

INTRODUCING OUR ADMINISTRATOR AND ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR CANDIDATES

Joseph Bayerl: Candidate for Administrator

I am pleased to offer my candidacy for the office of Administrator of the Slavic Languages Division. It is fair to say that I am a newcomer to the translation business, arriving here by way of a 24-year career in the US Army. The last seven of those years have been devoted to training as a Eurasian Foreign Area Officer, followed by further training and employment as a Presidential Translator (RU>EN) for the Washington-Moscow Direct Communications Link (the "Hotline"). I am a graduate of the Defense Language Institute (1988) and have an undergraduate degree in Political Science from the University of Michigan (1991) and a Masters Degree in Russian & East European Studies from the University of Kansas (2001).

Along with my military career, I have worked part-time as a freelance translator since the winter of 2003. Now, with my military retirement in July, I will be moving on to a new position as translation project manager for Language Services Associates, a mid-sized T&I company in Philadelphia. There, I will continue to author and edit some portion of the RU>EN translation work that is handled in-house and am also looking forward to immersing myself in many other aspects of translation management and the important work of client education.

I view the Administrator's role (aside from tending the books and the rolls) as one that centers on listening to the opinions and ideas of SLD members, finding the unity or, better yet, the constructive and creative harmonies among those views, and then expressing them as clearly as I can. In doing so, I take my lead from three sources: from the "Young Hegelian's," "Question everything;" from the Apostle Paul's Letter to the Thessalonians, "хорошего держитесь;" and from the wisdom of Kuzma Prutkov, "You'd best say little, but well."

What I can well say is that my greatest satisfaction in translation work has come from the relationships with my mentors and colleagues. I see the SLD as an important institution for bolstering the network of translators and interpreters working in the Slavic languages. I want to see it remain an organization that is professionally enriching and personally satisfying to all its members, and that is where I will focus my efforts.

Joseph can be reached at b@yerl.net.

Thanks to the efforts of SLD's Nominating Committee, consisting of Christina Sever and Boris Silversteyn, two very able Division members have been found to run for the administrative positions that will become open at the 2005 Conference. Although the election is uncontested, we would like to share with our readers the two candidates' statements. And, on behalf of our membership, we would like to express our gratitude to the candidates for taking on this challenge.

Elena Bogdanovich-Werner: Candidate for Assistant Administrator

I am currently a professor, freelance translator and court certified interpreter in the states of Oregon and Washington. Born and raised in Russia, I now live on a houseboat in Portland, Oregon. I earned a Ph.D in Linguistics (Germanic Languages) from Moscow Pedagogical University and have been teaching both Russian- and English-language courses and courses in applied linguistics and translation, as well as translating, editing and interpreting for thirty years. My research focuses on issues of second language acquisition and I am currently working on a book describing typical mistakes that native English speakers make when speaking Russian. *SlavFile* readers have been able to read excerpts of this book in the past two issues and will see more in upcoming issues. I appreciate being a member of ATA, NAJIT, and other professional organizations that provide the opportunity to share experience with colleagues for the benefit of the translator/interpreter profession. I would consider it a great honor to serve as the assistant administrator of SLD and actively participate in its work. In the capacity of assistant administrator, I would like to focus my attention on raising the prestige of the translator/interpreter profession through promoting professional excellence, providing educational and professional development opportunities and educating the general public about the importance of the profession.

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NUTS AND BOLTS

or, Confessions of a Lazy Translator

by Jen Guernsey

By way of introduction

This is the first of what I hope will be a regular column providing practical tips and tricks for translators. In the recent SLD survey (see the preliminary report published in the Fall 2004 SlavFile), the readership requested more practical information, i.e., "nuts and bolts," and I will do my best to oblige.

First, a few caveats. I am not an expert linguist, an expert businesswoman, an expert computer user, or really an expert anything. I work from Russian into English, I translate but do not interpret, and the works I translate are primarily scientific articles. I will share whatever knowledge I have with you, but it is limited, and my biases will certainly be evident.

So, dear reader, use this column in the same way that a good translator uses Multitran (more on this below), i.e., take everything in it with a grain of salt. My tips and tricks may work for you, or they may not. You may find them useless or adjudge them to be already common knowledge. Or you may have advice that is much better or serves a different audience. In this latter case, I sincerely hope you will pass your own tips and tricks on to me for publication in a later column.

There are so many "nuts and bolts" areas in which I would like to give, or better yet receive, advice and opinions. A few of them are formatting hints, computer tips, favorite dictionaries, techniques for finding terminology, useful software, and websites for finding work and communing with colleagues. I doubt that I will receive sufficient information on any one topic at a time to devote an entire column to a single, coherent issue. Thus, you can expect this column to be a patchwork of information. I hope you will nevertheless find something useful in it.

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WHAT IS A CERTIFIED TRANSLATION?

Virtually all of us, I suspect, have been contacted more than once with an inquiry from an anxious candidate (for citizenship or medical school, for example) as to whether or not we can produce a certified translation. I myself have never been clear as to what such a translation is, whether one has to be an ATA certified translator to produce one, and whether or not it has to be notarized, and have always asked the client to please check with the requesting agency as to what exactly is required. I would imagine that at least some of our readers have been similarly confused, especially now that the ATA has changed the name of its credential from accreditation to certification. Recently, my attention was drawn to the following definitive answer published on the website of NOTIS, the Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society, which gave us kind permission to reprint it here. LRS

What is a Certified Translation?

In the United States a certified translation consists of the following three parts

- 1). The source-language (original) text
- 2). The target-language (translated) text
- 3). A statement signed by the translator or translation company representative, with his or her signature notarized by a Notary Public, attesting that the translator or translation company representative believes the target-language text to be an accurate and complete translation of the source-language text. Sometimes this statement bears the title "Certificate of Accuracy" or "Statement that Two Documents Have the Same Meaning." Some translators will attach a Curriculum Vitae to the notarized statement.

Please note that any translator and any translation company representatives, regardless of credentials, may "certify" a translation in this way. A translator does not need to be "certified" in order to provide a "certified translation." It is also important to realize that the Notary Public seal assures only that the signature is that of the person who presented him or herself to the notary. The Notary Public is not attesting to the accuracy of the translation.

What is a certified translator?

In contrast to many other countries, in the United States there is no federal or state licensing or certification for translators. There are some credentials available to translators working in some language pairs in this country, but they do not carry the same weight—in the market place or in the translation community—as federal licensing or certification in other countries.

The American Translators Association offers translator certification in some language pairs. ATA-certified translators are required to specify the language pairs and directions in which they are certified. For example, a translator certified in German to English is not necessarily certified in English to German.

The Translators and Interpreters Guild, a national organization of independent professional language translators and interpreters, announced in September 2000 that it will be offering TTIG Certification for translators.

Please note that there are many languages for which there is no type of certification or screening available in this country. There are many excellent, experienced translators who are not accredited or certified.

In the United States it is not necessary to be certified or licensed in order to provide a certified translation for official use.

Reprinted from the NOTIS Website, www.notisnet.org.

