



Winter 2010

Knowledge for 2010 and beyond

Responses to AAIT conference show supply met demand

By Rosa Burkard

After so much work organizing the Conference and so much fear that we wouldn't cover our expenses, it feels good to say, "We did it again!"

When the AAIT Board of Directors decided to hold the AAIT 3rd Annual Conference, we knew it wouldn't be easy, given the current economic situation. However, we also realized that the recession calls for translators and interpreters to keep their skills sharp to stay competitive in the job market - now more than ever. As a professional association, we in AAIT could not think of failing them.

In general, the participants commented that this year's Conference has been the best of the three we've organized so far in terms of the quality of speakers, presentations, facilities, and organization.

Special efforts were made to give participants the best value for their "investment" with top-notch presenters, relevant topics, a lively panel discussion, comfortable facilities, good service, and additional benefits such as membership until December 2010 for any non-member signing up for the registration-membership combo.

At the end of the Conference, most of the participants submitted their evaluation sheets, which provided very valuable and useful insight, comments, and suggestions. They not only highlighted the achievements of the AAIT 3rd Annual Conference, but also pointed out some of its shortcomings, which will definitely be taken into account for future conferences.



Erik Camayd-Freixas delivers his presentation at the 3rd Annual AAIT Conference about his experiences as one of 16 interpreters who witnessed the largest single-site immigration raid in U.S. history at Postville, Iowa. On page 2, Phyllis Stallman, owner and operator of Translation Station, Inc., reviews his talk – and adds a cautionary note.

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Speaking up on speaking out

By Phyllis Stallman

I believe that most of us have heard about the courage and convictions of Dr. Erik Camayd-Freixas, who received positive acknowledgment in the interpreting world for speaking out about the injustices practiced by federal prosecutors in the largest immigration and customs enforcement raid in U.S. history.

Dr. Erik Camayd-Freixas is currently director of the translation and interpretation program at Florida International University. He has been a federally certified court interpreter since 1985, and has trained more than 3000 interpreters in professional ethics and standards of practice. He spoke out only after the case was closed and was considered public domain, and after much reflection and discussion with other federally certified court interpreters. He then presented his concerns to a U.S. District Court judge, the *NY Times*, the ATA, and NAJIT.

As the owner/operator of a small translation agency, Translation Station, Inc., I was impressed with Dr. Camayd-Freixas' concerns about his obligations as both an interpreter and a citizen.

On the other hand, I worried about the effect his actions might have on less experienced interpreters. When he made his presentation at the AAIT Conference, I overheard more than one interpreter make

comments about the behavior of an attorney for whom they had interpreted recently, and how Dr. Camayd-Freixas' presentation had given them the courage to speak out in the future.

It is of utmost importance for all interpreters to take seriously all of the rules of confidentiality and ethics, as well as the Code of Professional Responsibility for Court Interpreters.

The interpreter code of ethics, in particular the confidentiality clause, has as its meaning and rationale that interpreters must *not influence the outcome of the case*.

Further, the rule of impartiality dictates that interpreters may never be expertes witness for either the defense or the prosecution, but only for the judge.

Interpreters are ethically bound to make a true inter-

pretation of the person for whom they are interpreting, regardless of their own perceptions or opinions about the effects of what is being said.

If interpreters believe strongly that a miscarriage of justice is taking place, to the point at which they cannot in good conscience continue, it is their responsibility to remove themselves from the case, taking care that they do *not influence the outcome of the case*.

Therefore, interpreters must remember their oath of confidentiality regarding what they hear in the course of their work, and not discuss pending proceedings with any party or witness.

Phyllis Stallman is chairperson of AAIT's Education Committee and president of Translation Station, Inc. She can be reached at phyllis@translationstation.com.



Photo: Jorge Lucero

Conference report card

Respondents: 64

Rating (1=Poor, 5= Excellent)	1	2	3	4 or 5
General organization				64
Promotion	1		4	59
Registration process		1	4	59
Program			4	60
Schedule		1	2	61
Speakers			2	62
Presentations			2	62
Conf. materials			9	55
Food/refreshments		1	5	58
Exhibits	1	4	13	46
Facilities			1	63

Attendees agree: Organization matters

To gain a true impression of the Conference, nothing works as well as getting others' opinions of it. Eva de Vallescar, Bridges' new staff writer, did just that. Here is the feedback she gathered from several of the attendees:

Bill Beverley-Blanco, Spanish/English translator and interpreter: "I want to commend the organizing committee for the work they have done to put together ... a great event. To me, the most powerful speaker was Dr. Erik Camayd-Freixas. Not that the other speakers weren't awesome speakers on their own, but to me, he was my "keynote" speaker.

