыночная цена) = world market price (мировая рыночная цена)*. Here the resulting structure of two adjectives and a noun derives from blending two noun phrases with a common word/morpheme in them (*market* in this example). As Michael states, some 10 years ago such constructions were not yet in use, and the above phrase would have been rendered as *цена на мировом рынке*, that is as a syntactic model, not a word-formational one. **[Reviewer's Comment:** Michael argues that this shift from the more synthetic structures characteristic of the Russian language to more analytic structures characteristic of English started recently, approximately at the end of the Soviet period. No doubt, Russian is now becoming a more flexible language, but the particular examples Michael gives to prove his point have not convinced me. He cites his colleague James Cradler who said in 1987 that the phrase *command and control radar installation* was translated as *радиолокационные средства, обеспечивающие управление*, not as an adjectival construction, “because the language does not form adjectival structures from... nouns such as *управление*”. In Michael's glossary, however, there are now such terms as *управленческая информационная система* for *executive information system*, *административно-управленческие отчёты* for *administrative and management reports*, etc. Probably, he should have looked for some better examples, because the adjective *управленческий* has long existed in Russian: *управленческий аппарат*, etc. are mentioned in Ushakov's *Толковый словарь русского языка* (1940), among other places].

To summarize, we may commend Michael Launer for an interesting study and for the somewhat shocking conclusion that by accepting a number of word-formational patterns previously unknown in the language, Russian – under the strong influence of English (and Western technologies of course) – is also “Westernizing,” just like life in Russia nowadays.

JEZIK U TOKU

Paula Gordon

Sometimes a good bilingual dictionary is just not good enough. Especially when none of the English meanings listed for a word sound quite right in context and no examples or idiomatic expressions are given. When I have this problem, I turn to Internet search engines and use the World Wide Web as a multi-lingual corpus.

In a recent job, I had to translate a sentence containing the phrase “kajem se.” Morton Benson (*Srpskohrvatsko-Engleski rečnik*) says “I repent”; my Langenscheidt’s *Pocket Croatian-Serbian Dictionary* (editors Rudolf Filipović and Milan Moguš) suggests “repent” and “regret.” The context indicated a translation closer to “I regret.” (Kajem se što sam pušio. / I regret that I used to smoke.) Even after lining up some support for my choice from other dictionaries on my shelf, I was still curious about usage in the real world.

So I entered “kajem se” in the Google search engine (www.google.com), and was treated to “about 463” responses. I didn’t even need to follow the links provided, because context was provided for each hit. I quickly saw that “kajem se” appears in secular and religious discourse (on the Internet, at least) at a rough ratio of 3 to 1. For the most part, the secular usage pointed to “regret” as the meaning, and the religious to “repent.” The results shown were from documents from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro. I was then pretty sure I could use “regret” in my translation.

But since the text I was working on was for the Croatian market, I went to the searchable Croatian National Corpus (www.hnk.ffzg.hr/korpus.htm), which contains an impressive 30 million words. My entry, “kajem” (only single words allowed), returned 5 examples, and 2 were in a religious context. Then I entered “kajati” (the infinitive), which returned 12 matches, 11 of which were in a religious context.

For fun, I also went to the Oslo Corpus of Bosnian Texts (www.tekstlab.uio.no/Bosnian/Corpus.html#cont – use of the corpus is free, but users must go through a registration procedure), and entered “kajem se” there. Four matches were returned, all secular in context. I entered “kajati,” and all three matches were secular in nature, but one instance could have been translated as “to repent” – it was in the context of a parent-child relationship gone sour. The Bosnian Corpus contains 105 texts, mostly published since 1990, totaling about 1.5 million words.

Now, while I was writing this article, it occurred to me that I had not yet run across a Serbian corpus in my online wanderings. So I entered “Serbian corpus” in Google, and presto chango, “The Corpus of the Serbian Language” appeared (<http://www.serbian-corpus.edu.yu/ns/eindex.htm>). This project comprises 11 million words, but unfortunately, does not seem to have a search function; it presents tables and analyses of syntax, morphology and phonology. (Note that the Bosnian corpus allows searches on that level as well, and the Croatian site also contains a few analytical documents.)

Curious how other commercial search engines would compare to Google, I tried “kajem se” in the following:

Hotbot (<http://hotbot.lycos.com/>) – returned “more than 100” results, but did not show them in context;

Altavista (www.altavista.com) – returned 282 results, but with less context than Google; and

Lycos (www.lycos.com) – gave me 503 results, most shown in context, but not all returns were “kajem se” as a phrase.

I have come to two conclusions from this brief investigation: First, for context searches in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian – contemporary usage – a commercial search engine will deliver the most varied results. And second, of the four search engines tried, Google and Lycos are the fastest and most productive, if one judges by volume of results and ‘readability’ of the display.