Editor's note: After copyediting this, Christina Sever wrote, "If the information in this article is true, I wonder why almost half of my business in the last ten years has been translation of official documents that the person or agency was told had to be translated and notarized by an accredited (certified) translator, or they would not be accepted by the institution requiring the documents." I have also done certificate, diploma, or transcript translation for an agency (when I know that notarization is required), and they assure me that they will "take care of that." From the NOTIS article, it seems that that would be legal if done by the translation company representative. I have also been asked for a copy of my accreditation certificate, and I don't know if that is kosher." Good points, does anyone have any ideas or information?

The Annual SLD Banquet 8 PM, Friday, November 11 Seattle, Washington

Come join us at the Armenian Restaurant *Mirage* to enjoy good food, good company, good music and, of course, good rhymes.

We'll dance, we'll sing, we'll eat, but mostly we'll talk
(at least some of us will do more talking than eating).

To reserve your spot, please contact Nora Favorov at norafavorov@bellsouth.net.
See the fall *SlavFile* for payment and transportation details.

BEGINNER'S LUCK

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

All analogies are false.
Scott Leibs
“An Exercise in Utility”

I am not in the habit of breaking my promises, but when I do, I do it big-time and in front of as large an audience as possible. Those of you who are in the habit of remembering such things will recall that in my last column, which dealt with the identification of poor payers in our industry, I twice said that the next column would review strategies for getting paid when caught in a non-payer's toils. And on that, I was hoping for some help from my kindly readers, because so far I have not had to apply either threat or persuasion to recover delinquent receivables and thus cannot bring any depth of personal experience to bear.

The payment success stories haven't exactly been pouring in. And since I find myself particularly, and gratifyingly, busy as the Summer *SlavFile* deadline approaches, I have decided to postpone the “pay me **now**, or I'll lie on the floor and hold my breath until I turn blue” column until later.

Instead, let me offer a brief meditation on translation. I'll bet every one of us, unable to sleep in the wee small hours, has wondered—or one day will wonder—what translation is. Not what it's *for* or what it *does* or *achieves* but what it *is*. And how is this a beginner's issue? Because it's never too early to be examining what we're really doing when we produce a translation. Sure, it's a question without a single answer, but here, for your consideration, are a few ideas.

Recently, thanks to the SEELANGS list, I was steered toward “Anonymous Sources,” a paper presented by Eliot Weinberger at *Lost and Found: The Art of Translation*, the second annual International Writing Program Festival in October 2001 (what an event; I wish I'd been there). It's a wise, synoptic, often contrarian piece, which you can read in its entirety at www.iadb.org/cultural/documents/encuentros/39.PDF.

As I read on, I realized that Weinberger was peppering his text with analogies for translation and translators, even as he questioned the very need for analogy (“... one wonders why there is this need to resort to analogies: we do not say that baking is like playing the violin”). To me, analogy and metaphor are the mad uncles of language (“Love is a battlefield”? Well, then, may I suggest that you're loving the wrong person?). They can be tremendously entertaining and may encourage us to rethink some received ideas, but are probably not the most reliable source of either information or evaluation. That said, let me list some of Weinberger's juicier comparisons:

“Translation . . . is a form of listening that then changes how you speak.”

“A translator is like an actor playing a role, a musician performing a score, a messenger who sometimes garbles the message.”

“Translation is a trade, like cabinet-making or baking or masonry. It is a trade that any amateur can do, but professionals do better.”

“Translation is a kind of fantasy life.”

By sheer coincidence, I had recently discussed this very subject with a long-time colleague and tower of strength (say, now, there's a metaphor for you!), who told me that for him translation is:

a competition, both with himself and with a chorus of conflicting variant renditions;

a sweaty arm-wrestling tournament that ideally ends in the text being beaten into submission;

a mountaineering expedition that sometimes leaves him hanging by one hand over a precipice, like Sylvester Stallone in the movie *Cliffhanger*; and a game of “15”—a kind of predecessor of Rubik's cube that involves moving numbered tiles around, without prying them in frustration out of their frame, until the numbers are in order (www.holotronix.com/samlloyd15.php is a fun place to start, if you feel you're not nuts enough already).

That all sounds rather grim, but—let's be honest—for many of us, translation is not an easy or soothing gig, and we would not feel the same about it if it were.

In contrast, a friend of mind who's a mother of two with a full time job in publishing and a thriving translation business tells me that translation is her refuge, her safe place. That's a long way from mountaineering.

Me? I've had a series of different perspectives on translation over the years. In my first few months in college, it was a miracle: “You mean *this* in Russian means *that* in English?” (But why was it more of a miracle to me in Russian than it had ever been in French, German, or Latin? I have no idea.) For a while after that, it was an act of mechanical transposition: “Hey, no problem—I can do this. Just hand me that dictionary.” As the affection began to grow and I began making translations for a living, I saw it as a kind of psychic alchemy: “It goes into my eye like this, passes through my brain and heart, and comes out of the ends of my fingers like that (and do hand me that dictionary).” Now, though, I'm in the unfortunate position of seeking an almost Platonic unassailability: “There's a perfect rendition of this in the Realm of the Ideal, and if I don't find it, whatever I do will be second-rate (and where the heck is that dictionary?).”

Oh, yes. All too often, as I stare blankly at a phrase that I've been translating, correctly, as *xyz* forever but now insists on being something else—though quite what, it won't say—I wish I

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ATTENTION: NEW SLD MEMBERS, FIRST TIME CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

Leah Misbin

New to the Slavic Division? Feeling a bit nervous about plans to attend the upcoming ATA Conference in Seattle?

ATA has an excellent mentoring program, providing a way for those new to the profession to learn first hand about the field of translation and how to break into it. See the ATA website (www.atanet.org) for more information. This year, SLD will also attempt to provide a "conference mentoring" program in Seattle to pair old hands dying to share expertise with relative neophytes (to the profession, division, or conference). If you are interested in becoming a conference mentor or mentee, please write Leah Misbin at gruzinka24@yahoo.com. She will also attempt to match up roommates.

The first planned event of the conference is the general Wednesday evening reception. Even with the incentive of free and delicious hors d'oeuvres and drinks, it may be daunting to enter a crowd scene when you don't know anyone. To avoid this, Leah Misbin, SLD Newcomer Conference coordinator, and other long-time members will meet with newcomers 15 minutes before the reception starts at its entrance. We will have a CONSPICUOUS sign.

Next, come to a special Slavic Division "meet and greet" lunch, which will take place on Thursday, 10 November at 12:30. Plan to meet

other Slavic linguists at the Conference registration desk whence we will proceed together to an informal lunch location. Newcomers to the division/conference, SLD functionaries, mentors and mentees and other interested members are encouraged to take part.

Do not miss the SLD meeting, currently scheduled for Friday. At its start, newcomers and others will be asked to introduce themselves and say a little about their interests and specialties, so that people needing or able to provide help or advice can identify each other. Also, those wanting to get more than their toes wet at this conference will have ample and varied opportunities to volunteer at the meeting.

We are trying to get a head start on our planning while ATA schedules are still in a state of flux. As plans develop and/or change, we will try to send out announcements to Slavic Division members registered for the conference. Please take advantage of these great opportunities to get to know other members! Write Leah if you have any questions or suggestions.

