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ANNUAL SUSANA GREISS LECTURE

Presented by Professor Michael H. Heim, UCLA

Reviewed by Larissa Kulinich

Let me start by saying that both in Los Angeles in 2001, at my first ATA Conference, and in Atlanta the following year, I found the annual Susana Greiss Lectures organized by the Slavic Languages Division to be the most rewarding and memorable events I attended. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to be asked to review these lectures for *SlavFile*. I must admit, however, that this task was a great deal easier in 2001, since the ATA provided recordings of presentations that participants could purchase. In Atlanta we did not have this luxury. My far from perfect scribbles and Laura Wolfson's notes (for which I am very grateful) on Professor Heim's lecture are thus the basis for this review and I apologize if it is not as complete as I would have liked it to be.

Michael H. Heim is a professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of California, Los Angeles. He has been teaching at UCLA for over 30 years. Professor Heim has published numerous translations from Russian (Chekhov, Aksyonov, Sasha Sokolov; his translation of Chukovsky's diary will be published soon); Czech (Kundera, Hrabal, Jan Neruda); Serbian and Croatian (Kis, Ugresic, Tisma); Hungarian (Esterházy, George Konrad); and German: (Brecht, Enzensperger, Günter Grass). Professor Heim has won translation awards from PEN and ALTA, and is on the juries of the NEA and the NEH for translation awards; he has just been elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Professor Heim caught the audience's attention from the start with a seemingly paradoxical sentence: "I am a translator *because* I am monolingual," and throughout the course of his speech he kept his listeners' attention by providing surprising and intriguing revelations relating to his career and rich professional experiences. He indeed had been monolingual before he went to high school. In the '50s, U.S. high schools normally offered 4 languages, and there was a set reason why a student chose a particular one. According to Professor Heim, those who wanted to be doctors chose Latin, those who wanted to be scientists studied German, those who were contemplating a career in diplomacy or culture chose French, and those who wanted the course to be as easy as possible selected Spanish. In those days Michael Heim did not share any of these motives, but eventually chose French because it had the youngest teacher. This teacher, Mr. Presto, failed 85% of his students at the end of the year. However, the remaining 15% were infected with his sense of the wonder of a foreign language.

After that, Professor Heim claims never to have learned a language for the heck of it; there was always a reason why he selected one or another for study. Early on, he learned German to be able to communicate with his relatives in Europe. Six months ago he began to learn Dutch because of his interest in Dutch literature. He is thinking of translating a Dutch novel written by an Iranian who has lived in Holland for 10 years. Earlier Professor Heim translated a Swedish novel written by a Greek. What interesting combinations!

With regard to his background and the start of his career, Heim said that his father, who was born in Budapest, died during World War II. Then the lecturer revealed to his audience a well-guarded secret: his undergraduate majors were Oriental Studies and Chinese. His advisor, a Professor of Russian and Russian Literature, said to Michael, "Why not take Russian, if you are doing Chinese?" So, he did. In the '60s he made his first trip to the USSR as a member of a group of American undergraduate students. It was the second group that was allowed in. This experience gave him a real feeling for the Russian language, as he began to find links between language and culture.

Professor Heim's second Slavic language was Czech, for which he had a wonderful teacher – Roman Jakobson's wife. As a student he traveled to Czechoslovakia and was involved for some time in the academic activity of the Institute for the Czech Language. In an amusing anecdote pertaining to this time he told us how one day, while he was working at the Institute, he happened to answer the phone and was asked by the caller whether it was permissible to name a newborn child Mike. This was his first experience as a linguistic arbiter.

According to Michael Heim, for a long period, there was hardly any interest in Czech literature. In the mid '60s he translated a story from Czech into English and offered it to several publishers – nobody was interested. Later on he translated a novel, called *Dancing Lessons* by the Czech writer Hrabal. It took him 15 years (!) to persuade the publisher to publish it. After "the Prague Spring" there was sudden spike of interest in all things Czech.

Audience interest was particularly high for the part of Heim's talk where he considered the issue of translating book titles. Sometimes we are so accustomed to the title of a classic that we do not notice it is awkwardly translated and are shocked when it

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Inside:

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!

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FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR: SLD MATTERS

Nora Favorov

Have you visited the SLD website lately? In addition to photos taken at the division banquet in Atlanta (which will evoke fond memories in those who were there, but will not fully convey the festive atmosphere for those who weren't), there are some valuable items in the "download" section. First, the handout from Steve Shabad's 2002 conference presentation, *Son of Russian —> English False Cognates* is there in RTF, available for printing or downloading. I, for one, have gone back to the handouts from Steve's parent (in LA) and child (in Atlanta) presentations on several occasions. The most recent instance was when I was doing battle with someone else's R-E translation in which *концепция* had been inappropriately translated as *conception*. Steve's handout reminded me of the possibility of translating this term as *doctrine*, which worked perfectly. The *Oxford*, for instance, only gives "conception, idea" as possible translations. Even the most experienced translators might do well to review Steve's compilation from time to time, and for beginning translators familiarity with these *faux amis* helps avoid those dreaded *faux pas*!

The other useful addition to the site's download page is Alex Lane's Atlanta PowerPoint presentation on encodings. This presentation was designed to help those of us who are a few bits short of a byte when it comes to understanding IT basics.

In this issue you will become acquainted with Valeriy Schcherbakov, a translator in Tula who is generously sharing with us a dictionary he is compiling. Reading his introduction to the dictionary, I was certainly able to see myself in the scenario described of a foreigner sitting stone faced in an audience of laughing natives. As immersed in Russian language and culture as I've been for 25 years, I still don't always "get it." (And what a relief to learn I'm not alone: see Alex Lane's column in this issue.) I'm sure other Anglonates will be happy to have Valeriy's compilation of Russian "common knowledge" handy. "Common knowledge" (from a Russian perspective) is the perfect term to describe the sort of information included in Valeriy's dictionary, but I lift the phrase not from his description of what he has done, but from another who has devoted years to the same endeavor. Compiling references of Russian/Soviet "common knowledge" is what our 2003 Greiss lecturer has been up to for the last several decades, as reflected in her *Russian World* and *Russian Context* (co-edited with Eloise Boyle). Although Genevra Gerhart and Valeriy are both working to remedy the same knowledge gaps, their works are quite different. Now, I wonder, are there similar works about American "common knowledge" or the minutiae of our daily life available in any of the Slavic languages?

The presentation deadline has passed for proposals for the ATA conference in Phoenix. Although it is too early to know exactly what the SLD lineup will be, from what I know of the presentations that have been submitted, it should be an excellent year, with lots of nuts and bolts presentations and workshops. Arrangements have not yet been made for our division banquet. Please contact me if you would like to assist with this process, or give input on your preferences. I have not been able to find any Slavic restaurants in Phoenix. How about Mexican?

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FROM THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

Alex Lane, Pagosa Springs, Colorado

Петька книгу читает. Чапаев подходит и говорит:

– Что за книга?

– Про летчиков...

– Как называется?

– АС Пушкин.

The first time I heard this joke, I wasn't sure I understood the punch line, so I had to have it explained to me. (Here's a hint in case you're scratching your head: "Ас" in Russian means "ace," as in a kind of pilot.) I've had many such jokes explained to me since then and confess that I still need explanations, from time to time, and I know that the same kind of confusion occurs in the minds of native Russian speakers hearing American humor. However, I can think of few other leisure activities that can yield such large benefits for linguistic and cultural comprehension (and believe it or not, for professional development) as the absorption (mastery?) of jokes, anecdotes, and riddles.

My first "organized" encounter with Russian language jokes was in the form of a thin booklet of Radio Armenia questions and answers published in the early 1970s. Many of those jokes had a political bent to them, and some required a bit more background knowledge to understand, in my opinion, than typical American political humor.

A listener asks: "What is more important than the development of communism in Armenia?"

Our answer: "The development of communism in Turkey."

Then again, I may be mistaken: non-Americans may find American humor very funny, indeed. In his book *I Owe Russia $1200,* comedian Bob Hope noted that some of the one-liners he told Soviet officials as examples of jokes he had told in America had never played to a better audience. Go figure, as they say.

Сидят два чукча на берегу Ледовитого океана. Один говорит:

– Хочешь, я тебе политический анекдот расскажу?

– Однако нет, а то еще сошлют куда-нибудь.

Indeed, I'm quite sure I would have trouble identifying specifically just what it is about exposure to humor that can give one an edge. Part of it has to do with picking up language – slang, jargon, and cant – that one won't find in textbooks or newspapers. Part of it has to do with puzzling out puns and riddles. Part of it has to do with being able to hold one's own in conversations with native speakers. Still another part has to do with getting a feel for what is considered funny in what is, for you, a "foreign" culture. Consider the following example of the genre of Штирлиц jokes, which requires quite a bit of "cultural literacy" for a listener to get the point, in my opinion:

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ANNUAL SUSANA GREISS LECTURE

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is challenged. This is exactly what Professor Heim did. He said that we accept the title *The Brothers Karamazov*, though it is bad English. *The Karamazov Brothers* would be better. He expressed hope that the latter rendition would be accepted in the next century. Similarly, the established titles for another work by Dostoyevsky, *Бесы*, are *The Possessed* or sometimes *The Demons*. Heim suggested that *Demons* – with no article – would be more accurate. The discussion of translating *Преступление и наказание* aroused the greatest interest and controversy. According to Professor Heim, the conventional *Crime and Punishment* does not work. First of all, the Russian title has a certain balance, due to the last two syllables of both words being the same. Secondly, the Russian word *преступление* comes from Old Church Slavonic and has an abstract meaning, whereas the English word "crime" is not abstract. So, Michael Heim suggested *Transgression and Punishment*, although he acknowledged that this sounds terrible.