One additional observation – the vast majority of hits turned up the phrase “*ne kajem se.*”

Perhaps because I was procrastinating about some other work (namely, finishing this article!), I thought I’d open up my investigation to online dictionaries for Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian. My experience with online dictionaries has been disappointing, but in this round of exploration, I found three that might do in a pinch, especially if I already had an idea about what the word might mean from its context, or if I were looking for synonyms or related words in the target language.

I chose words that have multiple meanings in the target language; here are my results for *taman* and *smack*.

Recnik/Rjecnik.com – www.recnik.com/
Serbian and Croatian <> English

This is more like a word-match program – when you enter a word, you get all pairs containing that word, for instance, *taman*:

black	= crn, crnilo, taman
brown	= braon, smedj, mrk, taman; zapeći, zapržiti, porumeniti
dark	= crn, mrak, taman
dim	= bled, blijed, maglovit, taman, zamračiti
dull	= glup, potmuo, sumoran, taman, tup

For *smack*: Nijedan red ne odgovara. / No answers.

(The answer in Serbian, loosely translated as “No line match,” confirms my initial impression of the program.)

Krstarica – <http://www.krstarica.com/dictionary/>
Serbian <> English Dictionary

This dictionary gives a number of choices in a simple two-column table, which is not bad in itself, but some of the entries seem rather far-flung (I was going to say “far-fetched” – interesting difference!); and the grammar of English phrases does not instill confidence: “I repent me,” “smack a whip”?

Continued on page 13

Initiative to Establish Certain South Slavic Language Pairs for Accreditation

Marijan Bošković and Paula Gordon

A volunteer effort is underway within ATA to establish separate translation accreditation for Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian language pairs into and from English. Two members of the Volunteer Committee, Paula Gordon (Chair) and Dr. Marijan Bošković (Member), attended the 43rd ATA Annual Conference in Atlanta and held an Open Meeting to present and discuss the initiative.

Paula and Marijan met with a number of ATA officers, committee chairs and administrative staff members. They also informed colleagues working in the above languages, SLD members and all official conference exhibitors about the initiative and the Open Meeting. Virtually everyone (ATA officers and staff members without exception) expressed support for the initiative and a readiness to help. A number of ATA members participated in the Open Meeting and subsequently joined the Volunteer Committee.

Open Meeting: First part, Saturday morning, November 9

On behalf of the ATA, Nora Favorov, Slavic Languages Division Administrator, called the meeting to order and welcomed those present. The following agenda items were covered:

ATA Procedures for Establishing New Language Pairs for Accreditation

Presented by Terry Hanlen, ATA Accreditation Program Manager, and Lilian Novas Van Vranken, Accreditation Committee Chair.

Details of the Accreditation Program are available on the ATA website: <http://www.atanet.org/bin/view.pl/285.html>.

Presentation of the Volunteer Committee and its activities

Presented by Paula Gordon, Chair of the Volunteer Committee (Committee activities are summarized below).

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Jezik u toku *Continued from page 12*

For **taman** (I've dispensed with the table to save space):

taman: dingy, black, benighted, pitch-dark, cloudy, opaque, midnight, met;

taman -o: dim, to a turn, tenebrous, darksome, sombre, somber, crepuscular, sightless, shadowy, gloomy, compact, pat to the time, obscure, narrow, dusky;

taman da: in the nick of, ready to do, be going to, be about to;

taman da idu: at the point of going, on the point of going;

taman da odu: at the point of going

Smack returned the following:

smack: cmakati, cmokac, cmoknuti usnama, potsećati, primesak, pljusak, šopiti, puckaj, prizvuk, pljesak, osećati se na, imati ukus, pravce;

smack a whip: puknuti bičem.

Ectaco – www.ectaco.com/online/diction.php3?refid=285&lang=11&direction

Serbo-Croatian <> English Dictionary

This is the only one of the three sites discussed that indicates parts of speech in the definitions. It is the most judicious of the three, if a machine function can be described that way; what I mean is, it appears that someone wished to create something more than a simple glossary. I was pleasantly surprised to find the Etaco dictionary, which seems to cover a wide range of meanings accurately, including slang and common usage.

For **taman**:

A dark, dim, mirky, murky, narrow, near, tenebrous, opaque, mirk, murk

ADV just, just right

For **smack**:

ADV direktno, pravo

N cmok, heroin [žarg.], ribarski brod, šamar, udar, ukus

V cmoknuti, mirisati, zveknuti, odlamiti, osećati se

All of these meanings, except 'odlamiti' ('to break off,' as in a cup handle), were listed in my Random House unabridged English dictionary.