Leah Misbin, a conference newcomer last year, worked and studied in Russia for approximately five years. She currently works as the education and events coordinator at The International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect in Chicago, Illinois. Email: gruzinka24@yahoo.com

BAFFLE BORIS: A NEW FEATURE

Exclusive to the SlavFile

Featuring Boris Silversteyn

Word, proverb, and dictionary maven, Boris Silversteyn, is one of our major divisional assets. I was chatting with him on his recent visit to Washington and remembering some of the great Russian equivalents to English proverbs he has come up with over the years at our game show and other such sessions (e.g., *Игумен со двора - братия в кабак*, for *When the cat's away the mice will play*), I asked if he could think of an equivalent to "My way or the highway!" Quick as a wink and without batting an eye he replied, "Вот бор, а вот попор!" This gave rise to the

idea for a new feature. Readers will be asked to submit modern English sayings and proverbs and Boris will be challenged to come up with Russian or Ukrainian folk equivalents as close as possible in meaning and tone. Needless to say, readers will be encouraged to comment and improve on his answers or perhaps to provide equivalents in other Slavic languages. Here are the initial list I gave him and his responses. *LRS*

P.S. Any volunteers to take up the challenge from Russian into English?

That's a no-brainer.	Это и ежу/слону/дураку понятно.
Life is what happens while you are making other plans.	Человек предполагает, а Бог располагает.
Pick on someone your own size.	Молодец против овец (а против молодца и сам овца).
Not just another pretty face.	Не для мебели.
Get your mind out of the gutter.	Каждый понимает в меру своей испорченности.
No pain, no gain.	Без труда не вытащишь и рыбку из пруда.
Go ahead, make my day.	Не лезь, а то получишь.
What part of no don't you understand?	Ты что, по-русски не понимаешь?
Cruising for a bruising.	Напрашиваться на неприятности.
Nice guys finish last.	Слабых бьют.

A GEORGIA PEACH WAS THE APPLE OF MY EYE

Genowefa Legowski

Almost three years have passed since I decided to become serious about my translation business. Since joining ATA, I attended the ATA conference in Phoenix and added many books to my reference library. I am still not where I would like to be, however, and some of the blame can be put on the tumultuous year 2004, when I had to take care of a lot of family affairs. I could not go to Toronto, but I hope I will be able to make the trip to Seattle this year. Living on the prairie, I do not have many encounters with my colleagues, so it is a must for me to participate in Internet translator discussion groups if I want to know what is going on in our world. These days, I generally confine myself to ProZ. I like the way it is structured, so that I receive messages only on problems in specialties that interest me, and my inbox does not get flooded by pointless ramblings about the culture and habits of the people living east of the Oder (Odra) River. Hardly ever is there an ego outburst or a show of “if you don’t know this you must be an idiot” attitude. There are many great and knowledgeable people on ProZ, who are very generous when it comes to helping others. This is a good place for education and observation; one can learn a lot and see what kind of problems other translators have.

Most of the Polish translators active on ProZ work in Poland. It seems that a great volume of their work comes from translating European Union documents. Many of these documents are not written by native English speakers, and sometimes the use of English words and expressions is surprising and awkward (and sometimes outright wrong), and it takes collective work to figure out the real meaning. Here is one interesting sentence: “When personal data are required to assess the health conditions or sexual nature of individual persons, the rights considered should match those of person concerned, i.e., with maximum respect for human personality and of any basic and inviolable rights.” I will deal with only one of the problems in this sentence: the use of the word “personality.” It can be translated to Polish as *osobowość* or *charakter*. It is obvious that the word “dignity” should have been used in this context. “Dignity” in Polish is *godność*. So what does a translator need to do? Correct the original in the translation and put *godność ludzka*, or translate verbatim and write *osobowość ludzka*? Apparently in Europe British English, American English, and Euro-English are all in use. I first heard about this (as a source of translation issues) a few years ago in Italy, where I was accompanying my husband to a scientific conference. One day this will be a rich research field for linguists.

I am still able to treat the translation process as an intellectual adventure, as a challenge for the brain and the resources that are stored there. Translators are multilingual people even if they work with only two languages, because each specialty

within a given language is like a different language. A non-specialist native speaker of English will have a problem understanding legalese, the jargon of any science, medical jargon, the language of financial reports, or just plain gobbledygook. Most of the time, a translator has to learn on the job, because there is always something new, something challenging. Now, with the vast resources available through the Internet, it is much easier to check facts and information and therefore to decipher what is meant in texts that are not clearly written. The most popular Internet search engine seems to be Google. In Polish there is now a word *guglować* that describes the process of looking something up on Google. If Google turns up a certain expression a few thousand times, that means it must be correct, right? Caution and a careful reading of the context are always advisable.

Ah, context! Full awareness of the context and understanding of it is probably the single most important element of a good translation. That is why only the person submitting a query to ProZ can make the final judgment regarding choosing or rejecting suggestions, because he or she knows the full text.

It is my observation that some colleagues tend to explain the meaning of certain words instead of translating them. I think that whenever the reader of the translated text will understand it and when it is not awkward in Polish, the idiomatic expression should be translated literally. Here is an example: “... as simple as 1, 2, 3, 4.” Everybody will understand, when you say in Polish: “... *proste jak raz, dwa, trzy, cztery*.” It sounds obvious, but there were other suggestions, for example: *dziecinnie proste* or *proste jak ABC*. Next is a case where a literal translation will not do: “No responsible CEO would launch a new product or make a major acquisition without first conducting methodical research. This is business 101.” Since the educational system in Poland is different from the American one, most people would not understand if a translator wrote: *To jest biznes 101, Szanowni Państwo*. Therefore some typical Polish expression for the meaning of the idiom would have to be found, something like: *To jest kardynalna zasada z abecadła biznesu*, or: *Jest to elementarna zasada w prowadzeniu biznesu*. American English can be wonderfully creative and informal. Sometimes idiomatic expressions are created *ad hoc*, and memos may be full of colorful expressions relating to culture, history, politics, and everyday life. If some of this flavor can somehow be captured in translations, the reader gets a better taste of American culture and possibly learns something new.

There is an ongoing discussion about the best place for translators to live—in the country of their native language or their second language. My opinion is that it is best to live in both. Only very talented and hard working people can learn English without a significant period of total immersion in one of the English-speaking countries. But nobody should ever assume that

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TRANSLATING GEORGIAN

Kim Braithwaite

Although most of us in the SLD translate Russian, many members also work with other Slavic languages and (rather fewer I think) some non-Slavic languages. My own non-Slavic specialty, Georgian, is spoken by about 4 million people in a country that hardly anyone in the U.S. except a few specialists ever heard of until the rise of Shevardnadze, the breakup of the USSR, and Georgia's growing visibility in the world arena. Despite its abundant 1500-year literary legacy and continuing vitality today, Georgian has never spread beyond its homeland. As a "language of limited diffusion," to say the least, it is not likely to seek ATA certification anytime soon.

What is it like to be one of the few Georgian translators in America? One might conjecture that a cozy little language niche should confer an advantage in the market. But *is* there a market? Any actual demand? Not a whole lot. Less than a tiny smidgen compared to the stacks of Russian on my desk. Because of all the interaction these days between Georgia and the outside world, especially the U.S., the volume has picked up a bit. Even so, it hardly adds much to income. Why do I translate Georgian? Because I really like it.

