

# SlavFile

May 1995  
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RUSSIAN LANGUAGE DIVISION  
AMERICAN TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION

## FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

by Susana Greiss



### THE VIEW FROM NEW YORK

The RLD East held two half-day workshops on two consecutive Saturdays, March 11 and March 18, at Eighth Avenue Studios in Manhattan. New York University no longer has rooms for us, or they won't confirm them until it is too late to notify our members. Eighth Avenue Studios is affordable, but we cannot get a room for more than 3 hours at a time. On March 11 we had a Russian into English practice test workshop, and on March 18, English into Russian. ATA provided us with vouchers in lieu of the required at-home practice test, thus saving our members \$35. There will be two ATA examination sittings in the New York area on June 3 and June 10. If you are planning to take an accreditation exam, you must be 1) a member of ATA for at least 30 days; 2) have taken the practice test, at home or at a workshop; 3) register and send your check to ATA at least 2 weeks before the date of the sitting. Don't forget to enclose your voucher with payment. If you have any questions, please call ATA directly at (703)683-6100. To find out where the sittings will take place, call (201)772-7182 (again, waiting for ATA confirmation!) Good luck to all!

On March 18, in addition to the practice test, we invited Krys Hall, an accountant who specializes in income tax returns, who talked to us about "everything a translator needs to know to keep proper records and file taxes." Krys also talked to us last year: she is very thorough and methodical. We are very thankful to her to taking the time to talk to us so close to the tax filing deadline.

We have had a number of inquiries for referrals lately, which is very encouraging. We try to spread the work around, but we need to know as much as possible about you. Robert Welsh tells me that he only received about 140 entries for our database, but at last count we had 414 members. It is hard for us to believe that our members don't want to be listed in our directory free of charge! If we don't know who you are and what type of work you do, how can we recommend you when a client calls? Wake up, guys! Fill out that form before it is too late! All you need is a first-class postage stamp to get into that directory.

As soon as possible after you receive this newsletter you will get an updated membership list. We

will do a special mailing to help you identify your colleagues. If you do not receive the list, or if the list contains wrong information about you, please let us know immediately. It is not easy to keep up with everybody, so this is one way you can help your Division.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Good news, we are putting our show on the road:** We are in the process of planning two summer meetings this year. One will be at Henry McQuiston's in Danbury, CT - an RLD tradition by now. We encourage everyone within reasonable distance to come: it's lots of fun, beautiful country, gracious host, plenty to eat, and an opportunity to make new friends and greet old ones. Oh, yes! We will also put together some good material for you, drawn from Henry's day-to-day experience, and discuss general RLD business.

**Date:** Sunday, July 9. **Rain date:** July 16. (Please check by phone with Susana Greiss or Henry; his number is (203)792-2483. **Time:** 11:00. **Where:** 159 Clapboard Ridge, Danbury, CT. It is less than 2 hours' drive from New York, and the ride is quite pleasant. If you are taking the bus from Port Authority, you should catch the 10:15 Greyhound which arrives in Danbury at 11:40. From there, call Henry for pickup (5 minutes away). Please be aware that you must buy the ticket in advance at the ticket window. The driver will not accept money. If you are driving, take the Saw Mill River Pkwy to Interstate 684 north, then Interstate 84 east to Danbury. Turn at exit 5 to Rte 39 north, about 3 miles; Clapboard Ridge is Rte 39, and Henry will put up a large sign near his entrance, so watch for No. 159 on your right and what we like to call the "dacha." *(continued on page 2)*

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**Membership**

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

Write to ATA, 1800 Diagonal Rd., Ste. 220, Alexandria, VA 22314.

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Write to Susana Greiss at above address.

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Display ad: \$25 per issue for up to

1/4 page. Send artwork to editor and payment to Susana Greiss.

**FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR** (continued from page 1)

You can also call Susana or Henry to see if you can catch a ride with somebody who is driving. If you are coming from another direction, please call Henry for instructions.

Henry's house has an absolutely gorgeous view of the valley, a patio (where we meet) and quite a bit of land, where you can pick all kinds of berries to your heart's content. We will provide containers for you to take some home. By July 9 the berries should be ripe for picking. Last year, berry picking was the highlight of the day, although Henry laid out a spread worthy of a true Russian *дачник*.

We will have a short agenda, but the main purpose of this meeting is to meet other Russian translators and network. Bring your questions, or make suggestions on what you would like to discuss in advance, so that we can be prepared for you. I have recently received lists of Russian dictionaries, and will bring copies of them to distribute.

We sincerely hope to have a nice turnout this year, so please mark your calendars right now!

**NEW: Midsummer night's dream:** Many members tell us that they would like to have a meeting closer to home. Well, New Englanders, rejoice! We are planning a meeting in the Boston area; suggested date: August 19. I would like to hear from all of you living in the area. Please fill out the questionnaire below and return it to me as soon as possible, so that we can make arrangements.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Is August 19 convenient for you for an RLD meeting in the Boston area? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, can you suggest another date? \_\_\_\_\_ Can you offer your house, or do you have suggestions as to where this meeting can be held (nearby public park, friend's house, etc)?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If no-one can offer their facilities for a meeting, would you travel to Lowell, MA (my son's house) for the day? \_\_\_\_\_. If the meeting is not held in Lowell, can you help with the planning, arrangements, and so on? \_\_\_\_\_ (If you need more space, please write on a separate sheet of paper.)