So now, thanks to my procrastination, I know there is a reasonably reliable dictionary available online. And reviewing the results of the first two sites mentioned, I can see that they could be very useful for finding synonyms. *Recnik* is good because it gives the entire entry – it seems to me this would decrease the likelihood of gross errors. *Krstarica* is interesting because it offers a broader view of the word in question, but may be a little dangerous for the same reason. I think it would be prudent to have a good dictionary handy (even monolingual) when using this service.

In conclusion, although I spent more than a few hours on this project: Ne kajem se!

I'm curious whether y'all have any favorite – useful or interesting, productive or good for procrastinating – Internet sites to recommend. What resources do you turn to when you come across a word you just can't get a handle on? Any favorite glossary sites? Where do you look up abbreviations? What about legal, medical, bureaucratic terminology? Write to me at dbaPlanB@aol.com.

And on a related topic, I promised Boris Silversteyn, Dictionary Committee Chairman, that I would relay this message: "Please spread the word among our South Slavic languages colleagues that we are constantly looking for dictionary reviewers!" The perk here is that the committee orders a copy of the dictionary for you, and you get to keep it after submitting the review. Please contact Boris at bsilversteyn@comcast.net for review guidelines and details.

Initiative for Accreditation *Continued from page 13*

Separate presentations about two of the languages covered in the initiative

Paula Gordon, "Bosnian as a successor language to Serbo-Croatian."

Dr. Marijan Bošković, "Croatian < > English: Background, Experiences and Resources."

Please contact the presenters individually for more information.

Open Meeting: Second part, Saturday afternoon, November 9

The focus of the second part of the meeting was on immediate next steps to be taken by the Committee:

- A. Recommendation to ATA regarding language designations (see below).
- B. Survey of potential accreditation candidates (see below).
- C. Nominations were made for the positions of Croatian Language Chair, Serbian Language Chair and Languages Co-Chair (into English testing).

The Volunteer Committee and its activities

A. Criteria for serving on the Volunteer Committee

A willingness to participate is the only requirement for serving on the Committee. There are no educational or professional criteria, nor is it necessary to be an ATA member. We are still open to accepting new members.

B. What the Committee does

The activities of the Committee are determined by the official ATA procedures for establishing a new language pair for accreditation. Present or planned activities of the Volunteer Committee and its Workgroups include:

- * Documenting current interest in accreditation and locating potential candidates (ATA members and non-members)
- * Compiling resources to aid in test-passage selection
- * Determining testing and grading criteria
- * Promoting the accreditation program to potential candidates and translation service providers; generating continued interest in the program

C. Some questions under discussion by the Committee

1. Whether "Serbo-Croatian" is a useful designation for translators and interpreters and their clients, and whether we should consider it as a language for accreditation.

2. How to attract a sufficient number of accreditation candidates. We discussed combining the languages to create one pair into English (for instance, a pair designated as "Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian into English.") However, this question has been definitively answered by the Accreditation Committee: ATA will not allow such a combination. We must determine which language pair or pairs have the potential to generate the required number of candidates, and focus our initial efforts on such pair or pairs.

D. Survey

ATA Accreditation guidelines require documentation of at least 50 accreditation candidates before an application to establish accreditation for a new language pair will be considered. In addition, ATA wants to see proof that there will be ongoing demand – not just a one-time rush, but a growing number of candidates over time. For this reason, we are undertaking a survey of ATA members and recommended non-members, in order to:

- * document individual interest in testing for accreditation;
- * serve as a vehicle through which colleagues can make suggestions and express their thoughts about forming language pairs;
- * attract new Committee and Workgroup members, including graders and passage selectors.

A draft of the survey questionnaire was sent to the Committee for review on November 25. We plan to distribute the questionnaire in early January 2003.

E. Response to the initiative so far:

As of November 9, we had received 28 responses to our announcements in ATA publications. Of these, 20 clearly stated they would pursue accreditation in one or more of these languages; five were unclear; and three supported the effort but said they would not pursue accreditation at this time.

F. ATA member statistics, compiled from the ATA Directory of Translation and Interpretation Services (Nov. 27):

Number of ATA members selecting Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian or "Serbo-Croatian" (ATA-provided options) as their native language: 24

Number of ATA members working in these languages (options provided: Croatian, Serbian, "Serbo-Croat"): 38

Total number of native speakers and members working in these languages (without duplications): 41

Note: Not all ATA members have registered in the ATA online directory.

G. Observed inconsistencies between ATA online directory language options and established existing language nomenclature (South Slavic languages only):

Native Language	Working Language	Recommended action
Bosnian	--	add to Working language
Bulgarian	Bulgarian	None
Croatian	Croatian	None
--	Macedonian	add to Native language
Serbian	Serbian	None
Serbo	--	remove from Native language
Serbo-Croatian	Serbo-Croat	(action pending Committee discussion)
Slavic	--	remove from Native language
Slovenian	Slovenian	None

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Un-polish-ed Humor in Translation

Urszula Klingenberg

When I think of humorous translations –and here I mean humor of the unintended variety—what springs to mind is machine translations. It seems that the translation community has not made a strong enough effort to educate potential clients about the intricate nature of language and how poorly served they are when they put their trust completely in any of the machine translation software available on the market. As a result, we as translators are losing ground. Instead of using our services, clients are swayed by claims of computer superiority and consistent performance, not to mention lower cost. Thus, techies and company accountants impose their misconceptions on clients, who are usually not in a position to verify the quality of the translation they receive.