SF readers may recall (see "My Life in Languages: A Translator's Odyssey," *SlavFile*, Fall, 2002) that my urge to learn Georgian in the first place was not prompted by any vision of a future profession. It was an offbeat teenage hobby, a fun pursuit, an elusive quarry for many years. Even after I did learn it, in my twenties by this time, it was still just a hobby. The prospect that Georgian might become my livelihood never occurred to me—until sheer chance sent me to Washington, DC to work for the Georgian Service of the Voice of America. It marked a dramatic turning point in my life.

After I left the VOA, served my time in academia, and became a freelance translator, Russian provided the great bulk of my workflow, as it does today. There was a period, though, when I had a fascinating assignment abstracting items in Georgian periodicals. For a few years it occupied as much of my time as Russian translating did.

These days most Georgian gigs I get, via the ATA directory or word of mouth, are documents such as birth certificates, diplomas and school transcripts, or occasionally something longer and more interesting such as a scientific article. Sometimes, if I already have too many Russian deadlines to meet, I might even turn down a Georgian diploma and steer the client to someone else. But if no one wants it I'll probably sigh and say, "OK, send it over."

For most Americans, the term "Georgian" does not quite compute. It seems to induce a referential dissonance. It muddles comprehension. After all, we have our own Georgia and our own Georgians, and people's cognitive apparatus just doesn't have room to accommodate a far-off land and people with the same name. The English, of course, have their own historical and cultural response to "Georgian."

By way of contrast, consider the Armenians, who live right next door to Georgia. Even people who don't have the foggiest clue where Armenia is, or care whether Armenians have a language of their own, are usually aware that there is such a place. If you say, "I'm a specialist on Armenia," people's reaction is probably "Oh. Sure. I've heard of it."

Reactions to Georgia are different. Often in a casual gathering, if I mention that in addition to Russian I also translate Georgian, people feel compelled to respond in a humorous red-neck accent ("Sho-nuff? Well, dog my cats, you-all"), perhaps with a reference to former President Carter. I'm cool with that. I smile and chuckle at their wit.

I did get irritated one time though. It was in Tucson, where I was invited to give a lecture about Soviet Georgia. The newspaper staffer who compiled the announcements of that day's public events, straining for a cute "hook," gave my lecture the heading "Marching Through Georgia" (the title of the old American Civil War song, get it?). There was a good turnout anyway, and the people who came to the lecture asked intelligent questions afterward. The next day I phoned the staffer and explained, gently, why it was a silly and misleading stunt.

Why is it called Georgia anyway? Even the best scholars are unsure (and no, it's not because St George is the nation's patron saint). Its Muslim neighbors call it *gurjistan*, which is the ultimate source of *Грузия* in Russian.

The native word for Georgia is *Sakartvelo*, meaning "Home of the Kartveli," and I sometimes wonder if the country might gain a more solid international identity of its own under a name like Kartvelia. The adjective form, by the way, is Kartuli. When I switch fonts on my computer, EN is replaced in turn by RU and then by KA.

How about dictionaries and references? Surprisingly for a small language of limited spread, Georgian enjoys pretty fair coverage; through the years I've acquired more than 50 volumes (compared to well over 100 Russian ones). But from one to the next the quality can be quite uneven. Many of them sit on the shelf unopened for years, and a few are just plain horrible, worse than useless (don't get me started). There aren't many Georgian>English dictionaries at all. A good one that came out recently in the U.S. offers a better range of vocabulary beyond the "general" corpus than any other Georgian>English available. But it too has serious flaws and gaps.

Georgian>Georgian dictionaries are comparable to the *Ozhegov Толковый словарь русского языка* or its larger academy kin. Although they are reliable and reasonably complete—I reach for them constantly—they suffer from the same inadequacies as their Russian sisters: definitions are skimpy and too many phrasal uses are left unexplained. (Georgian aside, can't someone *please* compile a Russian>Russian dictionary that is as good as the American Heritage Dictionary of English?)

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SLAVFILE LITE: NOT BY WORD COUNT ALONE

Lydia Razran Stone

If I am even less scintillating in this column than usual, please attribute this to the fact that I have spent a great deal of the time between writing the last column and this one felled by a noxiously painful and persistent backache. During the period I was trying to get diagnosed, when I was not going off to doctors or for a series of high tech x-rays whose aggregate cost exceeded my mean annual taxable income as a graduate student (and I have the bills and old tax returns to prove it), I must have spoken to 80% of the people I know on the phone. There were several reasons for this. First, I had numerous plans and commitments to cancel; secondly, telephoning is one of the few activities that can be done for prolonged periods while lying flat on one's back; and third, I was more than a little bored. At any rate, when I mentioned my piteous condition to any of the Slavonates I spoke to, they, without exception, suggested that the disease I might be suffering from was likely to be radiculitis. On the other hand, none of the Anglonates made this suggestion or, indeed, proved later to have heard of this ailment, (which my husband refers to as ridiculosis). I confirmed that this is a "Russian disease" when I had recovered enough to stagger to my computer. In English radiculitis has approximately 1/32 of the number of Google hits appendicitis does; however, the number of listings for радикулит and аппендицит are approximately equal. When the doctor ultimately gave me a diagnosis of radiculitis, he was somewhat startled when I burst out laughing. Some years ago I published herein a list of criteria by which I knew I was developing a "Russian soul." Now, for my sins, I seem to have grown a Russian body to go along with it.

Bits and Pieces but Not the Bottom of the Barrel

A very amusing piece of verse in and about "Brightonese" can be found by searching the Web for *Прекрасно жить в свободных штатах*. I would have been delighted to reprint it here, but could not find a way to contact the author, cited on some sites as Alexander Martlin, to get permission. I do not think I am violating copyright law, if I note as further inducement to this web search, that the last line of this work is *И Пушкин стинает в гробу*.

I am fairly frequently asked to edit someone else's translation. I am perfectly willing and able to do such work, but never know what or how (by the page, word, hour?) to charge. My first impulse would be to charge by the hour, but this seems to make clients uneasy. Recently a colleague suggested I simply charge 50% of my translation rate, and if the job, while called editing, merely involves proof-reading, 25%. I fully intend to adopt this practice.

The other day, I was chatting with Nancy—the Peruvian immigrant who lived with us, off and on, for three years—about cultural differences and cultural stereotypes. As what I thought was an incontrovertible example, I cited the fact that Russians smile much less frequently than North Americans or Latinos. Nancy disagreed, saying that in her experience, Russians were

always smiling. It took me only a minute to realize the source of the discrepancy. The only Russians Nancy has had any contact with are those who have come to visit our house over the years, usually dear friends, colleagues or relatives living, for the most part, in other cities, whom we have invited for dinner, or to stay with us. Nancy is right, under such circumstances, Russians do indeed smile.

Am I the last kid on the block to figure out that a good colloquial translation of не замедлять... is "to waste (or lose) no time in..."?

It is a truism that many English speakers disbelieve anything said to them that follows the phrase "to be perfectly honest," or any person who says "Trust me!" I find I have a similar reaction to the word буквально. Thus, when a Russian speaker apologizes for being late by saying that traffic was bad, I tend to believe him; however, if I am told that it was буквально at a standstill, I am likely to surmise that the person did not leave his house until after he was supposed to be at mine.

I feel the need for yet another new word. What is the unreadable gibberish called that results when someone sends you a message in a Cyrillic your computer cannot read? How about Cyrillubish or, on the model of "word salad" (unintelligible utterances of schizophrenics), словесный винегрет or even alphabet borscht? As always, suggestions are welcome.