Other than getting to know each other and networking, what would you suggest for a short program for the meeting?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One possibility is to discuss how each one of you handles the translation of new E/R - R/E terms, perhaps bring your glossaries and/or your questions.

Another topic could be: Should we change the name of the Division to Slavic Language Division (pros and cons, implications of the change, etc)?

I can take written or faxed responses. (718 271-2110.) Planning takes time, so please don't delay.

## RUSSIA'S "NEW TRANSLATORS"

by John Doyle

In common speech in Moscow, "New Russian" is an increasingly pejorative label. Players in the post-perestroika economy are pushing the comrade-on-the-street down confusing alleyways. "Non-new" Russians connect the tide of foreign businesses with a continuing decline in their own country's production; joint ventures seem to them linked to the constantly rising prices of goods. When I left for St. Petersburg in July of last year, it was because my sponsor, the Canadian Bureau for International Education, had approved a proposal to work with translators and interpreters in the "northern capital" firstly, and later in Moscow itself. My goal was to talk of business methods to this group whose members, I envisaged, must be greatly benefitting from recent developments. The rise of the "New Russians," I thought, likely has been abetted by "New Translators." Perhaps it even has included them? Actualities, of course, are always more shaded.

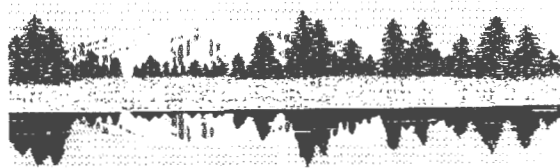
Aleksey Vladimirovich Yurasovski is a *korennoy moskvich*, a third-generation Muscovite who began interpreting twenty-five years ago, on a military posting in the Middle East. Things had gone awkwardly. His own pair was English and Russian, but English hadn't been mother tongue to any of the parties. "There simply weren't any Russian-Arabic interpreters available. But I personally enjoyed the experience, and decided that it was what I'd do after leaving the army."

At that time though, employable interpreters were those who had graduated from a prestigious foreign-language institute, perhaps as long ago as before the Great Patriotic War [WWII]. "The elite group who worked at the Foreign Ministry, for government offices, and so on, were very well paid, very snobbish, and quite isolated—self-isolated—with the desire that no one else should penetrate this small circle of gurus."

Similarly, to be a working translator in the former Soviet Union meant following one of a few well-defined routes. One career path entailed graduation from a university linguistics or philology faculty, then placement within a large institute or industrial concern. The translation needs of the workplace got assigned to these employees; training involved a gradual absorption of the vocabulary connected to their particular enterprise. The duties of the translators, who typically were low-salaried and female, were interlarded with other, usually clerical, tasks.

Alternately, scientific and technical works were much commissioned. In the view of the translators I spoke to, the assortment of, for example, specialized dictionaries published in the Soviet Union was much broader than that which was produced abroad. And the books themselves were more precise and serviceable. (The technical merit of the books produced was undercut though, by the demerits of their distribution. Locating, and especially ordering a book following its printing was a process that largely confounded even experts in scientific fields.) But the field had its own checks to employment. Work could only go to translators via VAAP, the massive government

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## THE VIEW FROM SEATTLE

by Ann G. Macfarlane

Our view is overcast this month by more than the usual Seattle drizzle. While the committee which studied the future of the University of Washington Slavic Department recommended that it be preserved, the College of Arts and Sciences has decided to eliminate the Department, along with several others. An appeal is under way, but the chances for success are not bright.

Tenured faculty will of course remain at the University, in different departments, but those without tenure, as well as the Department's support staff, will be left to find other employment. Some type of language instruction in Russian at least will be maintained by the University, but the courses in other Slavic languages will presumably not be offered. The loss of this Department will also impact adversely on the Eastern European programs of the Henry M. Jackson School, and will no doubt lessen the University's chances of obtaining Federal grants in those subject areas.

Members of the Russian Language Division have pushed hard to try to preserve the Department. As Bill Derbyshire points out in the current issue of NOTIS News, however, this is but one incident in the general discouraging trend of a "siege on Slavic studies." We regret the outcome and fear that it may not be overturned.

On other fronts, Victoria Davidova Stowe gave us a three hour workshop on "Russian Financial Terminology: Accounting" in March. Members appreciated her extensive experience, her warm personal style, and the generous materials which she provided. We have continued with our breakfasts. The Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society, which I now have the honor to serve as President, has been active in trying to ward off a wrong headed proposal by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services to "broker" language services to its clients (more about the outcome in our next issue). Finally, Division members are planning some interesting workshops for Nashville. I hope to see many of you at the ATA Convention in November.

# Письма

Editor:

I was glad to see an invitation in the February issue of the Slav File to voice our views on the proposal to change the name of the Russian Language Division to "Slavic Language Division."