Have you seen funny machine translations lately? Most likely you have seen quite a few or were even asked to proofread some—a truly daunting task. The unrestricted medium of the Internet abounds in examples. Those who want to get their message out in other languages can use free software for translation, and many take advantage of this opportunity. However, a sample* that has recently come to my attention comes from another source. It is a form that must be filled out by foreigners entering the US. It starts with “Witamy do Stanow Zejdnoczonych” that is, “Welcome to the United States.”

To quote more excerpts: “Pisac na masynie czy drukowac czytalnie z piorem WSZYSTKIE DUZE LITERY. Nie pisac na tyle tego formularza.” Pan/i/ma pozwolenie się pozostać w U.S. tylko do daty co napisano na tym formularzu. Żeby się pozostać dłużej, bez pozwolenia od władz imigracyjnych, osoby mogą być karane.” And so on in a similar vein.

I do not know how long the form has been in use but it may have been quite some time. Here is how things would probably work. The language used in it would raise an eyebrow or two among Polish travelers but, after some head scratching and with a little help from a friendly stewardess, they will fill it out one way or another. Would the travelers complain about the poor

quality of the translation? But they do not speak English (if they did, they probably would have chosen the English language form) and besides to whom would they complain? An Immigration inspector? Not likely. They are vitally interested in getting their visa stamped and being allowed into the country so they do not want to rock the boat. Thus the status quo of the gibberish form is preserved.

I wonder if a similar mechanism was at work in the case of the earlier Polish version of the famous recruiting slogan for the US army “Bądź wszystko że możesz” [Be all that you can be].

Rather than suggesting ways to combat the unfortunate reliance on machine translation (I cannot think of any that would be guaranteed to work under the present conditions), I would like to end on a lighter note. After all, the intention of this article is to amuse the reader, not to bring up irritations. Below you will find a list of phrases with botched translations. The effect duplicates methods used in machine translation, which in its more basic form reminds me of a beginning student of language. When faced with the task of translating a sentence, the student painstakingly looks up word after word in a bilingual dictionary to find the other language equivalents. If there is more than one word listed, he will choose one at random or according to frequency of use. As a result of this hit-or-miss approach idioms, homonyms, or stock phrases become unrecognizable in the other language and the translation sounds incoherent and “foreign.” The unquestionable advantage of machine translation software over the laboring student is that the result is accomplished much faster.

In any event, it may be worth your while to get some practice puzzling out the meaning of these gems (correct, annotated English translation provided for the benefit of non-Polish readers):

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Initiative for Accreditation

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H. Regarding the above-mentioned inconsistencies between ATA online directory options and established existing language nomenclature:

Participants in the afternoon session of the Atlanta Open Meeting, based on the morning presentations and evidence further cited, determined to propose to the full Volunteer Committee that it recommend to ATA that it align the lists of language choices in all its services and membership directories, as well as other official ATA language lists, with the established and existing normative language nomenclature.

On November 25, a draft Recommendation was sent to the 17 Volunteer Committee members for discussion. If accepted by two-thirds of Committee members, it will be forwarded to ATA. In accepting this Recommendation, the Committee would also accordingly standardize the nomenclature in the listed choices of potential new South Slavic language pairs for accreditation.

NOTE: For more information about the initiative, the Volunteer Committee or its activities, or to be included in the upcoming survey (with the opportunity to volunteer), please contact Paula Gordon at dbaPlanB@aol.com.

Marijan's Boskovic's career includes academic work and professional research. He has authored numerous sci-tech publications and a U. S. patent. An active member of ATA since 1978, he has 40+ years of translating and interpreting experience from Slavic languages into English and from English into Croatian. He is a Board Member of the Croatian Academy of America. He can be reached at : mboskovic@msn.com.