Working with the theater is another interesting aspect of Professor Heim's diverse literary activity. He spoke about his experience working with actors during the rehearsals of the plays he has translated. One of them was *Three Sisters* by Anton Chekhov. Heim's primary concern was to speak to an American audience without Americanizing the play. He listened for the actors' mistakes, and when they inadvertently said something that sounded better or more natural to him, he accepted that rendition and thanked the actor. The actors saw him as a stand-in for Chekhov, and asked about the characters' biographies. He was aware of the fact, however, that such work with the cast could well lead to a conflict with the director. Professor Heim said that his most exciting theatrical experience was his work with the famous Russian director Lyubimov. He did stage adaptations for *Crime and Punishment* and *Master and Margarita*. One somewhat amusing cultural difference between American and Russian theatrical audiences is that an American audience will not sit in the theater as long as a Russian one will. Luckily Lyubimov was aware of this and he himself suggested making cuts.

Later in the talk, Professor Heim shared his views on the issue of style. When he translates into English, his concern is that the translation should not be too British or too American. He thus tries to make the English neutral. Professor Heim acknowledged though that he has used different dialects of English in his translation of fiction as a kind of "social marker". He mentioned this in relation to Aksyonov's novel *Island of the Crimea*. The characters in this work belong to three generations and their original language reflects this. When translating the characters' speech, Heim tended to use a more British variety of English for the older generation, while he had the younger characters speak a more American English.

At the end of his presentation Professor Heim touched upon another aspect of a literary translator's career – relationships between translators and authors. He provided two extreme examples – working with Günter Grass and Kundera. Grass sets up meetings with his translators, sponsored by his publishing house. They last three days, with 15 to 20 translators in attendance to discuss their work with the author. Grass claims that the insights of translators are better than those of critics, and perhaps most literary translators would agree. Grass makes a point of holding these sessions before he finishes the novel, so that he can incorporate ideas from his translators. Kundera, on the other hand, has a reputation for writing negative things about his translators. Heim maintained, with no objections from the audience, that when translators are regarded as collaborators the translation benefits.

When Professor Heim finished his very interesting and informative presentation the audience began to bombard him with questions. One of these was: "Is translation a lucrative business?" Maintaining his sense of humor, Professor Heim answered, "Yes, because you don't go out and you don't spend money when you are translating". Incidentally, he said he has never earned any royalties for any of his Slavic translations.

Another question asked was whether Heim had had any problems in his career because he had written fewer scholarly papers as a result of devoting himself to translation. His answer was: "I told the tenure committee of my commitment, giving them the choice of backing me or not. They did."

Larissa Kulinich is a freelance English<>Russian translator and interpreter. She holds a Ph.D. in English Philology. She also does teaching and tutoring. Larissa can be reached at (425) 821-7366, e-mail larajim@earthlink.net

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From the Assistant Administrator

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У своего дома Штирлиц увидел бездомную собаку.

– Дурашка, – позвал ее Штирлиц.

– Сам ты дурашка. Я из центра, – ответила собака.

(If you have no idea who this Штирлиц character is, then this joke had better not make any sense to you.)

There is also a pleasant side effect associated with most of this "research" material: it evokes a laugh. (Although having said that, I might offer a *caveat* to the effect that serious efforts to uncover humorous stories will result in the discovery of stupid, dumb, offensive, and simply unfunny material.)

If this kind of armchair adventure interests you, the Internet is filled with compilations of jokes of all kinds (obviously, including Russian language jokes), as well as background information (on subjects such as, well... Штирлиц). If you find any particularly good sources, drop me a line and we'll add the URL to the links page on the SLD web site.

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BEGINNER'S LUCK

Liv Bliss (perennially novice translator)
Lakeside, Arizona

You know, I am surprised by how little feedback I've received on my past three columns. I was sure that by now I would have said something to cause a flood of e-mails along the lines of "what in the world were you thinking?" and "give me a break!"

But no. And there could be several reasons for that.

1) The readers of this column are overwhelmed by my erudition and brilliance... Yeah, right.

2) The information and opinions in this column are perfect in every way... Uh-huh.

3) The information and opinions in this column are boring beyond belief... OK, then, send me some *good* ideas.

4) Nobody reads the stuff anyway.

Well that last one can't be entirely true, as I did get some mail regarding my Fall 2002 column, which touched on translator ethics in client relationships. In case you don't remember, I offered two scenarios. In Scenario 1, an end-user wanted to contract with me directly to revise a translation project that I had performed via an agency. And in Scenario 2, an end-user wanted to contract with me directly after receiving my translation sample from an agency.

With the gracious permission of the individuals concerned, I'm going to offer some excerpts from their replies. I'll keep it as brief as I can, since I expect that most of you made up your minds on what you would have done within about five seconds.

First from a contributor who prefers to remain anonymous:

Scenario 1 – option f): none of the above.

"Since the agency was your contact (and employer) for the first round of work you did for this client, I think that it would be in your best interests to stay on good terms with the agency, even while taking advantage of the client's generous offer. Perhaps you could write to the agency, summarizing the situation as you understand it: that is, that the client and agency are unable to come to a satisfactory agreement. You could state your willingness to continue working through the agency, but in light of the present situation, you are seriously considering accepting the client's offer for direct hire. Of course, you hope this will not spoil the positive working relationship you've already established with the agency, etc."

Scenario 2 – option c): refused to do a second sample but expressed my willingness to do the job.

"It seems to me you don't owe the agency anything, since they couldn't be bothered even to acknowledge your work sample, much less let you know the outcome of that job . . . I would write back expressing enthusiasm for the project and how pleased I was that she short-listed my work based on the many samples she received. I would say that, unfortunately, I'm not able to undertake another sample translation for the same project . . . but I am sending the same sample translation . . . (and if it needs revision, send a revised version, and say so). And then I'd be prepared to never hear from her again! What did you do? How did it turn out?"

It is often easier to fight for principles than to live up to them.
Adlai Stevenson

From a second contributor who wishes to remain equally anonymous:

"In both cases an important point is whether or not you ever signed an agreement with the agencies employing you that you would not agree to direct employment with a client they set you up with for some period of years. Although I suppose the ATA Code of Ethics point F ('I will respect and refrain from interfering with or supplanting any business relationship between my client and my client's client') would seem to condemn you even if you hadn't (assuming you wound up working with the clients)."

And finally, with her characteristic warmth and engagement, from **Susana Greiss,** den mother of the SLD:

Scenario 1: "When your client's client approaches you directly and bypasses the agency, the correct thing to do is close to your option d) - refuse the author and contact the agency. . . Aside from it being the right thing to do, consider this:

1) The author is acting unethically in order to save some money.

2) If they are unethical, it is entirely possible that they will promise you anything and end up by not paying you.

3) Although the implication here is that the agency will never find out and you will be a little richer, it is quite possible that the agency will find out, particularly if the job is going to be published and they will see that the text was changed.

4) Even if the author pays you as agreed, s/he may very well be a one-time client, while the agency will most likely continue to work with you and give you more work, particularly if you come clean and tell them what is going on.

5) In every situation in life, I believe that we should live by the golden rule - how would you like it if somebody did something similar to you?"

Scenario 2: "Before agreeing to do any work for this lady, paid or unpaid, I would ask her what happened with the agency and point out that you feel a certain obligation toward them. Then I would contact the agency and ask them what happened. It is possible that they did not agree on a price and the prospect was abandoned. In this case, the agency may have no objection to your accepting the job."

I'd call this option g) – none of the above.

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Сколько голов, столько умов. Great minds don't always think alike. I wish I could have quoted these replies in full, but we have to leave room for the other articles, right?

OK, then, let's wrap this up. To answer anonymous #2's implicit question – no, in neither case did I have an agreement that forbade direct engagement with the end-users of work completed or contemplated as a result of my dealings with the agency.

In fact, in Scenario 2, even the author and the agency did not have a contractual or a working relationship. That, to me, is the big difference between the two scenarios, since I believe the ATA Code of Ethics does not apply to #2, although it clearly does apply to #1. But this distinction did not influence my decision.

And to satisfy the curiosity of anonymous #1 (and the rest of you, whose tongues must be hanging out by now), this is what I did:

Scenario 1: option d) - refused the author and let Agency A know about her offer;

Scenario 2: option f) - refused any further involvement and discussed the matter with Agency B.

Maybe I was naive. Maybe I missed out on worthwhile work. But I just felt better doing it that way, and to me, that's what counts.

Now on to less potentially frazzling matters. Several months ago, while trolling the Internet with some purpose that I've since forgotten, I fell upon **The Research Cooperative - a meeting place for research editors, translators, and writers**. TRC is a "not-for-profit site designed for academic and scientific research." Its basic mission is to provide a forum for research editors, translators, writers, and proofreaders, and to connect service providers and potential clients, for volunteer or paid work. If you want to know more about TRC, check out the web site, which is at www.researchco-op.co.nz.

It's a praiseworthy initiative – and, as far as I know, an original one – although Dr. Peter Matthews, who is the site's good genius, wryly commented to me back in September that "unfortunately TRC is a site that writers do continue to live without."

The reason I mention this is that Dr. Matthews has written a poem that is posted on the site and deserves to be widely read, so I obtained his kind permission to reproduce it here. Consider it a word to the wise.