I oppose such a change. It makes no more sense to lump all Slavic languages into the Russian Language Division than to merge Dutch and Swedish into the German Division or to combine Japanese with Chinese and change the Japanese Division name to Character Language Division. Such divisions would be too general and would provide no added benefit past that already provided by general linguistic associations such as the ATA.

The Russian Language Division was formed because of the need of Russian translators and interpreters for a language-specific forum. Some of the Slavic languages don't even use the same alphabet. The Russian Language Division should remain exclusively Russian. For that matter, the name "Slav File" should be changed to the "Russian File."

Tanya Gesse

Chicago, Illinois

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Editor:

With regard to the other Slavic languages, I would make the **strongest possible pitch that the current Russian Division include them. Speaking from 35 years experience teaching in Russian/Slavic departments in this country, I think it unlikely that there will ever be sufficient demand for translators of the other Slavic languages to be able to form their own separate sub-division. (The same would apply to**

translators of the non-Slavic languages of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.) Most of the Slavic languages are so close in their structures and vocabulary that there could be a great deal of valuable exchange of ideas at future meetings. I myself am competent in Slovene and Serbo-Croatian as well as Russian, and I welcome the participation of translators of all Slavic languages.... [Other suggestions for division names are] the Russian/Slavic Division, the Eastern European Division, or even the Russian and Eurasian Division. Having written the above, I state that my own preference is to be as inclusive as possible and to have a group which would welcome translators of all Slavic languages as well as those not related to the Slavs linguistically, i.e., neighboring languages or those who have had, for better or worse, historical ties with the Russian empire such as Hungarian, Armenian, etc. Finally, although I very much dislike the idea of giving prominence to the name of just one language in a title, for practical reasons I also believe it is necessary to highlight the word Russian. I would therefore propose the following title for the current Russian group: Russian and Eastern European Division. None of the titles proposed above have much pizzaz, but each is plain, simple, and conforms to common usage in academia and the public and private sectors. Whatever new name the Russian Language Division takes on, it should be one that clearly identifies it as that arm of ATA which concerns itself with the languages east of the German speaking territories up to, let us say, the Ural Mts.

I hope that the preceding is of help in your deliberations.

William W. Derbyshire

Somerset, New Jersey

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Editor:

ATA is now examining its structure and looking at possible by-laws changes. One proposal calls for geographical representation on the Board of Directors. But as the globe shrinks, we can see how interest groups are becoming the dominant principle for representation, not geography. I have more in common with a Russian-English translator who works in New York than an English-Spanish interpreter who works here in Austin. If Board seats are allocated, the principle might focus on Division representation in a governing body. In any event, I believe the Divisions will grow in importance with regard to ATA itself, and especially in terms of useful services they can provide. That is why we should carefully define and name ourselves....

Russian is the primary working language for a large body of ATA members. Although we may also translate other Slavic languages and other languages of the former USSR, the term best describes the majority interest. We focus our energy on Russian, but we can and do support other languages. Ukrainian translators, for example, have entries in the division's directory and present sessions at workshops and conferences; indeed, they are now working to establish ATA accreditation examinations for Ukrainian translators. The RLD's current "big umbrella" policy will support and publicize the activities of its members, but these activities will be conducted by those who work with the specific language.

On the other hand, if we want to encourage active participation by those who work with all Slavic languages, it is only natural that we call ourselves the Slavic Language Division. This does not detract at all from the majority

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# Письма

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working with Russian, but merely acknowledges that our interests go beyond that one language.

The division has had a de facto policy of inviting other-than-Russian linguists to join and participate. Why not make this policy explicit in our name? Our newsletter is already called the *Slav File*. Polish translators, for example can more readily identify with a Slavic Division than a Russian Division. We might expect a small growth in membership by being more openly inclusive. And there is strength in numbers.

On consideration, I believe I will vote for "The Slavic Language Division." Russian translators have nothing to lose, and by acknowledging all the translators and interpreters within our linguistic family, the division has much to gain.

Mike Conner  
Austin, Texas



## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

by Christina Sever

With a fairly meager, though heartfelt response to the question posed in the last issue regarding the Division's possible name change, I feel compelled to add my two kopeks to the discussion, by registering my opinion as heartily approving a change to the Slavic Language Division. And I see no reason to restrict it to Cyrillic-alphabet Slavic languages. There is no compelling reason **not** to be open to all the languages of our family, and there are many advantages. The consequences of coming out from under Communist regimes gives us much more in common in terms of our work as translators and interpreters than just the language family itself. The ATA does not now accredit translators of any but Russian and Polish. Until that problem is solved, we can provide a home for the rest of the Slavic translators. There are many of us who work in more than one Slavic language, and that number will probably increase given the explosion in travel, trade, and communication. I myself am learning Ukrainian intensively right now, and have done a little work with Croatian.