Original Polish	Machine translation	Appropriate translation
Jestem z Wołomina.	I am from Beeftown.	I am from (the town of) Wołomin (wołowina – “beef).
Nie zwracaj mi gitary.	Don't turn my guitar.	Don't talk my head off (idiom).
Zwierzę ci się.	I animal to you.	I will confide in you (zwierzę means animal as a noun and confide as a verb).
Wierzę ci.	I tower you.	I trust you (wierzę means tower as a noun and trust as verb).
Obrazy Moneta.	Paintings coin.	Paintings by Monet (moneta means coin).
Czuję do ciebie pociąg.	I feel train to you.	I feel attracted to you (multiple meanings of pociąg).
Bez ogródek.	Without small garden.	Without beating around the bush (idiom).
Kawa na ławę.	Coffee on the table.	Put one's cards on the table (speak directly and completely).
Widzew Łódź.	I see boat.	(Name of Sports Association from the city of Łódź)
Biały bez.	White without.	White lilac (bez has multiple meanings).
Z góry dziękuję.	Thanks from the mountain.	Thank you in advance (idiomatic phrase).
Przejsć na drugą stronę ulicy.	To go to the other page of the street.	To cross to the other side of the street (stronę means both page and street).
Obniżyć stopy procentowe.	To cut percentage feet.	To cut interest rates (multiple meanings of stopa).
Czy podzielasz moje zdanie?	Do you divide my sentence?	Do you share my opinion? (Verb and noun both have multiple meanings.)
Spadek cen.	Heritage of prices.	Price decrease (multiple senses of spadek).
Możesz mnie podrzucić?	Can you throw me up?	Can you give me a ride? (Multiple senses of verb.)
Moja dziewczyna jest mi bardzo droga.	My girlfriend is very expensive.	My girlfriend is very dear to me (multiple senses of droga).
Tom podzielił ich los.	Tom divided their lottery coupon.	Tom shared their plight (multiple senses of los)
Pierwszy z brzegu.	First one from the shore.	One at random (idiom).
Prawo Powszechnego Ciążenia	Universal pregnancy law.	Law of universal gravity (multiple senses of ciążenia).
Glasgow	Szkoło poszło (literally: Glass gone).	Glasgow

Endnote:

* In this article the goals of 1) explaining why these examples are humorous to readers who do not read Polish and 2) not explaining to such an extent that the humor is destroyed for the Polish speaking readers, who form the central target audience for this article, conflict. We have compromised by providing no explanations for the examples, in the third paragraph. Those who do not understand Polish can simply skip them and supply the analogs they are sure to be familiar with in their own working languages. We have placed the concluding examples in a table with the explanation provided in the rightmost column. Those who fear that the humor will be attenuated by too much analysis can simply cover up this part of the table.

ATTENTION
Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian < > English
Translators and Interpreters

An effort is underway to establish ATA accreditation for one or more of these language pairs. A Volunteer Committee has been formed, and we will soon conduct a survey, from which the initial language pairs will be determined. The survey is planned for early January 2003. To participate in this survey, or for more information about the initiative, please contact the Volunteer Committee at dbaPlanB@aol.com.

BEGINNER'S LUCK

Liv Bliss (perennially novice translator)
Lakeside, Arizona

This being the season of giving, I thought that this time I'd share with you *twenty web sites I'd be miserable without*. And ask you to share your favorites right back. Of course, so as not to get too sweet and sticky, we could also talk in a later column about *our unfavorite web sites of all time*. It's your party.

We'll start with the discussion sites and message boards. I'll bet I'm not alone in having jumped into any number of these, brimming with good intentions, but only the ones that offer the option of receiving messages directly into my e-mail in-box have avoided slipping below my radar.

Translator Client Review is a forum where translators exchange their client experiences, good and bad. The moderator, Laura Hastings, runs a tight ship and keeps the postings strictly on-topic, which I feel adds to the value of this service. There is a \$12 per year fee, but some members pay more so that anyone in financial difficulty can have a year's free membership. To sign up, start at www.tcrlist.com/TCR_Info_page.html. There's also an associated forum where the discussion runs more freely, which you can join by going to tcr_subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Word of warning: any *yahoogroups* URLs I give you here will tell you that you have to sign up with Yahoo Groups first. Yahoo, like many other sites, has instituted a Web Beacons feature, which is a kind of cookie on steroids that tracks your Internet usage outside the Yahoo domain. To have any chance of avoiding this, you have two options. Go to <http://privacy.yahoo.com/privacy/us/pixels/details.html> and click on "click here" in the text to opt out (be careful that you don't inadvertently cancel your opt-out on the following screen; they've made that very easy to do). Or you can try signing up for these groups without registering with Yahoo, at [\[LISTNAME\]-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:[LISTNAME]-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). I myself haven't gone that route, so can't vouch for it.

Back to our message boards. Running pretty much parallel with TCR is the *Transpayment site*, which is free and is managed, with a rather looser hand, by Peter Erfurt. Sign up at www.smartgroups.com/groups/transpayment.

One more payment practices list that I'm not personally familiar with, run by David Orpin* and Ted Wozniak, is at www.trwenterprises.com/payment_practices.htm. In a previous incarnation, this was a fee-paying service but now it's free too.