Read it! – a poem for writers

read again your Words
a Stranger to Yourself, with Best Intentions
discover the Relationships
Unintended Offspring, Orphan Facts
and Broken Promises

sleep on it
your Unmade Bed
let Dreams come, welcome Serendipity
avoid Pointless Flirtation
acknowledge Friends and Sources

Contradiction and Failure
can make You strong
face Them fairly, use Them well
Respect may foster
Unexpected Resolutions

imagine Future Readers
be remembered well, if at all
find your Own Way, with Words
then read it, again, and again
before The Letting Go

As always, comments, ideas, arguments, boxes of chocolate, and threats of physical reprisal will be welcomed and responded to in kind. Contact me at bliss@wmonline.com to find out where to send the chocolates.

Linguistic Rare Birds

Languages may be disappearing faster than birds and mammals, according to a new analysis. William J. Sutherland of the University of East Anglia in Britain evaluated the danger of extinction that all 6,809 "living" languages face using the same criteria used to determine the risk that species face of being wiped off the planet.

Sutherland determined whether the languages were "critically endangered," "endangered" or "vulnerable" based on the estimated number of speakers that still exist and the estimated rate of decline. "Languages are more threatened than birds or mammals," he concluded in the May 15 issue of *Nature*. There are 357 languages that have 50 or fewer speakers, he said.

Sutherland also found that places with a large diversity of languages also tended to have a wide diversity of birds and mammals. "And all three show similar relationships to area, latitude, area of forest and, for languages and birds, maximum altitude," he wrote. He was surprised, however, to find that there was no relationship between the time a country was settled and the diversity of language.

— Rob Stein, *Washington Post*, Monday, May 19, 2003

Slovist

Hi all:

I am back with some more material that I would like to share with you.

I was interpreting at a dinner party when one of the guests decided to tell a joke (oh well...). I am not going to tell you the joke in its entirety, just the beginning.

Стой. Кто идет?

Свои.

I paused for a second surprised finding I didn't quite know how to interpret **Свои.**

It's amazing how fast (sometimes!) the mental process works. It occurred to me that in the military the world is divided into -friends and enemies. Hence what I said was: *Halt. Who goes there?*

Friends.

Since my boss wants me to interpret everything that is said in Russian, I have to deal with lots of seemingly simple everyday set phrases and expressions. Here are some examples from my notes and suggested interpretations:

Не стой над душой/головой – *Do not crowd me*

He takes in thousands of dollars for **looking the other way**

Смотрит на это сквозь пальцы

As good as it gets

Лучше не бывает/лучше быть не может/лучше не придумаешь

I would like to discuss this project with you **in a more private setting**

... в более спокойной обстановке

Of interest:

Наконец наступил **долгожданный** день:
At last the *long-awaited* day has arrived

Не спасение от всех бед - *...is no cure-all*

This is further evidence of **growing stupidity** in this company.

Еще одно свидетельство, что *идиотизм в компании крепчает.*

How would you interpret these?

Вы меня не пугайте. Я **пуганный.**
Don't try to scare me; *I've been around, you know.*

Toast: One of the things we value about Vadim is his ability **to make a difference.**

??????????????

If somebody doesn't like me, well, **I am not his cup of tea.**

Совсем не обязательно чтобы я всем нравился/меня все любили/Если я кому-то не нравлюсь, ну и ладно.

Cheers,

RA

The Slovist can be reached at RaffiAlden@aol.com

A HOME FOR THE *SLAVFILE*

Laura Esther Wolfson

Editor's note: We have received the following gratifying message from former SlavFile *Associate Editor, Laura Wolfson.*

I recently visited Indiana University in response to an invitation by ATA member Breon Mitchell, a professor of German literature there, to speak to a group of faculty and language major and honor students about my work.

Breon is the curator of a rare book library at Indiana University called the Lilly Library and is interested in having a full set of *SlavFiles* for their archives. He is collecting translation manuscripts for scholars to study, because, according to him, this will provide a snapshot of a particular historical, cross-cultural, literary moment. I asked if he would like to have the *SlavFiles* to store there as they contain relevant materials and he said yes. I will send him a full set of what I have and I wonder if you can put him on the mailing list so that he continues to receive it.

He gave me a tour of the library, a fascinating place. Treasures among the holdings include the personal papers (letters and manuscripts) of Jack Kerouac and Ian Fleming, first editions of Oz books, James Joyce's *Ulysses,* illustrated by Matisse and signed by both him and Joyce, a *U.S. Constitution*, which had belonged to Jefferson Davies (inscribed by a subsequent owner, "This was Jefferson Davies' book. And a lot of good it did him.") and numerous other quirky marvels.

I think it would be good for the *SlavFile* to be preserved in a safe and prestigious place where scholars and other interested people may someday come in order to leaf through it. I hope you approve.

From the Editor: Needless to say, immediate steps were taken to supply the Lilly Library with an ongoing subscription to and a complete set of back issues of our marvelous and quirky publication.

INTRODUCING A NEW CONTRIBUTOR AND A NEW DICTIONARY

From the Editors: The other day, more or less out of the blue, we received some correspondence from ***Valeriy Schcherbakov****, a translator in Tula and self-described avid friend of the* SlavFile*, containing a brief Profile and telling us about the dictionary he was working on, which he introduced in the following words.*

"I am so interested in words and languages and have run into so many language-related difficulties that I have conceived the idea of compiling "a dictionary of untranslatables". Its working title is *Obscure Russian Made Clear*. It is to contain words and expressions that are known over here even to children, but can present a bewildering mystery to adult professional translators of Russian into English. I am not speaking of slang or esoteric lingo, but of people, events, common notions and phenomena that are exclusively Russian and therefore almost untranslatable into English (or any other language for that matter). What do you make for instance of *дядя Степа?* (Just a very tall man.) What does *красный угол* mean? (Two things, a place for social gatherings and a patent certificate for an invention.) What is *Армянское радио*? (An imaginary organization that gives witty answers to foolish questions.) What does *жить за 101-м километром* mean? Who are *химики*? (Nothing to do with chemistry and everything to do with the world of crime.) What are *белые мухи*? (The first snowflakes.) Why are *белые* among preferred chasers for vodka? What is the *5-й пункт*? (Indication of one's ethnic origin in questionnaires.) What is *японский бог*? (Just a mild curse). What is *халява*? This is a very popular word here, but not registered and explained in the dictionaries. What is the difference between *герой социалистического труда* and *ударник коммунистического труда*? Who is *золотарь* and who is *Вовочка*?

"Once I heard the very popular stand-up comic, Yan Arlazorov, recite one of his monologs. He uttered just one word and the house broke into uncontrollable laughter. He uttered one more and the audience was close to hysterics. However, virtually ANY foreigner, no matter how proficient he was in Russian would have remained stony faced. What to us is the fabric of life is *terra incognita* to most foreigners. I would like to help those foreigners understand us better and be able to laugh with us. This is the motivation for my dictionary, which as a matter of fact, I have already started working on. If ever it is completed I am prepared to give it for free to my interested colleagues abroad."

Well, as editors we know a good thing when we come upon it. We immediately wrote to Valeriy and proposed not only to publish his profile, but also, as a regular feature, excerpts from his dictionary, and have opened the possibility of posting sections of it, as they are completed, on our website.

SOME EXCERPTS FROM *OBSCURE RUSSIAN MADE CLEAR*, A WORK IN PROGRESS BY VALERIY SHCHERBAKOV

(from entries for numbers and the letter A)

101-й км (*Жить за сто первым километром*) Literally, to live beyond the one hundred and first kilometer, meaning be forbidden by law to live closer than 100 km from a major town (usually Moscow) after serving a criminal sentence.

57 статья Article 57 of the Stalin-era Criminal Code, mandating long sentences for short political jokes (see *анекдот*), viewed as anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda (expression of discontent, criticism of authorities, independent thinking). Millions of citizens were imprisoned on the basis of this article.

5-я статья/5-й пункт Article 5/5th Paragraph. The fifth entry in Soviet *domestic* passports calling for the ethnic origin of its holder. There is no entry for ethnic origin in current RF foreign passports for travel abroad.

6 соток 6 hundredths of a hectare (6,000 m^2), the maximum amount of land that could be legally allocated for the private use of townspeople. A considerable portion of Russia's agricultural produce (particularly, radishes and strawberries early in summer and potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers and cabbages in autumn) comes from those privately owned (without the right to sell) allotments. «6 соток» is also the name of a popular periodical for gardeners. See *дача*.

авторитет Apart from its conventional meaning (authority, influence, respect and prestige) this word is used more specifically to describe a major figure in the underworld, an actual or potential leader of a criminal group, a boss among criminals. Suggested English equivalents include kingpin, mister Big, etc.

академия A term of respectful reference to a prison among criminals.

Альфонс A gigolo, a male who lives off a woman.

амба Slang and old thieves' expression for *That's the end of it!* Other related expressions are *капут* (from German Kaput) and *каюк* or *кранты* (informal, but not rude). Another term is *хана* which means an end as in ruin, or death. *Всё, братцы, хана! Тут нас и закопают! That's the end, guys! They will bury us here.* Extremely obscene terms are also used with this meaning.

андроповка A cheap brand of vodka sold during the rule of Yuri Andropov. Another phenomenon specific to the Andropov period was *облава* —a round-up by police operatives of citizens in public places, such as shops, bathhouses, etc., with subsequent interrogation as to why these people were hanging around idly during working hours.