## О, великий, могучий, свободный русский... изнвидж

Наташа Гейльман

Опубликованное в 4-м выпуске *Slav File* письмо в газету «Аргументы и факты» привлекает внимание к проникновению в русский язык огромного числа иноязычных терминов. Хотелось бы обратить внимание еще на один факт, не способствующий сохранению чистоты русского языка: это характерное для многих иммигрантов вкрапление в русскую речь английских слов и конструкций. То и дело приходится слышать: "Он берет английский и математику" (вм. "он занимается английским и математикой"), она имеет хороших детей" (вм. "у нее хорошие дети"), "не знаю, если я смогу пойти" (вм. "не знаю, смогу ли я пойти"). А как часто звучат вокруг фразы типа: "У него замечательный иншуранс" (почему не "страховка"?), "Я аплаивала на работу" (почему не "подавала заявление"?), "У них юзана я машина" (почему не "подержанная"?), или "Мы купили это на сейле с таким дискаунтом!" (почему не "на распродаже с такой скидкой!").

Пишешь все эти английские слова русскими буквами и сердце кровью обливается! А ведь именно такую речь слышат дети, которые и так-то, к сожалению, во многих иммигрантских семьях последней волны теряют русский язык легко и слишком быстро.

Безусловно, американская жизнь настолько отлична от жизни в России, что для многих здешних понятий просто нет русских слов, так как не было и соответствующих реалий. Смешно было бы настаивать на употреблении сочетаний "высокоскоростная дорога" вместо "хайвей" или "центр города" вместо "даунтаун", так как это далеко не одно и то же. Заимствование подобных слов в русский язык обогащает его, так же, как обогащается английский, заимствуя такие русские слова как "borsch" или "kasha", что далеко не то же самое, что "beet soup" и "hot cereal". Но использование английских слов там, где в этом нет необходимости, — нелепость. Вот какой разговор между подростками я нечаянно подслушала в доме своих друзей:

- Маш, ты имеешь время? Выброси этот мешок в гарбидж.
- Не знаю, если я смогу это сделать. У меня большой эсаймент. А потом, заботься сама о своем гарбидже.

Страшноато? По-моему, просто жутко! И первое что, по-моему, можно и должно нам всем делать в этой ситуации — это следить за своей речью, помня, что наши дети невольны нас копируют.

### От редакции:

Эта проблема не нова и была подмечена еще в 1925 году Маяковским. Стихотворение «Американские русские» приводится на странице 10.



## UKRAINIAN — AN EMERGING MARKET?

by Igor Vesler

The telephone is ringing. "Hello, is this Igor? My name is John Anybody from the XYZ Corporation. Are you a Russian translator? Excellent. We have an agreement that needs to be translated into Ukrainian. Are you available?"

This is a conversation I have had many times. Sounds good, right? Except that nobody would be likely to ask a Swahili translator to work with a text in Urdu. But until very recently the Ukrainian language has been widely considered – at least among the general public – to be just another dialect of Russian. This was not purely a matter of linguistic literacy. Historically and geographically, Ukraine was a part of the former Soviet Union for a long time, and the language of all business and trade with Ukraine has been predominantly Russian, which, to a great extent, contributed to the creation of such a peculiar stereotype.

Today, American businesses are increasingly exploring new opportunities in Ukraine. The number of American law firms and trade and industrial companies establishing offices in Ukrainian cities has tripled over the last three years. The recent approval of the IMF loan to Ukraine, U.S. assistance in dismantling the Ukrainian nuclear weaponry, and numerous joint projects are adding to a steady growth in this trend. As a translator, I can measure this growth by the number of requests for Ukrainian translations: from 8 in 1990 to 72 in 1994. (Besides, it definitely is not pure coincidence that an article on government involvement in the translation business was written in the October 1994 *Chronicle* by Mr. Edward J. Salazar, the U.S. Department of State's Desk Officer for Ukraine!)

However, things are changing much more slowly in language than in the economy. All such changes are not always positive: presently, the Ukrainian language, even though it's gradually getting back to its roots, suffers from the same contagious disease Russian does by borrowing mostly English terminology and phraseology. (Reading Ukrainian newspapers is still a tough business for me: sometimes I think that it would be much better if certain articles were written in English.) Although this probably makes life easier for Ukrainian-into-English translators, the opposite is not true. Ukrainian business, trade, and financial terminology and phraseology, which started developing in 19th century, have been all but forgotten. The situation is aggravated by the fact that for more than 60 years the Ukrainian language has experienced strong pressure from the language of "Big Brother," i.e. from Russian (which itself has been grossly distorted and spoiled by ideological clichés and

communist phraseology). Borrowing Russian words and expressions became so common that a special, and very contemptuous, Ukrainian word – *surzhik* – was coined for that weird Russian-Ukrainian slang.

Unfortunately, the apparent proximity of the Russian and Ukrainian languages creates a false impression that any Russian translator who spent some time or even lived in Ukraine can handle English-Ukrainian work. Quite often here in the U.S. translators accredited by ATA in English-Russian language combination can't resist temptation and, armed with only a school English-Ukrainian dictionary and a vague idea of what real Ukrainian language is supposed to sound like (save for grammar, style, and special terminology), accept assignments into Ukrainian. The results are shameful: I once witnessed some Ukrainian officials diligently try several times to read one such 'translation' and finally asked their American counterpart to give them the English original to have it translated by a local translator. In other cases I received requests from translation agencies to review Ukrainian translations, and in most cases these were so poor that no editing was possible. Such cases damage the reputation of real professionals, in particular, and that of our profession, in general.