Another favorite of mine with a broader topic range, not visibly moderated (I believe) but highly civilized, is the *Business Practices* group, which also lives at Yahoo Groups—http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bp_disc/.

Periodicals now. The best two freebies I know are *tranfree* (www.translatortips.net) and Accurapid's *Translation Journal* (www.accurapid.com/journal/). Alex Eames' *tranfree* is sometimes light on content, which could never be said of Gabe Bokor's splendid publication, but it does show up automatically in your in-box. (And, hey, if people don't pitch in and contribute, the range is sure to suffer, right?) The *translatortips* site also has forums, which I admit to my shame I haven't yet visited, though I am intrigued by another new feature called *the Freelance Translators Index*, where you can see how busy other translators currently are and add your information (to get there directly, go to www.tranfree.com/ttfti.html). This has the fascination for me of a mobile hanging over a baby's crib. It can keep me amused for... oh... minutes at a time.

OK, let's get serious: job sites. There are probably a gazillion of them, though the only meaningful cybersource of jobs for me this year has been the ATA Online Directory. That said, I know other translators who score jobs quite regularly from elsewhere.

One such site is *Jobs for translators* (tr_jobs-subscribe@yahoogroups.com), which is run by Radek Pletka. Members scour various other sites and post information on the jobs they find. Like so many of these ventures, it's only as good as its contributors. But you can't beat the price—it's free. Radek has recently set up a basic member database (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tr_jobs/database) which he intends to publicize when it reaches a worthwhile size.

Then there's one of the pioneers—ProZ (www.proz.com). If you haven't checked this one out yet, do. (And if you have, skip the rest of this paragraph.) It's a lot more than a job site, and is worth a visit for its quirky terminology exchange (KudoZ) alone. Once signed up, you can have language questions e-mailed automatically to you in your chosen language pair/s and area/s of expertise. If the asker chooses your answer, you get KudoZ points... at which stage it all gets a bit Byzantine, so just go and explore for yourself. ProZ also has plenty of moderated discussion forums, and a bunch of other goodies—including a client evaluation feature called the Blue Board—many of which are only accessible to paying members (the lowest rank of paying membership, Platinum, was \$120 per year last time I checked). And don't even think of having a support-related question if you're not a card-carrying ProZer.

Three more, all of which also have more to offer than their job exchanges and none of which I've had time to explore properly: www.translatorscafe.com, www.translationzone.com (truth in advertising would require that this one be called Tradoszone.com), and www.trally.com.

Information-dense sites? There's a compendious new portal at www.eurotexte.net/portal, which is run by the Paris-based translation firm, Eurotexte. It's heavily eurocentric, of course, and strongly commercial (the Acronym Finder, for instance, has

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* As this issue of SlavFile went to press, we heard the sad news of the death of David Orpin. David was owner of Language Services International and Director of the German Office in Wassenberg. He was a UK-examined and Authorized Translator for German and English, and a conference interpreter.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SLAVIC LANGUAGES DIVISION

Continued from page 1

and 70) when my earnings were limited by law, so that I had time to give to this group without losing income. Best of all, I understood the problems Russians were facing because my parents and their generation went through the same thing. I also told them that I knew exactly what they were thinking, and I could prove it. At this point, everybody was slouching in their seats, wondering how soon they could leave the room. You are thinking: this lady is going to take money from us, she will publicize the new group and when clients call her, she will take the work for herself and give us nothing. Well, I continued, I am going to prove to you that this is not going to happen, because, I DO NOT TRANSLATE FROM OR INTO RUSSIAN. I do not have or intend to take accreditation in these two combinations, because I already have accreditation in five language combinations, in languages I know much better than Russian. All of a sudden, I could see my audience perk up. Aha! I had hit the nail on the head!

So that's how we started. I outlined my plan: I needed people to give me \$10 each to cover initial expenses. They would be covered as members for one year. If the endeavor failed, they would get their money back. I planned to prepare a questionnaire—we needed to know as much as possible about each other. I would send the questionnaire to every member of the ATA with a Russian-sounding name, we would advertise in the *Chronicle* and the local chapters' newsletters, and send the questionnaire to anyone that they suggested. Then we would hold meetings in New York and I would try to explain the wicked ways of these Americans with their unreasonable demands: efficiency, accuracy, skill, promptness, and all those other silly notions of the capitalistic world.

I promised to write and distribute a newsletter to keep everyone informed of what we were doing, give our members tips on where to look for work, how to set up a home-based office, provide news on dictionaries, and encourage and organize sessions at ATA conferences. Well, in the first mailing, we sent out 100 questionnaires, and we received 80 responses! I should be a politician!

The first person who came and signed in at this meeting, and the first to reach in his pocket for a \$10 bill was Alexander Feht, who at the time lived in my neck of the woods, although he later moved to Colorado. Thanks, Alex, wherever you are now!