анекдотчик A story teller, specifically, a person sentenced to imprisonment for telling politically colored stories in the Stalinist era (see *57 статья*).

артист Usually meaning *actor*, this word can signify a highly skilled cheat, a very smart swindler, a crook involved in non-violent offenses that require some intelligence to plan and carry out. *Меня не проведешь! Я этих артистов как облупленных знаю* (see also *облупленный*). *I'll never be taken in! I know those crooks like the back of my hand!*

Why I am a Translator

Valeriy Shcherbakov
Tula, Russia

I am a translator. Why? I don't know precisely. Probably, because ever since my childhood it has astonished me that people manage to understand each other by pronouncing what sounds to strangers like perfect gibberish. Hence, when faced with the dilemma of which career to pursue, I chose foreign languages without a second's hesitation.

From sunrise till sunset—mountains of dictionaries. Zealous study and never getting enough of what your teachers had to give you (mine happened to be brilliant specialists although they worked in a provincial college).

Then work came along—and what is traditionally referred to as life, with all its ups and downs. Years passed, but my linguistic curiosity remained unsatisfied. To appease it somehow, I learned several other languages on my own, among them—I find this hard to believe myself—Japanese. Abilities? Mediocre. Curiosity? Unquenchable.

I have remained true to my first love once and for all. Thanks to English I have knocked around the world a bit. I have climbed Cheops's Pyramid and swum in the Mediterranean. I have visited the major cities of Europe and spent quite a while in the sandy deserts of Africa. I have met and worked with all sorts of people—geologists, bankers, agronomists, builders, military men brewers and nomads who were pleased with how their day had gone if they emerged from it alive and whole.

I have seen a great deal (though there is a great deal more that I haven't) and have learned much. But much woe comes with much knowledge.

In the middle of my journey through this world I lead a busy life full of struggles. A translator's services, though highly important and frequently as necessary as air, does not typically secure for him a position of authority and respect or assure material benefits. A skilled specialist, I am dependent on human stupidity and petty tyranny for my means of sustenance.

But ... I have neither wish nor inclination to change my vocation for anything more exciting. I cannot bear to part with people who are dear to me. These include Mark Twain and Somerset Maugham, George Orwell and Charles Dickens. And many other remarkable people who have become my close friends and life companions in my romance with English. I am very fond of them. They, too, have some liking for me, I imagine.

SlavFile readers, I am looking for a kindred soul (or souls) interested in language related work and wishing to learn more about Russia. I seek friendly language-related correspondence with somebody who needs help with Russian terms and translations, possibly in exchange for help with English. I can be reached at val@tula.net. Please write and introduce yourself.

Attention Ukrainian Translators:

Vadim Khazin
Contributing Editor, Ukrainian

I would like to inform you of two recent developments worth your attention:

I.

A forum of Ukrainian translators has been organized by our Canadian colleague Bohdana Badzio (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ukrainiantranslation/?yguid)

This is how she describes it:

Primarily a forum for translators to and from Ukrainian, UKRAINIANTRANSLATION welcomes queries, ideas and discussion on such topics as the practice and theory of translating and interpreting, terminology, cultural linguistics, translation software, payment practices and other items of interest to the Ukrainian translator community. Beginning translators and all those working with the Ukrainian language are also invited to participate. This group's main working languages are English and Ukrainian.

II.

Monthly seminars on Computer Linguistics have started at Kiev National Linguistics University under the guidance of Dr. Zynoviy Partyko. The software products demonstrated at these seminars included numerous online dictionaries (soon to be described in *The ATA Chronicle*) and Integrated Lexicographical System "Ukrainian Dictionaries" (a 152,000 words Dictionary of the Ukrainian language, with paradigms, synonyms, antonyms and phraseology), etc.

Contact information: partyko@uniling.kiev.ua (Dr. Zynoviy Partyko); xmas@ukr.net (Mariya Dmytriyeva, who informed us about this); web sites where materials submitted to these seminars can be found (they were not yet accessible as of this writing, but hopefully will soon be) include: www.linguistics.kiev.ua and www.franko.lviv.ua/ujcl/index_en.htm.

SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

Even in these truly ghastly times, every once in a while one can, I am delighted to report, find encouraging news in the *Washington Post*. Some weeks ago a play review I read started as follows: "'Action was never your forte, was it?' goes a line in director Sam Mendes' enthralling new *Uncle Vanya*. Though the words, in Brian Friel's, invigorating translation, are articulated by one of the play's minor characters, the question might have been posed by modern audiences to Anton Chekhov himself." How many times have any of us seen the translator being mentioned, much less praised, in the second sentence of a review? I, indeed, have read countless book and play reviews where the translator was never mentioned at all.

Several issues ago, I asked for help in translating Russian sentences or phrases ending with a clause introduced by *включая*; since I did not feel that constructions such as "I love to travel, including on business..." were acceptable in English. However, my trusty daily newspaper suggests that perhaps I was simply being too fastidious. From a recent *Washington Post*, "Food portion sizes have increased, including in people's homes..."

Vladimir Kotler has replied to another of my linguistic inquiries as follows:

Lydia, the closest equivalent of 'like' in Russian is probably 'tipa', between commas as well. Here is a trove of modern Russian teenspeak equivalents as suggested by Russian translators of 'Beavis and Butthead' TV scripts:
http://www.beavis-butthead.ru/index_startpage.htm.l

What a world we live in! Who would have thought, say 15 years ago, that today one would not even be surprised to find a Russian website devoted to this abstruse but certainly amusing topic.

The ad placed by Lynn Visson seeking examples of false friends in Russian<>English translation as well as Nora Favorov's solicitation of examples for a presentation on errors made by Slavonates in speaking and writing English has set me thinking. The example I have already submitted is *advocacy* as in *advocacy* groups. Through reading the newspaper with my advanced ESL students, I have discovered that the majority of speakers of non-English European languages whose word for lawyer stems from the same root as the English word *advocate*, interpret the expression *advocacy groups* as groups of attorneys. While intelligent readers of a foreign language can often eventually figure out from context that their interpretation of a false cognate is incorrect, at least in the articles we read, context provided no clues at all that all members of advocacy groups do not possess law degrees.

A much thornier issue is the misuse of *small* and *little*. When I first started dredging my memory for more subtle errors made by Slavonates in English, I recalled noticing nonnative uses of these seemingly simple terms. However, when I consulted with various speakers of English, they asserted that, except for idioms and such phrases as *a little* and *a small amount* there was no differences in the usage of these words. Search of various unabridged and synonym dictionaries produced much verbiage but little clarification. Finally, a Russonate friend wishing to inquire whether I was going to babysit for my grandson, asked "Will you be caring for *small Carlos* today?" Here at last was an example of a usage that other English speakers were willing to acknowledge to be not quite normal, while *little Carlos* in the same context sounds fine. Using this small (little) error as a springboard, I have come up with the following. Where the noun being modified (minimized) is already uniquely specified, *little* should be used. Thus (in my dialect, at least, which admittedly may be, and probably is, somewhat idiosyncratic) proper names are normally preceded by *little*, not *small*. A similar rule applies to possessive pronouns; one would ask "Is that your *little* (not *small*) dog?" I even find usages such as "An animal just came out of that *small* (rather than *little*) hole?" to be non-fatally abnormal. It seems that *little* is generally used to declare a noun to be a member of a class of diminutively sized (or otherwise diminished or simply cute) members. *Small*, on the other hand, refers to the relative size of things within a class otherwise defined. Thus, "my daughter is *small* (not *little*) for her age," "They serve very *small* portions," "I used to wear a very *small* (never *little*) size." Of course, it goes without saying that there are numerous contexts where either of these two terms can be used. Thinking of the distinction this way actually suggests a rather simple rule of thumb for speakers of Slavic. If you would use or be strongly tempted to use a diminutive in your own language, use *little*. If you would always use an adjective to indicate small size, use *small*. If you could go either way in your native tongue, you probable cannot go wrong with either. Readers, speakers of other languages and idiolects, please comment.

A week or so after I derived this analysis I thought of another example of nonequivalent usage. I took this as the linguistic analog of independent corroboration. Consider the word order of other adjectives used with little and small. One says, "What a cute *little* boy!" but never "What a cute *small* boy!." One would also say "She was a small, attractive woman,: but, I think, *little* is stylistically correct if the adjective order is reversed." Certain counter examples such as "What a charming *small* town" just go to prove the rule as "*small town*" has amalgamated into a single concept as proved by its use as an adjective, i.e., *small town ways* (ways characteristic of small towns, rather than small ways characteristic of towns).

To complicate the situation further the usage distribution of *big* and *large* does not seem to parallel that of small and little. I am not yet ready to tackle *big and large* in any thorough way. However, I have been thinking about the use of the term большой in the titles of dictionaries and other references books. Big or large of course would sound odd in English titles of reference books, except perhaps for children's literature (*The BIG Book of Dinosaurs*). Really large reference works are frequently referred to as *unabridged*, but since that means uncut, in theory any reference work that has not been boiled down to smaller size

is unabridged. It would be sheer hubris to refer to any reference work as *complete* – there's always one more factoid, or in this case, perhaps, lexoid somewhere. Comprehensive is of course the best solution. A search of my comprehensive book shelves reveals that this is the preferred translation for my *большие словари,* where an English translation of the title page is provided. Inexplicably, the otherwise exemplary two volume Galperin English-Russian dictionary uses *new* as the English equivalent of большой. However, the prize for the most creative translation must go to a book I just ordered, called the *Большой толковый медицинский словарь*; it proved on receipt to be a translation of an Oxford medical dictionary entitled. ***Concise*** *Medical Dictionary.*

Last Sunday I was peacefully and productively working on this column with my husband safely ensconced downstairs watching what I thought was the usual mindless line up of Sunday sports. Suddenly, I heard *Swan Lake* coming from the family room TV. I rushed down to investigate. Instead, I found he had channel surfed to a showing of the newest Western movie version of *Anna Karenina,* which was actually shot in Russia. I stayed and watched it to the end partly because the scenery was so beautiful, partly to find further material for this column, and partly to put off writing it. My TV listing tells me that this film is actually called *Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina,* I imagine to ensure that, if the venerable L.N. is peering down from his cloud, he will know this is really meant to be a riff on his novel, rather than just a use of its name.