At the recent ATA convention in Austin I was a moderator of the Ukrainian business and legal terminology workshop. After having had the pleasure to meet colleagues and work with them, I've come to the conclusion that there are so many highly experienced and professional Ukrainian translators actively working with Ukrainian language that the time has come to establish an accreditation exam in English-Ukrainian and Ukrainian-English language pairs. This is not just a matter of showing respect to a language more than 50 million people currently speak. With its geographical location, well-developed industry, and a large number of trained specialists, Ukraine is becoming increasingly attractive for foreign (and, in particular, American) investors. This creates a new market for translation and interpretation services requiring professionals whose credentials are validated by ATA accreditation.

Recently the *SlavFile*, the newsletter of the Russian Division, spread a message for those who would support this idea. Since then, I have received a dozen phone calls from Ukrainian translators, but we need more! Please call me at 718-853-5030 or fax your comments and suggestions as well as contact data (very important!) at 718-435-8530 (24 hours a day).

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The ATA Chronicle*

## TRANSLATING CZECH IN THE UNITED STATES

*by Dagmar Kotlandova Koenig (Seattle, Washington)*

Translators of less well-known languages living and working outside their own country face a number of unique issues. Competing in a small pool for too few jobs, limited access to linguistic resources, and lack of standards for evaluating qualifications and skills can make for a challenging, and sometimes a hard life.

I am currently in the process of establishing myself as a translator of Czech in the United States. The Pacific Northwest is not a high-demand region for Czech. Since my heritage is Czech, however, and I love translating Czech and English, I decided to conquer the problem of the "wrong location" by developing contacts all over the U.S. and my own country.

Since I have an appropriate degree from Charles University in Prague, and teaching and translating experience in the Czech Republic, I thought establishing myself would not be difficult. After several months of market research, though, I have discovered that the name "Charles University" does not mean much to most people here. Clients sometimes cannot distinguish between speaking Czech or Slovak as a native language, and having the relevant education and experience to do the job. It seems often impossible for local administrators to evaluate a potential translator's skills properly without any American certification procedure.

The situation is slowly improving as the profession is growing. The Department of Social and Human Services of the State of Washington, for example, is establishing standards for interpreters in a number of languages (Czech is not yet among them, however). I welcome this development, and hope that the process of increasing requirements for qualifications and skills of all interpreters and translators will continue.

Most translation and interpreting work in Czech is done in the Czech Republic, of course, where opportunities abound these days. Translation of English has a long and strong tradition with Czechs, and it has never been easy to break into. The once small and tight pool of serious, professional translators is growing, however, both inside and outside the country.

Even with the current professional boom, when increasing quantity does not always mean the best quality, one must still work hard, and have an excellent knowledge of both Czech and English, in order to succeed. Equally high standards should be maintained outside the Czech Republic. Certification

testing should be established in the United States and Canada. Perhaps ATA accreditation tests in Czech and in Slovak would be a worthy pursuit at this time, paying off later for the increasing numbers of clients in these languages.

Lack of professional resources is another difficulty. There are many good dictionaries published in the Czech Republic, but there are still gaps. Legal terminology is a good example—I have still not been able to find a good legal terminology dictionary for English and Czech. Many professionals are working on it, though. I heard recently that such a dictionary might be on the way from a team of translators working for an American law firm stationed in Prague.

In recent years much has been published in business and technical terminology, and some of these resources are available through international bookstores in the U.S. Some promising dictionaries are available on computer, though they are rather costly. I am diligently working on compiling my own glossaries in the fields in which I work, mostly legal, medical and business terminology. I would be happy to exchange notes and ideas with anybody who is interested and has something to share.

My conclusion for anyone trying, like me, to become a serious full-time translator and interpreter of Czech in the United States is that there is a long way to go. But the translation profession is like that: first a long period of investing in skills and equipment, with little return until after years of dedicated work. T.G. Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia, used to say that any Czech who wants to be successful in a foreign country must work twice as hard as the locals. He certainly knew what he was talking about!

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NEW YORK, NY 10017.**

copyright agency which authorized and commissioned all translations from within its own ranks.

Literary translators also, or even especially, constituted an authorial mafia. Dima, who tried breaking into that field several times since the late 1960s, sees a division to the literature that formerly was translated into Russian. "I think that it was the achievement of, say, the two previous generations to have translated all classical [i.e. Greek or Latin] literature at a very high level." But of those who provided books translated from Russian to English, "there were a few masters among them, [but mostly] they all seemed the same to the reader—the same language, the same expressions, the same curses, and so on." Dima's colleague in translation concurs: "There were ten to fifteen of them, fostered at this institute, and they didn't give any work to anyone else. Their views and sympathies, their idea of languages—of both the Russian and English languages—took the same, purely Victorian form. Very starchy, high-brow, decent, and polite. In other words, old farts."

In the late 1980s, official translators did become affected by changes inaugurated by perestroika. As the Soviet government began stopping down on its foreign language publications VAAP began to founder. Predictably, then came moves to establish two or three associations with the right to qualify interpreters and translators. But by this time, most "outsiders"—i.e., most translators or interpreters—viewed such efforts as an attempt by insiders to guarantee their privileged positions in the newer, less secure market.