Attention Readers who Receive *SlavFile* in Electronic Format Only. I am happy to say that we have solved the problem that delayed the printing of last fall's *SlavFile* for several months by finding an efficient and affordable new printer. However, with the last (Spring, 2005) issue we ran into a different problem. Although the print version was delivered extremely promptly in mid-April, for reasons too technical to go into, the notification to our "electronic customers" was sent only 5 weeks later. We will work on this problem too, but in the meantime we would like to suggest that such folks occasionally check our website for the latest issue if they feel it is beginning to be overdue.

From My Extensive Archive of Unpublished Literary Translations

A former Russian noble, who had left Russia immediately after the revolution, frequently told his American-born son that the most remarkable experience a hunter could have was to go after bear in the forests of Bryansk. The son grew up to be an avid hunter, just like his father. More than once he begged his father to tell him precisely what was so wonderful about the bear hunts of Bryansk that caused him to speak of them with such affection.

His father refused to explain. "Eventually times will change. You can go over yourself, and then you'll understand."

Perestroika came. Times changed. The father had died, but the son, already a millionaire, decided to make his dream come true and find out what was so remarkable about bear hunts in the forests of Bryansk. He contacted Bryansk. He proposed to pay in dollars and an enterprising cooperative jumped at the idea. However, of course, there was a slight hitch: the last bear had been seen around Bryansk at the time of the civil war. But how could they stand to let all these dollars slip through their fingers? Capturing and transporting a bear from the steppes of the Far East was too expensive and would take too long. The American was already on his way to the Soviet Union. They contacted the circus in the next city. The circus did indeed have an old bear, who had been retired from the ring long ago. At first the circus director did not want to let him go. After all, he was like a member of the family. But the co-op members pleaded that they needed him for their photographic studio; they promised to take wonderful care of the animal and offered to pay an unheard of sum. Finally the circus sold them the bear.

They decided to bring the old bear to the forests of Bryansk in a freight train. To celebrate their forthcoming riches, the co-op members drank themselves silly in the train. The hunt was to be held the next day. In the morning the millionaire was to go hunting in his ancestral forests. Apparently, the intelligent animal, out of his long experience working with people, sensed that something was amiss, and as soon as his escorts fell asleep he escaped from the train through the improperly closed door of his cage.

In the morning the bear set out for a walk along a country road. Along came a mailman on a bicycle, minding his own business. Now, since this was the first time in his life that the mailman had seen a bear in his native forest, he jumped off his bicycle and ran into the forest, leaving his vehicle on the road. But this was a circus bear. He had not worked in the ring for a long time and he missed the excitement, so he did not hesitate long before mounting the bicycle and merrily pedaling off to meet the dawn. Just at this moment, the American millionaire emerged from the forest with his rifle. Seeing a bear on a bicycle, the hunter was astonished; when he further remarked that the bear was coming right at him, he threw up his rifle in fear. The bear took this as the ringmaster's cue for his next trick and balanced on his front legs on the handlebars.

At this moment the avid hunter understood that his father was right—the most remarkable bear hunts in the world are to be had in Russia near Bryansk.

Translated from Михаил Задорнов; *Возвращение: Путевые заметки якобы об Америке*, Москва, 1991. See the SLD website for the original of this excerpt.

A GEORGIA PEACH WAS THE APPLE OF MY EYE

Continued from page 6

the language of the country he or she left 20 years ago has remained unchanged. The Polish language has adopted many words from English, especially from computer lingo, and with capitalism and now the European Union came a new vocabulary, many words that may have just a slightly different spelling from the original. One of these words is *franszyza* from “franchise.” I really, really do not like this word and I would prefer the word I’m used to, namely *koncesja*. However, *franszyza* actually has a slightly different meaning and is probably the better choice in most situations, and therefore I will just have to get used to it.

A few days ago I spotted a title in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the most popular Polish newspaper. It read: “*Czatowali, żeby gwałcić.*” In my day *czatować* meant “to stand on the lookout.” Since *gwałcić* means “to rape,” my first understanding of the title was: “They were standing on the lookout to find the opportunity to rape.” Only when I started reading did I realize that they (some teenagers) were chatting with girls on the Internet, making dates and then raping them. In the Polish language there is now a word, *czatować* that came from “to chat.” I am pretty sure that many of the young people chatting on the Internet know only the newer meaning of the word *czatować*.

I found some real “peaches” on ProZ. Here is a challenging English sentence: “I’m telling you, that girl was a Georgia peach, and she was the apple of my eye to boot.” In this situation the literal translation would not work because there are probably many people in Poland who are ignorant of Georgia and its peaches. There was also a problem with “the apple.” It would be very shocking to say in Polish, *ona była jabłkiem mojego oka*. And how do you deal with two fruits in a description of one person? It reminded me of the Polish saying about two wild mushrooms in the borscht, meaning that sometimes there is simply too much of a good thing at one time. I believe a good translation would go something like this: “... *ta dziewczyna to prawdziwy skarb Georgii. Była moim oczkiem w głowie...*” The fruit is gone, and instead we have a treasure and a little eye in the head, which needless to say, does not make much sense in English.

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Review of *Beginning Translator's Survival Kit* by Susanna Greiss and George Fletcher

Reviewed by Olga Collin

Note: The *Survival Kit* can be ordered from: www.nytranslators.org or www.globallanguage.com. The cost is \$15 per book, and all profits go to the New York Circle of Translators.

Have you ever been asked your occupation and proudly replied, "I am a translator," only to get a polite, understanding (patronizing) smile in return followed by the remark, "That's a great job until you find something more serious!"? Well, I've found myself in such a situation on numerous occasions! The reality is, I am not looking for anything "more serious," and translation is exactly the career I want to pursue. I have a degree, some experience and the presumption that anybody would be delighted to have me on their team. But I am new to the U.S. translation market, so where do I start?

Beginning Translator's Survival Kit, by Susanna Greiss, M.A. and George Fletcher, Ed.D., was my answer. Both authors are very well known in the translation community. Greiss has been freelancing for more than 20 years, is certified by ATA in five languages and is the founder of our own Slavic Languages Division. Fletcher is the co-owner of a translation company that specializes in personal and academic document translations. He has published a number of articles and books on the Soviet Union and Latin America, where he has studied and worked.

This book is a great source of tips, suggestions, and other information everyone in the translation field—and especially those of us who are just starting out—will find extremely useful. Both authors have extensive translation experience, and they represent the translation profession from two different perspectives. The reader has a unique chance to learn from Greiss' insights gained as a freelancing professional and to explore the world of a translation company represented by Fletcher, who also shares his experiences teaching translation at New York University.

"Translation is... a profession and a business," says Greiss, articulating one of the key ideas of the book. Thus, we must perceive ourselves as professionals and translation as a business. And in order to be successful in our business, we have to be prepared and clear about our goals, about the challenges of the field, the skills required and the opportunities available. In the first part of the book she describes the initial steps anyone considering becoming a translator should take. Here are just a few of her suggestions:

- Unless you have enough financial means to support yourself at the beginning of your translation career, don't quit your job! It will take time to gain clients and build trust.
- If you don't have any formal education in translation, there are numerous courses and books offered on the subject.
- Join ATA (the earlier the better); attend national and local conferences; explore the Job Exchange at the conferences and the ATA online job bank; network, volunteer and intern.