Here is a random list of aspects of the movie I found jarring. The very minor characters, servants for instance, speak Russian (with subtitles) while the main actors speak English, except for some critical points (like the alphabetic proposal scene between Levin and Kitty) where they too speak Russian (with varying success). I suppose this is meant to convey some kind of authenticity but it more than fails in this purpose. Two of the main characters in a single conversation will place the stress on a different syllable in another character's name. The main actors are all beautiful but, to my mind, completely miscast. Vronsky looks like a poor man's Robert Redford and emotes like Al Gore. Anna is at least as girlish as Kitty, if not more so. Karenin is a handsome and debonair diplomat type, who, incidentally, abortively attempts to rape Anna, after the horserace incident. Seryozha is quite well cast but seems to look younger rather than older as the movie progresses. The actor cast as Levin is a hunkish Semitic type with soulful black eyes and a Pavarotti beard. I wonder if the casting director didn't share the impression of a friend of mine in high school who thought that the surname Levin indicated that Kostya was a "Son of Abraham." Anna loses the little girl she is carrying which, I guess, is forgivable as an attempt to simplify the plot and bring the film down to manageable size. But why then, do we subsequently see Anna babbling baby talk and apparently feeding an infant, which, a moment later, turns out to be a doll? The sign on the railroad station where Anna dies reads «ЯСНАЯ ПОЛЯНА». In the end, Vronsky goes off to the Balkans to fight the Communists (really).

On the topic of non-highly recommended English renditions of things Slavic, I received the following from Alla Toff, in response to the remarks in my last column about a book by Jonathon Foer:

"I was compelled to respond to your analysis of [*Everything is Illuminated*] in the *SlavFile*. Not only did I find the book irritating for the reasons you mentioned, I thought of it as outright phony and primitive. I listened to the book-on-tape version during a long trip and screamed out loud with indignation (good thing I was alone in the car) as I heard another butchered English phrase that did not even remotely sound like a sentence constructed by a native Russian speaker. Not only did the author know nothing of the way a Russian speaker could actually butcher English, he was clueless of the Jewish life in Ukraine at the time. For example, in one of the scenes the Jews were taken into a synagogue by the Germans. There were NO synagogues in Ukraine in 1941! Another detail: remember the scene where Alex's father was telling Jonathan about the people on a photograph they found? He said that the man with a yarmulke ("and that is how you know he was a Jew") - was his best friend - no way! Jews did not wear yarmulkes at the time. They didn't want to and wouldn't have been allowed to even if they had. Foer completely misunderstood and misrepresented the relationship that Jews and non-Jews might have had in pre-war Ukraine. Nor does he understand the Ukrainians of today. His presentation of life in Ukraine and of the people there is erroneous more often than not and based on his shallow cultural and historical knowledge. He had done absolutely no research on the subject! What shocked me even more was that not only did this book find its way into print, but was actually praised by several respected reviewers! Completely shocking! The only mitigating circumstance regarding the author himself (and he does seem to possess some literary talent) is that he was very young when he wrote it. Sorry, if I got a bit too emotional, I just had to get it off my chest!"

Any other comments on this book? It would be particularly interesting to hear from someone who liked it.

I have been translating Russian forensic reports on a particularly ghastly early 20th century murder case. I will spare you the awful details, but one thing strikes me as quite interesting from a linguistic viewpoint. In the descriptions of blood stain locations the forensic expert, who clearly has a ruler or tape measure available since some distances are reported in cm and mm, prefers to talk about *x* number of finger widths. Furthermore sizes of stains are likened to lentils, millet, buckwheat groats, kidney beans, peas, walnuts and cherries. A grimly homey touch amid the gore. After all these years as a vegetarian cook, I have finally learned my legumes in Russian.

Finally, Ted Crump has sent the following recommendation to *SlavFile* readers. "A Glossary of Russian Police & Security Service Acronyms and Abbreviations" by Dr. Mark Geleotti."14 pp. www.keele.ac.uk/depts/hi/resources/modern%20resources/PoliceGlossary-v3.pdf

Peace!

Double Jeopardy:

SLD Bilingual Game Show for Russian Translators and Interpreters

Presented at the ATA Conference by Larissa Kulinich and Steven Shabad
Reviewed by Lydia Stone

To my knowledge, no one has ever before tried to put together and run a bilingual "TV style game show" for professional translators and interpreters. Thus there is no body of expertise to help make decisions about such details as: which games are suitable for teams and which for individuals (not to mention which games are suitable at all); how much time should be allotted to each exercise, how should games be scored and what should be done in the case of a dispute; what can be done when no one volunteers to be a victim, er I mean contestant. It is thus small wonder that what was only the second such endeavor in human history contained some organizational kinks that still need to be ironed out if the event is to run as butter-smoothly as, for example, an ATA Board meeting presided over by Ann Macfarlane. However, none of these issues interfered at all with this game show's being at least as much fun as the last, thanks, primarily, to the efforts of Larissa Kulinich, ably assisted by Steve Shabad. It might be noted here that the charming Ms. Kulinich presided over the event as if she had been professionally trained for just such a métier, although no institute or *вуз* has ever been known to offer a course of studies in bilingual game show mc'ing.

The first game the presenters ran was similar to one played at our first game show. Teams of two volunteers competed to translate idioms (alternatively Russian and English) into the other language, with the winner being determined in each case by audience vote. The hitch here was that only four intrepid souls could be induced to volunteer rather than the six to eight we had been anticipating. However, this turned out not to be a disadvantage at all, as the four: Boris Silversteyn teamed with Alex Lane, and Lyudmila Razumova teamed with Emily Durakovsky (no, I promise you, I am not making up these amusingly apposite surnames) were remarkably creative with their translations and the gender composition of the two teams made it possible to play out a (bi)linguistic battle of the sexes in front of the very eyes of the audience. The teams were so evenly matched that the event was officially deemed a draw.

Here are some of the offered idioms and their translations.

English Idioms:

The squeaky wheel gets the grease. (A person who complains is more likely to have his complaints taken care of.) Contestants' translations: Кто не стучит; тому не открывают. (Literally: If you don't knock, no one will answer the door.) Под лежачий камен вода не течет. (Literally: water does not flow beneath a rock that just lies there.)

While the cat's away the mice will play. (When the person in charge is not around, subordinates take the opportunity to stop work and enjoy themselves.) Only one response is extant, but it is too good not to publish. Игумен со двора – братия в кабак. (Literally: When the Abbot leaves the premises, the monks go to the tavern.)

Russian Idioms:

Когда рак на горе свистнет. (Literally: When the crayfish whistles on the mountain i.e., never.) Responses: When Hell freezes over.... When pigs come home to roost,

Назвался груздем; полезай в кузов. (Literally: If you have claimed to be a mushroom, you had better go along with being picked and put in a basket. i.e., if you have volunteered for something don't back out just because it turns out to be more difficult than expected.) Responses: Marry in haste, repent at leisure. In for a penny, in for a pound.

***

For the next game, audience members divided up into teams of from three to five people. Each person was given a table whose columns were headed: animal, emotion, furniture, clothing, food, and profession. In each round a language was designated and an initial letter supplied. Players had to fill in each cell with an animal, emotion, etc. starting with the designated letter in the designated language. Points were allotted for being the first to complete a row and for having unique responses. The scoring got a bit chaotic, but it appeared that the winners were the team consisting of Julia Coe, Paul Gallagher, and Irina Paramonova. The most creative response this reviewer remembers hearing was телогрейка for a Russian article of clothing starting with **T.** Fringed hat was a unique entry, starting with letter **F**, in the same category for English, but was debated and voted unacceptable.

In the next game, players were asked to come up with as many translations of one English word (greedy) and one Russian word (веселый) in a short period of time. Sadly, this embattled reporter was too busy trying to catch up with her notes on the previous games to make a very good record of this one, but she does have a clear memory of Kostya Lakshin reeling off a truly impressive list of Russian greedy equivalents, which included but was not necessarily limited to: алчный, корыстолюбивый, прижимистый, жмотистый; скряжистый, скупой, скаредный.

The last game was perhaps the most amusing of all. Somehow Larissa had managed to find appropriate four line poetic stanzas in each of the two languages. The presenters read the first three lines and audience members competed to think up a winning (as determined by audience vote) fourth line. At this point there remained only enough time for two poems, but perhaps you will agree with me that the lines offered by our winners were actually superior to the poems' original endings, which are indicated in parenthesis.

В изящной Греции гетеры молодые
С толпою мудрецов сидели до зари,
Гипотезы судили мировые
(И розами венчали алтари)

Winning entry from Boris Silversteyn:
Безделушки – ну, что не говори!