These associations continue on, not as registered societies, but rather as informal means for levying professional "accreditation only at the highest level." No one is ever invited to join, and their activities in Moscow are largely unknown to translators outside of their very select circles.

VAAP itself disintegrated when the Soviet Union collapsed. But Russia is still a hyper-literate nation where a never-ebbing flood of translated works gets carried forth to readers. (Television and radio in Russia is a polyglot's paradise. TV viewers get to watch, for example, German or Swedish movies dubbed into Italian, with subtitling in English or French, topped off with studio overdubbing by Russian "actor-interpreters.") Everyone recognizes that the books and magazines sold at bookstores, in markets, on street stalls—everywhere in the cities—are of uniformly low literary value. The problem now is centred in market economics.

Dima's professional résumé, with its many twists and turns, illustrates well what problems translators must contend with. "After the mid-1970s, when I decided not to work for the state, I had to combine

translating from English or French, with teaching at home. At the time of perestroika, I tried to become a literary translator. I translated several detective novels. It was very interesting and I liked it very much." But even at ten to fifteen typed pages per day, it turned out that it was easier to earn money by teaching. This was at a time when many private firms sprang up, teaching crash courses to adult learners. (Of this period he notes: "Perhaps I am one of those responsible for the fact that now so many people here know English that they don't need many translations.")

After three-and-a-half years of teaching, high taxes were taking too much of a teacher's salary, so he returned once more to translating. There had been a similar mushrooming in the early 1990s of small 1- or 2-persons translation bureaus in Moscow. Most of these have since folded, also killed off by "taxes, racketeering, or the high rents for offices."

Consequently, most requests for translations come to Dima from the fewer, larger firms that remain. Clients are mainly businesses seeking translations into English. The topics are very varied, from telecommunications or mobile phones to legal texts such as contracts and agreements. His per page fees are \$10 US; for interpreting he charges \$50 per day. This is about six or seven times what an average or state employed worker makes, or a university professor for that matter.

Working translators aren't loath to admit that the translations being provided to their commercial clients are of wildly varying quality. But they don't foresee that a society or accrediting body... soon will be formed. "There would be no point in applying any rules because they won't work. The demand is too high you see. Let's let the market develop."

Short-sighted? Yes, from over here. Pressing translators further on this question of how to assure quality, the response that is ventured seems to me so reflective of our differences, that it might serve as a key to understanding the prevailing approach to the profession "over there."

Nothing is final with translation. If your English or Russian isn't sufficiently good, why not learn it better? You've got all the chances of becoming an expert in two or three years. It's just diligence and patience, that's all. It makes me optimistic, because even a very bad translator can become a very good one in two or three years. Or four or five. If he is diligent and he knows what he wants.

*Reprinted with permission from TRANSLetter  
newsletter of the Society  
of Translators and Interpreters of British Columbia*



## INSURING YOUR HOME TRANSLATION BUSINESS

Translators in Seattle have looked into liability or omissions and errors insurance, but that is not the focus here. Free-lance translators generally work from their home. Not all self-employed people think of the risks involved in their home office, but the recent winds and floods should make us all think again. Not only your living quarters but also your livelihood could be ruined. A lawsuit could wipe you out financially. A thief might not take your dictionaries, but he might vanish with your computer and other office equipment.

Some translators might feel special insurance will cost too much. But you might find the coverage you need for as little as \$15 to \$50 a year. A more comprehensive policy might cost \$75 to \$400.

Because home-business insurance is relatively new, to find the insurance you need, it is important to call two or three agents to learn what is offered. You may have four options.

Your current homeowner's or renter's insurance does not necessarily cover the contents of your office. It typically protects \$1000 to \$2,500 worth of business equipment and \$250 for a loss off-premises (stolen from your car, for example). The equipment is insured against the risks named in your policy, like fire, theft, windstorm and so on—but not flood (that comes only under federal flood insurance) and not if your toddler dumps spinach into your laser printer. There's no protection against lawsuits, and no income-replacement if your business shuts down because of damage to your home.

Nevertheless, simple home-owner's insurance may be sufficient for a one-person translation business. Read your policy to see what's covered. Strictly speaking, business computers are often excluded. But if you

also use it for games, balancing your checkbook and other personal matters, the insurer may accept it as covered personal property.

You might add a traditional rider to your policy. You can raise your home-business coverage limits to protect equipment worth up to \$10,000 or \$15,000 and \$1,000 or \$1,500 off-premises. There may also be riders for limited types of liability, like injury to customers at your home — but not for broad business risks like false advertising. Cost range for a rider could be around \$10 to \$15 a year, and perhaps \$40 for a package of several protections.

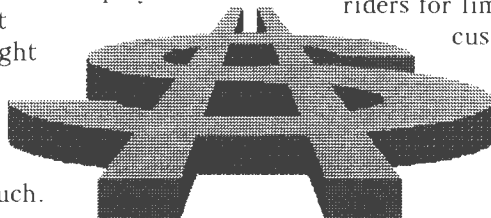
A separate business owner's policy covers the works: loss of equipment, computer files, business property, cash up to \$5,000 or \$10,000, a broad range of business-liability risks and off-premises losses of equipment worth over \$15,000.