NYU is located in Greenwich Village, the "Village" to us, and the head of the Foreign Languages Division was a good friend of mine and of some other members of the New York Circle of Translators (NYCT). He helped us tremendously, by giving us free rooms, which were under-utilized on Saturdays. We had a nice turnout, and sometimes I would invite somebody to speak to us, such as an accountant, who explained how to set up an office in your home, what was or wasn't a legitimate business expense, how to keep records, and the advantages of "dba" versus setting up a corporation. We also had a member of the Federal Court's Interpreters Office come to talk to us about the need for interpreters and about court procedures.

Our meetings were long, I have to admit. As long as I had the room and we had something to talk about, we would stay there. People would come, but they were slow in pitching in, aside from arranging the chairs or getting water for coffee. We used to break up for lunch, but when I saw that our members were slow in getting back, I decided I would bring lunch and ask them to share the expense. I didn't buy anything at the deli, I made everything myself. I used to joke that I suspected people came for the lunch and not for the meeting. Where else could you get the kind of spread I would bring for \$2.50, which was usually what I asked them to pay. We met five times a year, rain or shine (or snow), and sometimes we had people come in from four states—NY, NJ, CT and PA. I felt so proud! One of our members who lived in Connecticut invited us to meet at his house in the summer. I called it our dacha. People were told to bring plastic containers and we picked blueberries and raspberries growing in back of his house. Thank you, Henry, for the good memories!

In the beginning, officially we were attached to the NYCT as a Special Interest Group. This gave us status and credibility. One day, I suppose, we became the victims of our own success—the new Board of NYCT decided to have a closer look at us. I have to admit, we were very independent and nobody bothered us, but our arrangement was sort of informal, to say the least, and I knew it couldn't last. I had done it this way because I figured that almost everybody could afford \$10 a year, but if they were required to become members of a larger group, they might not be able to afford it, and it was precisely those people who needed our support the most. And there was another problem, one that I had not foreseen.

It seems that although "Americans" understood the purpose of our fledgling organization, the "Russians," on the other hand, did not seem to grasp the concept of a "professional" organization. Every one of them initially joined in the belief that somehow this organization was going to provide work for them, and they worried about favoritism. It took a long time for them to understand the advantages of belonging to a professional organization. They thought we were a sort of a guild, where work would come in and be distributed among the members. Some offered to pay me if I recommended them. It took a long time for them to understand that they were no longer in the Soviet Union. Most of them did not realize that what I was doing was on a purely volunteer basis. So I undertook to explain what professional ethics were all about, and how much we all stood to lose in the long run if we failed to abide by them. I am proud to say that most of my Russian friends gradually began to understand and, I hope, to follow my advice in this very sensitive area.

You will notice that I mention "Russian" when we are actually the Slavic Division. Well, we had always welcomed anybody from Eastern Europe and the member states of the former Soviet Union, but I had no experience and no knowledge of all those other languages, even though we made every effort right from the beginning to list in our directory all the languages

with which our members worked. I always felt that it was worthwhile to capitalize on those other languages in our members' quest for work.

As I said, as we grew, we began to attract the attention of the NYCT, who was starting to wonder how much money we had collected and what we were doing with it. We had a separate bank account, and actually were spending all our money—if not on printing and mailing of notices and newsletters, then on our Membership Directory. In those days websites were still a new phenomenon. Even the ATA didn't have one. So we had hard copy directories. We printed as many as we could afford, and mailed them to every translation agency in the country. We didn't charge anything for them because I felt that not enough people knew we existed and if I did not send them out unsolicited no one would order them. So I kept a small supply, and mailed out the rest. Although I accounted for every penny that was spent, I still I felt that sooner or later we might run into trouble for lack of proper controls. So when NYCT started inquiring, I thought it might be wiser to petition ATA for division status. That way we would be much more visible and somebody else would handle our money, which would relieve me of the responsibility. This is what we did in 1993. The Portuguese Language Division had been created only a year or two earlier, and I knew the routine. I wrote the bylaws, and statements of background, goals and statement of purpose for the new Russian Language Division. The petition had to be signed by at least 21 active members of ATA. We obtained over 46 signatures. We were welcomed with open arms, and within a year our membership doubled to over 400. I understand that right now we have approximately 467 members.

A couple of years later, our good member Patricia Newman, whose accomplishments I need not enumerate here, suggested that we should expand our membership base by reflecting in our name what we were actually already doing: welcoming members who worked in other Slavic languages and languages spoken in countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union. Even this definition is actually quite loose, because you could work exclusively with Indonesian, and if you wanted to join the SLD, you would be more than welcome. So after a vote of the membership in 1996 we became the Slavic Languages Division.