Dearest creature in creation,
Studying English pronunciation.
I will teach you in my verse
(Sounds like corpse, corps, horse, and worse)

Winning entry from Paul Gallagher:
The difference between hers and hearse.

Congratulations to all winners, and my sincere apology to any that I did not mention!

Larissa, who did such a splendid job selecting material and keeping a lid on the chaos that threatens to break out from time to time when language professional start playing with words, has selflessly agreed to take on this difficult task for next year's third annual ATA game show. Anyone willing to help her with suggestions or more, should contact her at larajim@earthlink.net.

Not quite like leaving your heart in San Francisco....

SlavFile editors, not content with enlisting participation of Division members, have their whole families searching for material of interest to our readers. The other day Lydia received this e-mail from her cousin, Jaye Lunsford, who evaluates environmental statements for the US Geological Survey.

"I was reviewing an environmental impact statement for a research station the Czech republic wants to build in Antarctica. Several members of the team had done work there before and remembered it fondly. I think the translator meant to say the equivalent of "they got sand in their shoes" or "they left a piece of their hearts". But somehow it came out in print as "Several members of the team left their legs in the Arctic ice and want to return."

One can only imagine...."

Letter from Ann Macfarlane

From: Ann G. Macfarlane

To: Nora Favorov

Sent: Monday, May 12, 2003 11:19 PM

Subject: do we have a dictionary list?

Dear Nora:

This comes to ask whether the SLD has a list of suggested standard dictionaries for newcomers to get? A Russian acquaintance has put the question to me, and I thought that it might be a great thing to have in the *SlavFile*, if we haven't done it already... anyway, all suggestions gratefully received!

Ann

Ann G. Macfarlane

Dear Readers, *SlavFile* staff could, of course, publish their own lists and, perhaps, we will do so in the next issue. However, it would be much more interesting and useful to have advice from a broad section of translators. Please send us your suggestions for a top 10 (or 5 or 15) list, specify language, topic area for which the dictionary is relevant, and whether dictionaries are electronic or written on papyrus. Price and availability information would be most helpful as well. *The editors.*

My Life As a Web Detective And Other Stories

Raisa Gertsberg
Huntington Beach, California

Editor's note: With my antenna set to pick up potential SlavFile talent, I have long noticed that many of the correct and obscure answers provided to questions posted through the Yahoo Russian Translators Club came from Raisa Gertsberg. When Raisa provided me with some Russian medical terms that I urgently needed, I seized the opportunity, not only to thank her, but also to ask her to write us a profile or tell us the secrets behind her success as a "web detective." Could she, for example, share with us any "super efficient web search strategies?" She chose to combine the two topics and the following article is the result.

Like most of us, in the last few years I have been using the Internet a great deal for terminology (re)search. Just like millions (or is it already billions?) of others, I find it fascinating that one can so easily access the exploding volume of information, produced non-stop, 24:7. The bad news is that wading through this information gets tougher by the minute and translators, who remain a very special human component in the business of information processing, do feel the pain.

In too many subject areas we are expected to be able to handle, specialized dictionaries are not sufficient any more, unless, perhaps, they are electronic/on-line ones and are updated regularly. So, it is probably safe to say that all of us are forced to surf and search the web in order to extract "expert knowledge" needed for any particular project. Wouldn't it be great to have some kind of *super efficient web search strategies* that we could all use? Do we even know if such strategies have already been defined by anyone?

We can try to find out... by surfing the web. For now, we will restrict ourselves to, say, the Google search engine. We know it's a translator-friendly one, because, first, it has a language feature for searching non-English sites and, second, one of Google's founders just happens to be from Russia. So, searching Google, what might we find about *super efficient web search strategies*?

To cover all the bases, we should, in fact, perform a number of searches, including those on variations of the original term, e.g.:

1. *super efficient web search strategies*
2. *super-efficient web search strategies*
3. *efficient web search strategies*
4. *super efficient web search techniques*
5. *super-efficient web search techniques*
6. *efficient web search techniques, etc.*

Depending on the richness of one's vocabulary, the possibilities of paraphrasing can be virtually unlimited. And if you have plenty of time on your hands, you can always try using more than one search engine, since different engines may produce different results. However, when there is a time constraint – and in commercial translation deadlines are no small matter – using more than one engine may often be impractical. Hopefully, we will manage to hit the right site before we reach the point of exhaustion.

If you were to undertake this exercise, you would notice how little information is available on this particular topic. And this comes as no surprise; after all, the (re)search process cannot really be formalized to the point where it becomes applicable to any query. A strategy that may work with one query may prove to be totally useless for another one. And, of course, working with two or more languages makes it even more difficult.

Without boring you by giving more examples, I will just share some tips which, I am sure, are already familiar to most of you. They apply to searches in both languages.

1. It's a good idea to use the "advanced search" feature whenever possible. Google makes this easy by allowing a number of search phrases separated by quotation marks.

2. Once you know what your subject matter is, use its name, in quotes, as the first search term, followed by the term(s) you are actually trying to find. This approach should help eliminate any results irrelevant to your subject matter (context) upfront. If there is nothing to be found this way, make your search less restrictive by removing some less critical words from the subject matter name, one by one.

3. Variation on the above point 2. Replace the terms in question with other terms that you already know pertain to the same subject matter (context). This may bring up sites with desirable terms, as well as educate you further on the overall subject. At the beginning of a project, this may also help with future searches for the project.

4. Sometimes, it helps to use the words "glossary" or "dictionary", followed by the term(s) in question. Even if you don't hit upon any pertinent glossary containing your term, your search can still lead to other relevant sites where you may be able to come across a synonymous term and/or learn more about the subject matter.

5. Often, it helps to use both languages in a single search. Many Russian sites, especially in technical areas, use English equivalents for brand new terms if Russian terms have not yet been established. Alternatively, some Russian sites transliterate English terms. So, if you feel that either of these possibilities may be the case, try entering English or transliterated terms to search the Russian sites. You may very well find an acceptable Russian neologism in the process.

6. If you have a good grasp of the subject matter, making an educated guess often works. The process of confirming your guess by doing a subsequent search can be gratifying and even fun. Even if you are not 100% right, this may give you a push in the right direction, that is, help you find your way to the correct term or confirm that you are on the right track.

In general, I have come to the conclusion that there are a number of prerequisites for success in this particular kind of creative activity: continuous self-education in a variety of subject areas (in both languages), unrelenting curiosity, some spare time, strong reasoning and problem-solving skills, and a lot of common sense, not necessarily in that order. And aren't we lucky there are translators' forums we can turn to for help: most participants, by definition, already possess many or all the qualities required for efficient web searching and, occasionally, they also have a few minutes to help a colleague pressed for time at the moment.

Another related observation I would like to share is that the success of any re(search) depends a lot on what can be called the relative complexity level of the material. Even complex subjects can be presented virtually to any audience by maintaining the level of complexity at the particular audience's level. With translation, if the complexity level of the source text exceeds the level we are currently able to manage (for reasons such as insufficient education/experience, time required to figure things out, etc.), the success of our (re)search becomes problematic: even if we can find a term, we may not be able to evaluate its usefulness and, thus, either accept or reject it.

The concept of "complexity level" may explain why quite often we, as translators are perfectly capable of handling a variety of subject areas. And all this at a time when specialization is king, and more and more translators strive to become highly specialized, and more and more agencies include us in their databases with only two or three "subject specialties."

In my experience, it is not the subject matter per se but the particular project's complexity level that matters, and only the translator can determine whether or not s/he is up to the challenge. Just to illustrate this point, in the last month I happened to work on the following projects: a) advertising materials for a city public library; b) a NNSA [National Nuclear Security Administration] slide presentation to the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy (elimination of weapons-grade plutonium production program); c) consent form for students' immunization. Despite the seeming complexity implied by the subject area of project (b), it was actually project (a) that involved the most research on new library technologies and related terms.

"Complexity level" may cause difficulties to any translator, including highly specialized ones, because there is, obviously, no limit to the complexity of any particular subject, especially in technical areas. And specializing in a very limited number of subject areas has proven to be quite a challenge, at least for me. Prior to my decision to become a full-time translator, back in 1994, I had worked as a computer programmer for a large corporation in Chicago for four years. It seemed like a logical choice back then and the shortest way to financial stability for a family with two kids ready for college. It was also a continuation of my most recent career back in the former USSR where I had had years of experience as a software developer, among other things.

When I decided to switch to translation full-time, I thought I knew enough about computers and software in both languages to specialize in the area of software translation and localization. Right after my name appeared in the directory of the Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association I received a call from a local software localization company and was awarded a large project. It was a lot of fun and the pay was great too. Since then, I have worked on many such projects, but things have changed dramatically in the last few years.

In the US, outsourcing has become prevalent in software development in general and in software localization in particular. As a result, a great chunk of the US software localization industry, including much of its translation component, has moved to Russia, Ireland, China, India, and, undoubtedly, a number of other countries. I realized early on that specializing in this particular field alone would not keep my business afloat for long. So, I ventured into other subject areas and although some of those were highly technical, I did seem to manage and really enjoyed the challenge.

A good all-around college education was, of course, a big help. I went to a great college (now called Moscow State Pedagogical University). My majors were math and English. All sciences, including biology, physics and chemistry, were taught at the university level. In fact, some of our professors lectured Moscow State University students as well. Our graduates were to become math teachers for the limited number of Soviet schools where subjects were taught in English and a select few of us were to go abroad, to developing countries, such as Uganda, to teach mathematics.