If your translation business shuts down because of damage to your home, you can be reimbursed for up to 12 months of lost income. Price range for a typical home-office package with a \$250 deductible from State Farm Fire and Casualty Co: \$150 to \$250 a year in a big metropolitan area.

Specifically designed for today's home-based businesses, the mini-business owner's coverage is a stand-alone policy. RLI Insurance has an In-Home Business Insurance Program and Fireman's Insurance has a Home Enterprise Program.

One of these four types of home-business insurance ought to be right for you. Just ask an insurance agent what is best for your needs.

*Summary by Radlex  
Reprinted with permission from  
NCTA Translorial*



### НОРКА У НОРКИ

*А. Шубаев*

Норка	Если в норке
Вылезла из норки	Нету норки,
И пошла	Может, норка—
К знакомой норке.	Возле норки?
В норку норкину	Нет нигде.
Вошла,	Пропал и след.
Норку в норке	Норка — здесь,
Не нашла.	А норки — нет.

*Из книги «Точка, запятая  
(веселые стихи о грамматике)»*

## Wanted

### Translator & Interpreter Profiles

Please send us a couple of paragraphs telling informally who you are to help bridge the distance separating our members.

**SlavFile**

*Американские русские*

Петров Капланом  
за пуговицу пойман.  
Штаны заплатаны,  
как балканская карта.  
«Я вам, сэр,  
назначаю апойнтман.  
Вы знаете, кажется,  
мой апартамент?  
Тудой пройдете четыре блока,  
потом судой дадите крен.  
А если стриткара набита,  
около можете взять  
подземный трен.  
Возьмите с менянем пересядки тикет  
и прите спокойно, будто в телеге.  
Слезете на корнере у дрог ликет,  
а мне уж и пинту  
принес бутлегер.  
Приходите ровно в севен оклок,—  
поговорим про новости в городе  
и проведем по-московски вечерок,—  
одни свои: жена да бордер.  
А с джабом завозитесь в течении дня  
или раздумаете вовсе —  
тогда обязательно  
отзвоните меня.  
Я буду в офисе».  
«Гуд бай!» — разнеслось окрест  
и кануло ветру в свист.  
Мистер Петров пошел на Вест,  
а мистер Каплан — на Ист.  
Здесь, извольте видеть, «джаб»,  
а дома «цуп» да «цус».  
С насыпи язык летит на полном пуске.  
Скоро только очень образованный француз  
будет кое-что соображать по-русски.  
Горланит по этой Америке самой  
стоязкий народ-оголтец.  
Уж если Одесса — Одесса-мама,  
то Нью-Йорк — Одесса-отец.

[1925]

ATA REFERENCE LIST

ARTS & HUMANITIES

Bibliography  
Biography  
Education  
History  
Humanities  
Information & Library Sciences  
Interpreting  
Journalism  
Linguistics  
Media  
Pedagogy  
Political Science  
Religion & Philosophy  
Theology & Scripture

Art

Architecture  
Art (includes visual & performing arts)  
Magical Arts  
Music and Musicology

Behavioral Sciences

Anthropology & Archaeology  
Criminology & Penology  
Psychology & Psychiatry  
Sociology

Literature

Literature — Children's  
Literature — Fiction  
Literature — Non-Fiction  
Literature — Poetry  
Literature — Theater  
Literature — Theory & Criticism

BUSINESS

Accounting & Auditing  
Advertising & Public Relations  
Banking  
Business Administration  
Commerce  
Economics  
Finance  
Insurance  
Labor Relations  
Maritime Commerce & Industry  
Marketing  
Real Estate  
Tourism

Law

Law  
Patents, Trademarks & Copyrights

INDUSTRY & TECHNOLOGY

Aerospace Industry  
Automotive Industry  
Building & Construction  
Computer Applications (includes data processing, business applications, documentation, personal computing, word processing, etc.)  
Computer Science & Systems Analysis (includes hardware, operating systems, programming languages, systems analysis, etc.)  
Cosmetics  
Cybernetics & Robotics  
Electronics  
Electrotechnology  
Fashion  
Glass & Ceramics  
Metallurgy  
Military & Naval Sciences  
Mining

Missiles & Rocketry  
Optics  
Paper & Pulp Industry  
Petroleum, Natural Gas & Fossil Fuels  
Photography & Cinematography  
Plastics & Rubber  
Printing & Publishing  
Silicates  
Telecommunications  
Textiles  
Transportation & Railroads

Engineering

Chemical Engineering  
Civil & Hydraulic Engineering  
Electrical Engineering  
Industrial Engineering  
Mechanical Engineering  
Nuclear Engineering (See Nuclear Science & Engineering)  
Sanitation Engineering

SCIENCE

Agricultural Sciences  
Agriculture  
Fishery  
Food & Nutrition  
Forestry  
Land Management  
Veterinary Medicine

Biological Sciences (see also Medicine & Medical Sciences)

Geology  
Biochemistry  
Botany  
Genetics  
Microbiology, Bacteriology & Virology  
Parasitology  
Zoology & Entomology

Computer Science (see INDUSTRY & TECHNOLOGY)