After another couple of years, I felt that it was time for me to move over and make room for younger and more knowledgeable members. It is never healthy for an organization to be run by the same people all the time, and I had been doing it for seven years. I am happy to say that the SLD is in capable hands, we have people who value what we are doing and we have no shortage of interesting and useful sessions every year at the annual conference. We have a wonderful team running our publication, the *SlavFile*, who enjoy what they are doing, and I hereby give this baby a clean bill of health. Thank you all for what you are doing. I feel confident that the baby I delivered is in safe hands.

BEGINNER'S LUCK *Continued from page 17*

a one-button link to amazon.com), but—to co-opt a cliché—you just take what you need and leave the rest. It gives you search engines, dictionaries, free downloads (Adobe Acrobat, WinZip...), translator associations, newspapers and magazines, worldwide weather... It's not that there's anything earth-shatteringly new here, it's just that everything is in one place. In fact, it might even be too much of a good thing.

If you prefer your information in more digestible chunks, try these:

www.mmiworld.com/codelist.htm, a comprehensive list of US telephone area codes, for those times when you're not sure if your client is still in bed;

www.webopedia.com, a searchable Internet and computer tech dictionary, in—gasp!—plain English;

www.ethnologue.com/web.asp contains detailed information on every language known—or, better yet, not known—to man (how recently did I pay \$30 or so for the relatively puny paperback version?);

www.sciencemadesimple.net/conversions.html for US <> metric conversions in everything from weight to stress (wait! you can *convert* stress?). This site has just added a link to the wonderfully easy to use www.xe.com/ucc.currency converter, making it a one-stop shop.

So, if I'm still counting correctly, I'm down to my last three, and I can't resist throwing in some Russian favorites.

www.rubricon.ru is a searchable database of several dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other sources. Increasingly these days, I turn up hits that I can only access as a fee-paying customer (the fees currently run from \$3 to \$56). But there's still a lot to be had for free there.

Then there's the invaluable, interactive—you can make your own moderated contributions so long as you have web site references to back them up—www.sokr.ru, for the abbreviation-challenged Russophones among us.

This next one is a bit off the beaten path, but I'm so jazzed about it, I just have to tell you. For help with any particularly obscure Russian place names, try www.calle.com/world/russia/index.html, which claims to have maps for 209,528 towns and cities in Russia, along with the latitude, longitude, altitude in feet and meters, the weather forecast, and other tidbits. I wouldn't know about that number—I haven't counted—but I do find this site handy when my trusty old paperback gazetteer doesn't go far enough or is hopelessly out of date.

And, when you're weary of all this surfing and just want to curl up with a good magazine, drop in at *Журнальный зал* (<http://magazines.russ.ru>). There you'll find complete runs of several years'-worth of 20 periodicals, from *Арион* to *Уральская новь* by way of *Континент*, *Вопросы литературы*, and *Новый мир*—and all free, gratis, and for nothing.

Those who pay attention to that sort of thing will have noticed that we made it to twenty-one. Even so, here's one last address. Why don't you contact me at bliss@wmonline.com and tell me about all the primo sites I've overlooked?



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

ВАШЕ БЛАГОРОДИЕ, ГОСПОЖА РАЗЛУКА...

из к/ф “Белое солнце пустыни”

Ваше благородие, госпожа разлука,
мне с тобою холодно, вот какая штука.
Письмецо в конверте
погоди—не рви...
Не везет мне в смерти,
повезет в любви.

Ваше благородие госпожа удача,
для кого ты добрая, а кому иначе.
Девять граммов в сердце
постой— не зови...
Не везет мне в смерти,
повезет в любви.

Ваше благородие госпожа чужбина,
жарко обнимала ты, да только не любила.
В шелковые сети
постой—не лови...
Не везет мне в смерти,
повезет в любви.

Ваше благородие госпожа победа,
значит, моя песенка до конца не спета!
Перестаньте, черти,
клясться на крови...
Не везет мне в смерти,
повезет в любви.

Булат Окуджава (1967)

Please Accept My Compliments

Please accept my compliments, Lady Fare-You-Well!
Though your touch is cold to me, I'm still caught in your spell.
Hold on there, oh, please, don't tear that letter— it's not read...
I've no luck at dying; I'll fall in love, instead!

Please accept my compliments, dearest Lady Luck!
You favor some with kindness; the rest of us are stuck.
Please don't let me catch a slug that leaves me cold and dead...
I've no luck at dying; I'll fall in love, instead!

Please accept my compliments, Lady Foreign Lands!
You embraced me with great passion, but loveless were your hands.
Please don't let me fall into the silken web you've spread...
I've no luck at dying; I'll fall in love, instead!

Please accept my compliments, Lady Victory!
This means my songs not sung out yet; I'm sure you will agree.
Stop you devils, swearing oaths over which you've bled...
I've no luck at dying; I'll fall in love instead!

Translated by Alex Lane (2002)