For a variety of reasons, both personal and societal, going abroad was out of the question. By the time I graduated I had also realized I would not mind not being a teacher since by then I already had two children of my own to instruct. In any case, before we came to this country, I worked for a few data processing centers, primarily as a computer programmer but also as a technical information specialist. And for a few years I worked as a high-school math teacher, as well as an English tutor and a freelance translator on the side.

My English studies started early on, in elementary school. My first English teacher was fresh from college and her love of the English language proved to be contagious. The rest of the faculty was no less remarkable, each trying to capture our attention, each with the ambitious goal of making nothing less than a scientist, a writer, or a historian out of each one of us. I still have the best memories of my entire school experience, up to and through high school graduation. The reason for this must have been the teachers, because the school facilities were extremely old and in dreadful condition, in fact, there was no such luxury as inside restrooms, only an outhouse.

My parents were born in Moldavia (when they were born, it was still a part of Romania) and returned there after the war, so the Moldavian language (a slightly russified version of Romanian used only in Moldavia), which I also loved, was always a part of our environment, both at home and at school. Romanian derives most of its vocabulary from Latin, so it was a much bigger help in English studies than Russian. And I was lucky to have had parents who could afford to hire an English tutor for me. He was a college professor specializing in phonetics and he would torture me for hours developing what was supposed to

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become my "perfect Oxford pronunciation". But my favorite activity was attending evening English classes for adults, taught by very creative teachers and attended by eager-to-learn people, mostly senior high school students like myself.

Members of my family could speak, read and write various languages: Yiddish, Hebrew, Romanian, German, French and Italian. But in order to communicate with our distant relatives in the US they needed me, so for a number of years I had been translating correspondence in both directions. But I never had a chance to use my skills in spoken English outside of school until we arrived in this country.

Our immigration took us one whole year during which our family got stuck in Italy. Had I known beforehand we would have to spend an entire year in that country I would have attended Italian classes, but as immigrants in route we had other priorities, so I opted for free English classes instead. A rotating staff of teachers from the US taught the classes. It was my first exposure to spoken American English (and to any "live" Americans, for that matter). Very soon I realized my Oxford pronunciation would have to go if I wanted to be understood and to get a job in the States.

When we finally arrived in Chicago, the culture shock was enormous. Although our teenage kids seemed to have acquired enough English skills in Italy to start preparing for college and to land their first jobs in the US (at local fast food restaurants and supermarkets, of course), the first few months in our new country were a real struggle for us, their parents. But we were lucky enough to get good jobs, in the information technology industry, only three months later, having responded to a few dozen ads in local newspapers.

Going through job interviews was a different story altogether. One particular interviewer was from India, his accent made me wonder what language he spoke, clearly not English as I knew it. He was very nice, though, and provided an interpreter from his English to the English I could understand. Once I was hired, my interviewer turned out to be my immediate supervisor, and a very knowledgeable, helpful and friendly one at that. As the only Russian on the company's staff of several hundred, I was often visited by curious coworkers and, in the process, I had a chance to learn some useful communication skills and become familiar with various accents, as well as with important dos and don'ts of the US (corporate) culture.

Our company's CFO happened to be active in promoting ties with religious organizations inside Russia and asked me to do some translating and interpreting for him. I helped him to host a group of visiting Russians and later on translated an article written by one of the guests for the CFO's suburban newspaper. I can admit now that it was the only time in my translation career when I worked for food: I was compensated for my extra-curricular linguistic endeavors with lunches in luxury restaurants. Of course, the paychecks for my primary work duties never failed to arrive despite the fact that I had not been at my desk for days.

I could feel my spoken English was improving by leaps and bounds and when a coworker and a friend, a Korean-born women, mentioned Berlitz Language School, which she had once attended, my ears perked up and I decided to take advantage of my company's commitment to providing learning opportunities to its employees. The company paid for semi-private classes of conversational English, excellent classes that I would not have been able to afford otherwise. One of the teachers became an informal mentor who later suggested that I make a shift to the translation business.

I mailed over a hundred resumes to translation companies nationwide and started getting some translation work. And once I passed their phone interpretation test, Berlitz included me in their interpreters' pool and I started getting interpreting assignments as well, primarily for immigration court hearings. The need for Russian interpreters in Chicago in the mid-90s was clearly there since, despite the fact that I had never advertised myself as an interpreter on my resume, I was getting a steady stream of calls from agencies.

For a few years I got to interpret at legal depositions, business meetings and lunches, trade shows and hospitals. To feel more "legitimate" as an interpreter I devoured an excellent book *Fundamentals of Court Interpretation,* by R. D. Gonzalez, V. F. Vasquez and H. Mikkelson, which I highly recommend to anyone who has anything to do with interpreting. Between my interpreting assignments and before I became quite busy translating for "real" clients, I wrote and translated for a Russian-language newspaper in Chicago, translated some children's stories and magazine articles.

Becoming a staff translator has always been a dream and I applied for a position with a government agency. I did get an offer but could not accept it since it required moving to the East Coast at a time when my husband was being transferred to the West one. So, I found myself in beautiful Orange County, CA and the nature of my workload changed considerably. One of California's visitors from Russia characterized our county as "a small village between Los Angeles and San Diego." With its fast-growing population of over 3 million it hardly qualifies, but I must admit there are not that many Russian speakers here and I do occasionally regret not having learned Spanish.

The bulk of my work since we moved has been translation, occasional on-site interpreting and telephonic interpreting. And, of course, any time there is no work I feel as if I am on vacation. We take advantage of what I consider to be the best weather in the country at any given time. As opposed to our life in Chicago, we get to spend a lot of time outdoors swimming, gardening, hiking, bird-watching, touring our great State and enjoying life in general, but all that would make yet another story.

To wrap it up, although I happened to become a full-time translator later in life, I feel very fortunate to have an opportunity to do what I love and to get paid for it. I still consider my children to be one of my primary achievements and treat successes in their most impressive careers and lives as my own success. To that end, my rapidly growing and, hopefully, at least bi- or better yet, tri-lingual grandchildren awoke the poet in me. Encouraged by some of my colleagues whose poetry translation was published in previous issues of *SlavFile*, I dare to offer my first poetry translation, of two poems by Shel Silverstein (see pages 17 and 20). I would be grateful for any comments on these from readers.

Raisa can be reached at raisag@gte.net.

JEZIK U TOKU

Paula Gordon, Wilmington, Delaware

As I write this, a winter storm is raging – snow, sleet, howling wind – in the middle (at least it seemed so yesterday) of spring! It brings to mind a particular Bosnian expression: *Babije huke*. The first time I heard the expression, it was explained as "Grandma's troubles," but a more literal translation is "Grandma's rumblings," and it refers to that unsettled weather during the change of seasons from winter to spring – in one day it can be sunny, windy, rainy, snowy... sometimes all at once. The funny thing is, I grew up in this town, with this weather, and I'm sure I experienced this phenomenon every year at some point in March or April, but I never noticed it until it was pointed out to me in Bosnia and given a name.

Jezik u toku wants to hear from you! This column features the South Slavic languages – Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Macedonian, Serbian and Slovenian. Some ideas: publications and resources for translators and interpreters; translator/interpreter profiles (yours?!) and interviews; overviews or evaluations of university or professional training programs; discussions of terminology and field-specific resources; anecdotes; translation humor; short literary translations – poems preferred – with discussion of problems encountered and solutions found... We don't call it "JU tu" for nothing! Please contact me at dbaPlanB@aol.com with your ideas, drafts or finished articles.

Now, back to business...

Update on the Initiative to Establish Certain South Slavic Languages Pairs for ATA Accreditation

In this update, I will discuss two important steps taken by the Volunteer Committee for Establishing New South Slavic Language Pairs. The first is a strategic, or policy issue, dealing with the designation of the languages themselves. The second is our first survey, undertaken in order to gauge the level of interest in establishing accreditation in these languages.

BOSNIAN, CROATIAN AND SERBIAN OR "SERBO-CROATIAN"?

In the previous issue of the *SlavFile*, in the report on our activities at the ATA Annual Conference, we mentioned discrepancies between ATA online directory language options and current standards for South Slavic Languages.

Aside from obvious errors in the Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services ("Serbo" and "Slavic" listed as languages, among other anomalies), one of the questions addressed by the Committee was the use of the designation "Serbo-Croatian" (or "Serbo-Croat") as a language of the countries of the region. (Macedonian and Slovenian do not pose a problem, as they have never fallen under the "Serbo-Croatian" umbrella; also, our initiative does not address these languages or Bulgarian, the remaining South Slavic language.) The Committee recognized that our answer to this question would dictate our overall approach to establishing the new language pairs, and very likely our success or failure in this effort as well as the long-term relevance of the pairs established.

Although many still refer to the language they speak (or grew up with, or learned, or translate from) as Serbo-Croatian, the committee tried to approach the issue less from a personal standpoint than from the perspective of today's working translator, interpreter and client, as well as future students of the languages covered.

While recognizing similarities among the languages and the ability of most translators to work **from** any of the three – Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian – committee members also acknowledged that few translators would nowadays accept an assignment **into** one of the three if it weren't their dominant one. It is thus better if the client specifies the target language not as "Serbo-Croatian" – giving rise to the question of which country, or which language, or what population is being targeted – but immediately as Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian. In addition, the trend seems to be

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Band-Aids

By Shel Silverstein

I have a Band-Aid on my finger,
One on my knee, and one on my nose,
One on my heel, and one on my shoulder,
Three on my elbow, and nine on my toes.
Two on my wrist, and one on my ankle,
One on my chin, and one on my thigh,
Four on my belly, and five on my bottom,
One on my forehead, and one on my eye.
One on my neck, and in case I might need 'em
I have a box full of thirty-five more.
Bu oh! I do think it's sort of a pity
I don't have a cut or a sore!