Earth Sciences

Earth Sciences  
Ecology & Environmental Science  
Geography & Cartography  
Geology & Geophysics  
Meteorology  
Oceanography

Mathematics

Mathematics & Statistics

Medicine & Medical Sciences

Anatomy & Physiology  
Dentistry  
Health Care (includes nursing, facility management, government health programs, etc.)  
Immunology & Radiology  
Medical Instrumentation & Techniques (includes surgery)  
Medicine & Medicinal Sciences  
Nontraditional Medicine (includes acupuncture, faith healing, herbal medicine, etc.)  
Pharmacy & Pharmacology

Physical Sciences

Astronomy & Astrophysics  
Chemistry  
Nuclear Science & Engineering  
Physical Sciences  
Physics  
Solid State Physics (includes crystallography, semiconductors)

Russian Language Division

American Translators Association

## Database Entry Form

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE/FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

TRANSLATOR: yes/no    INTERPRETER: yes/no    INSTRUCTOR: yes/no

OTHER LANGUAGES:

NATIVE LANGUAGE:

DEGREE(S):

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION: [list up to six from ATA reference list on page10]

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER ATA: [check one] active \_\_\_\_\_ associate \_\_\_\_\_ division affiliate \_\_\_\_\_

ATA ACCREDITATION: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

FREE-LANCE: yes/no    REFERRALS: yes/no

EQUIPMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

EXPERIENCE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

OTHER SERVICES: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please detach this page, fold in half, staple, and mail to the address on the back.**



# Database Entry Form

*The database entry form given in the February SlavFile did not include the full list of ATA specializations. If you have already sent your form in, please mark your name and your specializations on this copy and send it on to Robert Welsh, so that he can complete your entry. If you are new to the directory, please fill out the form according to the notes given on this page. We also include a sample form for your reference.*

## Sample Database Entry Form

### LINGUIST, Ima

123 Younameit Street, Apt. 5A  
Mytown, Mystate 99999-9999

**Phone:** (101) 555-1212, **Fax:** (101) 555-3456

**E-Mail:** ima@home.com

TRANSLATOR: Yes

INTERPRETER: Yes

ATA ACCREDITED: Russ-Eng, Eng-Russ  
Fr-Eng, Span-Eng

INSTRUCTOR: Yes

NATIVE LANGUAGE: Ukrainian

OTHER LANGUAGES: Belorussian, Romanian,  
Celtic

DEGREES: MA, Translation Theory;  
BA, Linguistics; MS, Computer Science;  
BS, Electrical Engineering

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION:

1. Linguistics
2. Interpreting
3. Computer Science & Systems Analysis
4. Electrical Engineering
5. Building & Construction
6. Cybernetics & Robotics

ATA MEMBERSHIP: active (x), associate ( )  
division affiliate ( )

FREE-LANCE: Yes

REFERRALS: Yes

EQUIPMENT: IBM-compatible PC, modem, fax,  
laser printer, Cyrillic fonts, Word 6.0a,  
WordPerfect 5.2.

EXPERIENCE: Twenty years experience translating  
and interpreting for major U.S. corporations expanding  
their business into Eastern Europe and the former  
Soviet republics. Served as Senior Editor for leading  
U.S. publisher of Soviet technical journals and books.

OTHER SERVICES: Desktop publishing (English and  
Slavic languages), proofreading, consulting. Private  
tutoring in Slavic languages and English as a Foreign  
Language.

## Notes

TRANSLATOR'S NAME This is essential. What is your name?

ADDRESS How do you receive mail? Where do you want your clients to send your check?

TELEPHONE, FAX, E-MAIL: Please list only the one number in each category that you can be reached at by a prospective client. Make it easy for the client to reach you; don't expect him or her to try four or five different numbers on the off chance that you might be at one of them.

TRANSLATOR: Yes/No. Are you a translator?

INTERPRETER: Yes/No. Are you an interpreter?

INSTRUCTOR: Yes/No. Are you an instructor?

OTHER LANGUAGES: What languages other than Russian and English are you competent to translate, interpret, or teach?

NATIVE LANGUAGE: In what language did you receive your formal education? Only one, please.

DEGREES: What degrees do you hold and in what fields of study were they granted?

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION: Choose only six from the subject ready reference list of ATA recognized specializations. Please, do not claim to be competent in everything. List only those specializations that you are qualified by education and experience to translate/interpret.

ATA MEMBER: Check only one of following:

active \_\_\_ associate \_\_\_ division affiliate \_\_\_

ATA ACCREDITED: In what language pairs have you been accredited by the ATA? List these combinations.

FREE-LANCE: Yes/No. Are you willing to work on a free-lance basis?

REFERRALS: Yes/No. Will you accept work referred to you by other agencies/translators?

EQUIPMENT: What equipment do you have at your disposal?

EXPERIENCE: Here is your opportunity to sell your abilities to prospective clients. Using 255 or fewer characters, explain what you have done that a prospective client might want you to do again for him or her.

OTHER SERVICES: Can you offer anything other than translating or interpreting ability? What?



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ТАКАЯ ПАРТИЯ!**

# SlavFile

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