- Have a field of specialization.
- Continue learning. There is no irrelevant information for the translator. Areas of business, finance and legal documents are of great importance.
- Find a mentor.
- If you are planning on opening your own business, work for another translation company first in order to gain some experience.

Greiss further briefly describes the present situation in the U.S. translation market. She also explores the kinds of challenges a freelancer and a translation company owner face and the different skills required. Freelancers will find useful tips, starting from the tools necessary (e.g., dictionaries, office equipment and others) to relations with clients, to professional image and (to rephrase Oscar Wilde), the importance of being honest. Among other topics discussed are the issues of charges for work done, payment/non-payment questions and special problems of dealing with clients abroad.

In the second part of the book Fletcher describes his own experiences and the hindrances he encountered on his way to becoming a professional translator, the co-owner of a translation company and a professor of translation. He provides an overview of some translation terms (such as "language," "translation," "translator" and others) and introduces a great tool that helps to determine the value of a translation and calculate a fair rate. There is also some good advice on how to get a translation job and what quality standards one should follow, derived from the translation company's point of view and followed by an example of the kind of work a translator should not do if he or she wants to receive additional projects from a company in the future.

Some of the other points discussed are:

- The mutual interests of translator and translation companies and why they should work closely together.
- Relationship building between translation company and client.
- Finding your niche and specializing.
- ATA Certification Examination as a source of professional credibility.
- Knowing the aim and the target audience of a translation.
- Acting professionally as a translator.
- The sacredness of deadlines
- The goal of client satisfaction

The second part ends with two articles written by Fletcher. The first one, entitled "How to Get Work From the City or The 62 or More Anuses Story," was originally published in *Gotham Translator* (New York Circle of Translators). This clever and funny piece proves to be quite educational regarding how to

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СЛОВ “Я” US: Update

Lydia Razran Stone

From time to time I search Amazon and Alibris for “Russian dictionary” just to see if there is anything new and tempting out there. Several months ago I noticed on the Amazon website that there was a new edition of I.I. Borisenko’s *Russian-English Law Dictionary* published in 2002, a more recent edition than the one I already had by 2 years. Although Amazon itself was charging \$106 for it, they referred searchers to two “New and Used” associates where the same book was available new for \$36 and \$39. Because I found the first edition quite useful (although I am not enough of an expert in law terminology to recommend it), not to mention the fact that I cannot resist a bargain, I ordered it. When it arrived, the new edition proved to be only approximately 6% longer than the old, although I could not swear that the font was not infinitesimally smaller in the newer version. Not content to leave it at that, especially with a column to fill, I decided to examine the listings under the initial letter “б” in both editions to see what additional words had been added. The results can be found in the box below. It is up to readers to decide whether this number and type of entries extrapolated to the whole alphabet is worth the replacement cost.

Note: Most of the additions listed are sub-entries under a head word; entries that are entirely new are indicated in boldface.

Russian	English
1. сальдо торгового баланса	1. balance of trade
2. баланс биржи	2. stock exchange balance sheet
3. консолидированный баланс	3. consolidated balance sheet
4. банковская ассоциация	4. banking association
5. банковские активы	5. bank assets
6. банковский капитал	6. bank capital
7. банковский служащий	7. bank clerk
8. банковское законодательство	8. banking law (legislation)
9. бесплатная работа	9. unpaid work
10. беспристрастное расследование	10. impartial (unbiased, unprejudiced) inquiry, investigation
11. игра на бирже	11. stock exchange speculation
12. благоприятный благоприятные вести благоприятные условия	12. favorable good news favorable conditions
13. симулировать болезнь	13. to feign sickness
14. больной вопрос	14. a sore subject
15. бона казначейские бонны	15. bond treasury bonds
16. аккредитованный брокер	16. authorized broker
17. независимый брокер	17. independent broker
18. брутто вес брутто / доход брутто	18. gross gross weight / gross proceeds
19. бум / биржевой бум	19. boom / market boom
20. гарантируемое размещение ценных бумаг	20. underwriting
21. пакет ценных бумаг	21. round lot
22. безналичные ценные бумаги	22. book entry securities
23. долговая ценная бумага	23. debt security
24. закладные ценные бумаги	24. mortgage-backed securities
25. бюджетное ограничение	25. budget constraint
26. бюджетные расходы	26. budgetary expenditures

Review of *Beginning Translator’s Survival Kit* Continued from page 10

combine a passionate idea, creativity, a sense of humor and persistence and get a job as a result. The second article, “Educational Documents: Translation or Evaluation?” (published in *ATA Chronicle*), addresses the difficulties of document translation. There are a great many valuable tips and references to sources of information, including websites and books, for further research and reference for anyone wishing to specialize in this area.

Beginning Translator’s Survival Kit will be of great use both to the beginner and the experienced translator, the freelancer and the company owner. And although some of the information might already be familiar to those who have been working in the field for a while, there are still plenty of tips left to explore. The

personal experiences of the authors, funny examples, valuable information and its compact form make this book a great reference work for everyone who has “the desire to bring the peoples of different cultures together,” as Fletcher puts it.

I was born in Ukraine and moved to the US in 2003. I now live in Deerfield, Illinois. I received an MA in Translation from the Johannes-Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. I translate from German and English into Russian and Ukrainian and also provide cross-cultural training. I am always looking for more projects. My email is: olgacollin@msn.com

DOUBLE JEOPARDY REVISITED

by Jennifer Guernsey

In the Spring 2005 issue of the *SlavFile*, I reviewed the Slavic Game Show “Double Jeopardy,” which was presented by Larissa Kulinich at last fall’s ATA Conference. As promised in that article, the answers the players came up with to the challenges presented are given below.

Alas, precious few of my colleagues, it seems, are interested in either Fame or Valuable Prizes. Truly, I should have known better. We are, after all, translators and interpreters, and though our work has its rewards, neither Fame nor Valuable Prizes are usually among them. On the contrary, we strive to be inconspicuous.

So the only response to the Game Show challenges came from a friend of mine. Here (in fulfillment of the promise of Fame) is his name in lights:

*** * * FRED GRASSO * * ***

Original Sayings	Proposed Translations
Сапожник без сапог.	A watchmaker without a watch.
	A dentist with bad teeth.
	*A shoemaker with barefoot children.
Preaching to the choir.	*Не учи ученого.
	Доказать, что ты не верблюд.
	Убеждать убежденного.
Большому кораблю большое плаванье.	Great talent breeds great accomplishments.
	*Big fish in a big pond.
	Big fish needs a big pond.
A stitch in time saves nine.	Не откладывай на завтра то, что можно сделать сегодня.
	Дорога ложка к обеду.
	*Копейка рубль бережет.
Как аукнется, так и откликнется.	Garbage in, garbage out.
	You made your bed, you lie in it.
	*What goes around, comes around.
While the cat’s away, the mice will play.	Без надзора делают, что хотят.
	Мать из дома, дитя без глаза.
	*Начальника нет, гуляют ребята. (See our new <i>Baffle Boris</i> column for another Russian equivalent of this proverb.)

The quotations from the “Switchcraft” game, in which a pair of words had been switched around, were as follows. The “confused” quotation is on the left, and the “corrected” quotation is on the right.