Лейкопластырь

Перевод Раисы Герцберг

Есть на пальце у меня полоска лейкопластыря,
Еще есть по одной полоске на пятке, на коленке, на носу.
И если можете поверить, на пальцы ног налипло целых девять
Да плюс одна полоска – на глазу.
На подбородке есть одна, на шее. На локте три вместилось,
На животе – четыре, на ягодице – пять, их трудно будет снять.
Лодыжку и бедро полоски залепили,
Две – на плече видны, две – на запястьи, всего – четыре.
На лбу полоска есть, и, чтобы мне не волноваться,
В коробочке, где лейкопластыри хранятся,
Есть целых тридцать пять еще в последней пачке.
Ах, все же жаль, что у меня пореза нет или болячки!

JEZIK U TOKU

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toward ongoing development and standardization, hence further differentiation of these languages, making the designation "Serbo-Croatian" an obsolete and inaccurate term for the current and future linguistic situation.

The question was discussed among attendees of the open meeting held at the annual conference in Atlanta. Presentations by two committee members pointed out that each country of the former Yugoslavia has determined its official language(s) within its constitution and Serbo-Croatian is not an official language of any of these successor states of the SFRJ. Furthermore, the language designations of the International Standards Organization (ISO) and The U.S. Library of Congress Network Development and MARC Standards Office (Joint Advisory Committee), revised in February 2000, list Bosnian (added on that date), Croatian and Serbian, but no longer include Serbo-Croatian (struck on that date). (The full list of language designations and codes appears at http://lcweb.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/englangn.html.)

Based on this, the following recommendation was drafted for consideration by the Volunteer Committee:

> "Recommend that the ATA eliminate from all its databases, directories and documents (e.g., the Annual ATA Membership Directory, the Directory of Translation and Interpretation Services and the Directory of Language Service Companies) any other than these three (3) standard entries for "Native Language" and "Working Language":
>
> Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian [multiple entries allowed].
>
> Specifically, the term "Serbo-Croatian" shall no longer be used in any official ATA document, publication or communication related to the normative language description or language accreditation/certification, for either translation or interpretation purposes."

This recommendation was submitted to the full seventeen-member Committee for a discussion and vote, and unanimously approved after a two-week consideration period. There were no objections voiced to its being forwarded to the ATA Board of Directors.

With this recommendation, the Committee has taken the position that "Serbo-Croatian" should be removed from the list of language choices in the ATA database, and therefore has also removed it from the possible choices for accreditation.

The Recommendation was sent to ATA on 13 December 2002. On 13 March 2003, Walter Bacak, ATA Executive Director, wrote: "...We have not forgotten your request. We are just trying to group our changes to the online directories. We will make them as you requested."

This seems to indicate that the above changes (as corrections to the Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services) will eventually be made. The chairperson of the Volunteer Committee will remain in contact with ATA headquarters about the progress of these changes.

SURVEY TO GAUGE INTEREST IN ACCREDITATION

Once we established this fundamental principle – that is, that we would deal with the initiative as an attempt to establish six separate language pairs (Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian from and into English) – we were able to begin the actual work: publicizing the effort, determining interest and forming language workgroups. The Volunteer Committee created a questionnaire intended to promote our initiative, gather information from accreditation candidates and recruit more volunteers.

The questionnaire was sent to ATA members and people who responded to the ads and announcements as well as others we knew were translators or interpreters of these languages.

Results of the Survey

--Total number of questionnaires sent: 67; total number of questionnaires returned: 33 (of these, 11 respondents were not on the original mailing list)

--Breakdown of respondents' native languages: Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian 24; English 7; Other 2

--Breakdown of respondents' dominant language: Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian 14; English 18; Other 1

Pair for which respondent would pursue accreditation	as First Choice	as Second Choice
Serbian > English	12	5
Croatian > English	13	10
Bosnian > English	9	1
English > Serbian	9	2
English > Croatian	12	3
English > Bosnian	3	3

Please note that many candidates circled more than one first choice and a few circled more than one second choice, but not all candidates would consider testing in more than one language pair.

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 are continuing our efforts to document interest in accreditation, mainly through a short questionnaire. The questionnaire is available online at www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/ and http://hometown.aol.com/planbusa/questionnaire.html.

To request that a copy of the questionnaire be sent to you, or for more information, please contact Paula Gordon at dbaPlanB@aol.com.

Conclusions and Further Steps

This initial, limited-target survey indicates a high level of interest in establishing accreditation.

--A majority of respondents said they would consider testing in more than one language pair.

--A majority of respondents would prefer to take the test at the earlier date specified (2004–2005 as opposed to 2006–2010).

--A majority of respondents want to be involved in the process and signed up for workgroups (the volunteer committee has expanded from 17 to 30 members, in 5 countries).

The Survey Workgroup of the Volunteer Committee has recommended undertaking another survey targeting a wider group of recipients (via Internet and other professional organizations and publications), in order to reach the goal of 50 documented candidates for at least one direction in each language. We ask *SlavFile* readers who know of additional potential candidates in our languages to contact us so that we can send them a survey. The proposed time frame for the next survey round is April (launch date 10 April, due date 8 May). However, we encourage responses even after the proposed deadline. The survey will be posted on the SLD webpage (www.ata-divisions.org/SLD/) and on a number of public sites, including: http://hometown.aol.com/planbusa/questionnaire.html.

Also, based on responses, we have formed five workgroups, which will address specific issues and tackle the assignments necessary to guarantee the success of the initiative:

Survey Workgroup

Document interest in accreditation for all three languages; determine language pair with most interest, or language pairs that meet ATA criteria (50 candidates); provide statistical information and names of accreditation candidates to Language Chairs, especially names of people interested in being graders or passage selectors; compile resources for contacting additional candidates; establish contact with professional associations, universities, training programs.

Separate Language Workgroups for Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian

Compile reports containing information about accepted reference materials (usage manuals and dictionaries), authoritative academic institutions and language academies. Compile sample passages; draft accreditation criteria; determine level of mastery required to meet accreditation standards; draft grading guidelines; recruit graders.

Public Relations Workgroup

Inform translation companies and agencies of the effort to establish accreditation; collect information about current subject area demands, types of jobs available (share information with Language Chairs and candidates for consideration when selecting test passages); raise awareness among clients/agencies of linguistic and cultural issues. Once accreditation is established, encourage agencies to ask job seekers if they are ATA accredited. Generate continued interest in accreditation through contact with professional associations, universities, training programs. Write and submit articles about language questions and professional matters to the *ATA Chronicle*, *SlavFile* and other language-related and professional publications.

Each Language Workgroup will work at its own pace, moving to the next stage in the ATA procedure as soon as it fulfills each requirement. The Volunteer Committee and Survey Workgroup will support the Language Workgroups as long as they are actively pressing forward with the initiative. The PR Workgoup will become especially relevant once accreditation is established, and its activities are likely to extend beyond the accreditation initiative itself – publicizing the accreditation program to potential candidates and translation service purchasers.

NOTE:

For more information about the initiative, the Volunteer Committee or its activities, or to be included in future surveys (with the opportunity to volunteer), please contact Paula Gordon at dbaPlanB@aol.com. Committee members will meet at the 44th ATA Annual Conference in Phoenix – we have proposed a formal presentation and will certainly get together informally – and we encourage all who plan to attend to contact us.

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The Little Blue Engine

by Shel Silverstein

The little blue engine looked up the hill
His light was weak, his whistle shrill.
He was tired and small, and the hill was tall,
And his face blushed red as he softly said,
I think I can, I think I can, I think I can.

So he started up with a chug and a strain,
And he puffed and pulled with might and main.
And slowly he climbed, a foot at a time,
And his engine coughed as he whispered soft,
I think I can, I think I can, I think I can.

With a squeak and a creak and a toot and a sigh,
With an extra hope and an extra try,
He would not stop, now he neared the top
And strong and proud he cried out loud,
I think I can, I think I can, I think I can!

He was almost there when CRASH! SMASH! BASH!
He slid down and mashed into engine hash
On the rocks below . . . which goes to show
If the track is tough and the hill is rough,
THINKING you can just ain't enough!

Синий паровозик

перевод Раисы Герцберг

Маленький и синий, паровозик робко
Фарой помаячил, поглядел на горку.
Засвистел свистком на высокий холм
И, покраснев от жару, шепнул, пуская пар он:
«Смогу, я думаю, я думаю, смогу».

Кряхтя и напрягаясь, тащился он устало,
Сил не жалея, в горку карабкался он браво.
Подъем ему с трудом давался, но он по малу продвигался
И кашлял он, пуская дым, и тихо говорил:
«Смогу, я думаю, я думаю, смогу».

Со скрежетом и скрипом, гудя и задыхаясь,
Надеясь - и поэтому особенно стараясь,
Не останавливаясь ни на миг, вершины он почти достиг
И гордо, и громко кричал во все горло:
«Смогу, я думаю, я думаю, смогу!»

Он был почти у цели... вдруг - БУХ! ТРАХ! ТАРАРАХ! -
Скатился и разбился о камни в пух и прах...
И хоть до слез обидно, однако, очевидно,
Что если крут подъем и пару недостало,
Лишь ДУМАТЬ, что ты сможешь, явно мало!