<i>The contract of a bigot is like the pupil of the eye; the more light you pour upon it, the more it will mind.</i>	<i>The mind of a bigot is like the pupil of the eye; the more light you pour upon it, the more it will contract.</i> —Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.
<i>Rising genius consists almost entirely of avarice and a financial market.</i>	<i>Financial genius consists almost entirely of avarice and a rising market.</i> —John Kenneth Galbraith
<i>Дозволяется делать то, что подобает, а не то, что похвально.</i>	<i>Похвально делать то, что подобает, а не то, что дозволяется.</i> —Сенека
<i>Образование делает плохого человека лучше, а хорошего – хуже.</i>	<i>Образование делает плохого человека хуже, а хорошего – лучше.</i> —Томас Фуллер

He submitted the following entries for words following the pattern of *пере_____ка*, along with definitions that reflect his background in the oil and gas industry:

1. Перекачка: Literally, re-pumping. But in oilfield terms, if memory serves, it refers to re-injecting produced water back into the reservoir.

2. Передышка: A breather or respite. In long and difficult negotiations (always inconclusive), the Russian side would call for a breather (break), usually for a *перекуп*.

3. Перегрузка: In oil transport terms, it refers to “lightering”—transferring crude oil from one tanker ship to another.

Listed below are the translations proposed by the three competing game show teams for various English and Russian sayings. The winning answers, chosen by the audience, are marked with an asterisk.

And finally, the answers to the two rebuses published in the Double Jeopardy review article are “When it rains, it pours” and “Read between the lines.”

TRANSLATING GEORGIAN

Continued from page 7

With so few Georgian>English references, having a shelf of Georgian>Russian dictionaries is absolutely essential to cover as many fields as possible. My only “general” Georgian>Russian dictionary, although pretty good, only has 20,000 entries; technical, military, medical, and other specialized references help fill the gaps.

For Georgian terms in fields lacking dictionaries, such as finance and legalese, I have devised the following technique: I parse the elements of the Georgian word or phrase and map them onto possible counterparts in Russian, make an educated guess, and look the item up in the relevant Russian>English dictionary. Imagine my glad relief when it works! At times the search has a comical quality, like a treasure hunt at a party—trick clues that lead to other clues or dead ends, retraced steps, more guesswork, hoping to find the prize at last.

There are certain notable quirks to the craft of Georgian>English translation. But first, consider this age-old elementary truth of *Russian* translation, an ingrained principle that is second nature to us: You can’t just set the English equivalents down in the same order as the Russian words and phrases. Usually you have to look farther along in the passage for the best point of entry, then find your way from there, and so on. Compared to English, the Russian word order can be terrifically convoluted. I have translated lots of Russian pieces that were crafted almost entirely in what I call “Möbius syntax. All right all right I *know* “Möbius” is a misnomer. What it does is make you skip back and forth between slippery dimensions to find points of entry and exit. It can be a diverting challenge. Or it can give you a headache!

To this maze of Möbius convolutions Georgian adds fasci-

nating kinks of its own. Rules of syntax turn certain familiar Russian and English patterns backwards and even inside out. For starters, Georgian uses postpositions instead of prepositions. Consider a Russian passage consisting of a preposition followed by several objects of the preposition, e.g. ... *после* X, Y, Z, Q, u W.... In Georgian the passage *starts* with those objects, and the postposition comes at the end, like this: ...X, Y, Z, Q, *da* W *shemdeg*. And if the objects include any long complicated noun phrases, you’ll have to look way, way down in the passage to find the point of entry. Have fun finding your way back!

Another kink: a string of connected Russian nouns in the genitive case—e.g. the X of the Y of the Z—will come out in Georgian as a string of “possessive” nouns in the *reverse* order: Z’s Y’s X. Here’s a nostalgic sample that should call up a few fond memories: *Орган Центрального Комитета Компартии Грузии* = *sakartvelos k’omp’art’iis tsent’raluri k’omit’et’is organo* (Georgian does not have capital letters, and the apostrophes mark glottalized consonants, not soft).

Finally, in most ordinary Georgian sentences the verb, which is amazingly complicated in its own right, comes last. But that’s enough quirks for now, I think. Not long ago a colleague asked me in fun, “How hard is Georgian translating? Is it brain surgery?” To which I replied in fun, “No. It’s brain *twisting*.” But, like George C. Scott in the role of General Patton surveying the carnage of World War Two, “God help me. I do love it so.”

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SlavFile’s editors invite other translators/interpreters of non-Slavic languages of the former Soviet Union to contribute articles about their work or languages.

Robert Louis Stevenson. Bed in Summer.

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candlelight.
In summer quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping in the tree,
And hear the grown-up people’s feet
Still going past me in the street.

Now does it not seem strange to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?

Зимой встаю во тьме ночи
При жёлтом огоньке свечи,
А летом мучают меня:
Кладут в постель при свете дня.

В постель кладут меня, и что же?
Я слышу гулкий шаг прохожих,
И вижу небо и нередко
В окошко вижу птиц на ветках.

Не кажется ли вам ужасным,
Когда вокруг светло и ясно
И мне так хочется играть,
Меня укладывать в кровать?

Перевод – Владимир Ковнер

Rumor has it that the readership of the *SlavFile* seldom responds to requests for reader input. However, given the strong response to last year's SLD Survey, I hope to set up a "Nuts and Bolts Survey" through which I can tap the founts of knowledge that I am certain you possess. Stay tuned for further details.

Without further ado, here are some basic techniques I have been using for online terminology research. My apologies to readers who have already advanced far beyond this level.

Multitran and Google: A match made in heaven (or at least purgatory)

I must have been living in a cave, for I learned of the online dictionary Multitran (www.multitran.ru) only about a year ago, from one of Nora Favorov's columns in the *SlavFile*. Now I can't imagine how I got along without it. These days, I whine whenever Multitran is down and I have to resort to my cumbersome paper dictionaries. I am also spoiled by the fact that Multitran can recognize a word no matter what declined or conjugated form the user enters.

Multitran's pluses consist of the vastness of its coverage (it advertises over 5 million terms), the broad base of dictionaries it incorporates, a user-friendly interface, and—my favorite part—the extensive coverage of word combinations and phrases. The interface allows searches for an individual word, several words together, or complete phrases. The individual word search automatically also pulls up all phrases incorporating that word. One can choose to display all available phrases, or—if there are hundreds or even thousands found—to pull up phrases in a specific field, such as medicine, military terminology, or even obscure topics like perfumery or yachting. Many a time, Multitran has produced satisfactory definitions where other dictionaries have failed; provided an excellent grasp of a new word by presenting a great many phrases utilizing it; and offered me better translations for familiar words, serving as a giant thesaurus.

Other helpful abilities of Multitran include displaying all declined or conjugated forms of a word; wild-card searches to find Russian or English words containing particular letters, a feature found under *Словари* on the main page and handy for deciphering those hard-to-read faxed documents; and, at the bottom of each results page, links to the sought-after word in online monolingual Russian dictionaries.

That said, Multitran does have its rather substantial downside, namely, that its accuracy is somewhat inferior to that of a good paper dictionary. The entries come from a wide variety of sources, including standard paper dictionaries, large translation projects, and entries by individual users. Humans being what they are, typographical errors or even wholesale mistranslations are not uncommon. In cases where a translator is trying to get the feel of a new word or find a better translation for an old one, such inaccuracies are generally not problematic, as they are readily recognized. However, particularly when a translator is working with completely unfamiliar terminology, it is dangerous to rely on Multitran (or even paper dictionaries) alone. That is where search engines come in.

Google: My best friend

I would be a poor translator indeed if not for search engines. Google is what I use most often for English-language searches. While Google.com and Google.ru can both perform Russian-language searches, I also use Rambler (www.rambler.ru), as it seems to be the best at finding what I'm looking for. My favorite search engine tricks are evaluating proper usage and phraseology (including verifying Multitran translations); finding background information and related articles; finding terminology lists; determining the correct spelling of proper names; breaking out acronyms; and finding the meaning of unknown words from their context.

Evaluating proper usage and phraseology. Often, I understand a Russian word or phrase but do not know how to put it correctly in English. Searches of Multitran and other dictionaries sometimes provide so many possible English translations that it is difficult to know which one is best. I find it helpful to google the likely candidates to find out which ones are used most often by native speakers in the required context.

For example, in a recent translation I encountered the phrase "климактерический синдром." According to Multitran, it's "climacteric syndrome," while in the article's abstract it was translated as simply "menopause." I googled "climacteric syndrome" and got 4,510 hits. Great, so I can use "climacteric syndrome," right?

Not so fast. A closer look at the hits reveals that they are mainly from foreign sources. Many of them have a two-letter country code (e.g., .ru, .cn, .fi) at the end of the web address instead of .com, .gov, .edu, .org, etc. And the hits that are scientific journal article citations (e.g., those from www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) had titles in brackets, indicating that they were translated into English. So I tried "menopause syndrome"—the hits were also largely of foreign origin. Then I looked up "hot flashes" and "syndrome" together and finally encountered "menopausal syndrome." "Menopausal syndrome" netted over 7,500 hits, generally from native English sources and including scientific articles. A few searches to find "menopause" and "menopausal syndrome" in online medical dictionaries revealed that while the two terms are related, they are not interchangeable.

Finding background information and related articles. When working in an unfamiliar subject area, it helps to peruse a few articles on the topic before plunging into the translation. A search using a few key words from the subject area will usually net a ton of background reading. For academic and scientific topics, limiting the search to the domain.edu can sometimes be helpful to ensure high-quality results from US academic institutions.

Finding terminology lists. A simultaneous search for several specialized terms—in English or Russian—will sometimes pull up a monolingual or even bilingual glossary in an unfamiliar subject area. Such topic-related searches recently netted me an up-to-date Russian-English military and political dictionary

(www.dcaf.ch/publications/Publications%20New/DCAF_Documents/r-e_dictionary.pdf) and a very helpful Russian monolingual medical dictionary (medomed.boom.ru/).

Determining correct spelling. Nothing confounds me more than trying to convert Chinese names from Russian to English. How should a translator render Чу Цзинь Куй in English? I googled every variant I could think of, with no results. But a Google search for the Russian transliteration netted the English one as well: Qiu Jinghui. Google searches are handy for determining the correct spelling of proper names of everything from people to places to pharmaceuticals.

Breaking out acronyms. When the abbreviations website www.sokr.ru fails, try googling an unknown acronym. Chances of finding its expansion are better if you can hazard a guess at one or more of the words it stands for (try them both in Russian and in English) and include them in the search.

Finding meaning through context. Sometimes, all dictionaries fail, particularly with expressions that have recently come into vogue. Before I pester my colleagues for assistance through an online inquiry system (e.g., the KudoZ system on www.proz.com), I try a Rambler search for the troublesome word or phrase. If hits are plentiful, it is sometimes possible to glean the meaning through the context.

Last but not least: Miscellaneous medical and scientific resources

Since a large portion of my translations involve medical research, I have run across a few helpful sites. One is the National Library of Medicine, www.nlm.nih.gov, which offers medical articles for laymen (MedLine Plus Health Information) and searchable abstracts of a wide variety of biomedical journal articles (MedLine/PubMed). The latter includes an option for searching the MeSH (Medical Subject Heading) database for medical terms and their definitions. Once a term has been found in the database, clicking on it displays all manner of related terms.

Finally, the patent database of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, www.uspto.gov, can be searched to obtain extensive background information on practically anything in medicine, science and engineering. Full-text patents are available from 1976 to the present day. If you are ever called upon to do a patent translation, first search this database as well as the Canadian (<http://patents1.ic.gc.ca/intro-e.html>) and European (www.espacenet.com/) patent offices. Searches can be performed by, *inter alia*, subject and patent number (the latter being useful for reviewing patents cited as “prior art”). On one occasion, I found the entire patent I was assigned to translate was already in English translation on the Canadian site! Of course, I didn’t charge the normal translation fee, but I earned some brownie points with my client.

As advertised, this column is a patchwork of advice covering the topics with which I am most familiar and may not be applicable or interesting for you. Please send your own tips and tricks, as well as requests for coverage of specific topics in future columns, to me at jenguernsey@att.net.

BEGINNER’S LUCK

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could go back to the time when I knew everything and doubt was only part of my vocabulary when I encountered the word *сомнение* in a source text.

“Translation,” says Robert Wechsler endearingly, in *Performing without a Stage: The Art of Literary Translation*, “is a truly multicultural event, without all the balloons and noisemakers.”

And in a blog aptly entitled “What is a Translation?” Paolo Roat of Venice Translations tells us that “you do your best work when no one realizes you have done anything. Achieving this level of translation is like walking a tightrope blindfolded during a wind storm, with people throwing heavy objects at you and shaking the rope.” That tightrope analogy seemed eerily familiar, until I remembered my mentor in Moscow, many years ago, telling me that my translations put him in mind of someone crossing a ravine on a high-wire (but not in a bad way, I hasten to add).

These are but a few of an infinity of possibilities. Yet it’s hard— isn’t it?—not to be enchanted by a profession that rouses such a rampage of explanatory inventiveness, such stalwart efforts to convey the *itness* of it, to the involved and disinterested alike. After all, translation (like life) is what you make of it.

I asked a total of four colleagues in the business about their views of translation. Two didn’t respond, either because they thought the subject was just dumb (which it may well be) or because they were too busy translating their heads off to spend time musing on anything. How about you: will you share your wisdom and insights with me and your colleagues? You will find me (if the gods of cyberspace are smiling that day) at bliss@wmonline.com.

American Translators Association 46th Annual Conference

**The Westin
Seattle, Washington
November 9-12, 2005**

**Don’t miss this opportunity to network,
meet newcomers and seasoned professionals,
market yourself and your skills,
reunite with friends and colleagues,
and have fun!**

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

SlavFile

A diner while dining at Crew
Found a rather large mouse in his stew.
Said the waiter, "Don't shout
And wave it about,
Or the rest will be wanting one too."

Человек в ресторане в Лиможе
В супе мышку увидел. О, Боже!
Официант сказал: «Тишшшь,
Не крутите так мышь,
А то все захотят её тоже».

Two Limericks by Edward Lear Translations by Vladimir Kovner

There was an old man of Peru,
Who dreamt he was eating his shoe.
He awoke in the night
In a horrible fright,
And found it was perfectly true!

Старику в городке Таганрог
Приснилось – он ест свой сапог.
Он проснулся в поту
С сапогами во рту
И вздохнул: «Да поможет мне Бог!»