I want to meet and I want to hear other translators and interpreters in the community. I would like to see more networking as part of the annual event. When you are doing networking, you don't get to hear or to speak with everybody. So I would like to have more open participation.

I think that [the annual conferences] are going to keep improving year after year; the more input and participation you get from the community, the better... I definitely want to exhort everybody to participate and give their opinions; we need audience participation in every aspect."

Luigina Johnson, Spanish/English simultaneous conference interpreter and translator: "I was very pleased to be a part of our 3rd Annual AAIT conference in Atlanta this past fall, especially since I noticed a much more prepared audience this year. The participants seemed to be more connected to our world of interpreters and translators, making the conference much more productive. All the topics that were covered by the presenters were of much interest to all of us and we were able to learn, discuss, and make great contacts for future training classes and work opportunities. I definitely recommend this conference to all of our colleagues, students, and people involved with our profession."

Vimal Vicky Nikore, psychologist, cultural consultant, and interpreter: "It was extremely well organized. The topics that were covered were very nice, like how to start a business and how to grow your contacts. I liked [hearing] from Garry Guan ... he offered advice about what it takes to start a business, the work, the investment, the sources that go into starting a business. I loved his honesty and directness in the sense that not everybody has the intelli-



gence, the future view of things; it is not only about giving out your name and investing some money, a lot of forethought goes into it.

Also, what Dr. Freixas said about our jobs as interpreters, you just can't take it superficially ... there is a conscience and judgment beyond the guidelines.

I would have liked some concrete technical sessions. The Translation Memory session was wonderful, but I would have liked some more material or guidance, or more practical [advice]. Also, some meal arrangements where the participants could have been connected more."

Sylvia Sham, Chinese/English freelance court and medical interpreter: "I'm impressed that it is getting much better. I'm doing a lot of court [interpreting] and I'd have liked to have more on courts... AAIT gets enough variety, but personally I'm more about interpreting than translating. I guess you need to get into different areas... and we had a little of court interpreting, but it is up to one to study a whole course. But overall, I'm really satisfied and I enjoyed it a lot... and I'm really proud of the efforts to bring all these to Atlanta, so we don't have to travel."

Edurne Chopeitia, cross-cultural communicator: "It was a great experience. The high point of the conference was the professor who spoke about the police interventions, showing we need more awareness and wake-up calls, especially to be able to discern as professionals and to start building our own body of ethical considerations."

MBA tells tales out of (business) school

Judy Jenner's presentation, "Lessons from Business School: The Entrepreneurial Linguist", drew a capacity crowd at the ATA conference – and on a Saturday morning at that. In a phone interview, she summarized the main points of her talk.

Bridges: About the paradigm shift you proposed in your talk: What's wrong with marketing yourself on quality?

Judy Jenner: The paradigm shift that I proposed was that we need to start looking at ourselves as businesspeople, because 90 percent of us run small businesses, and very few of us work in in-house positions. It's important that we understand that we are first and foremost businesspeople, because you can be the best linguist in the world, but if you can't get any business, it won't work.



Photo: Ulf Buchholz

You have to distinguish yourself from the competition (although let's think of each other as colleagues, not as competition). If you're on ProZ or Translators' Cafe and you look at profiles, you see that they all say the same thing: on time, professional, quality. If you saw 100 people with the same characteristics, how would you choose if you were the customer? The assumption is that everybody is good and reliable.

Bridges: Your presentation included a funny video in which a beauty salon customer, some restaurant guests, and a customer in a video store all attempt to negotiate their own prices. What point were you making with it?

Judy Jenner: Negotiation of a professional service doesn't happen in other industries. My point was that as a vendor you set the price, and not the other way around. It isn't really black and white, but what I wanted to illustrate is that it's not acceptable to negotiate this. In every other professional industry I know, you can't negotiate. I don't go to my doctor and say, "Look, my budget is 50 bucks," but it happens to linguists all the time.

When you negotiate only on price, the customer won't be able to distinguish between the different providers. If we negotiate on price, we turn ourselves into commodities. In economics, a commodity is something that is traded solely based on price - that would be things like sugar,

copper, or grain. Our services are highly specialized professional services, and they should be valued for their quality and for the way they enable global communication, not for their price. And that's really analogous to other professional services. I mean, nobody hires the cheapest lawyer, the cheapest PR agency, or the cheapest accountant.

Bridges: What *didn't* you learn in business school?

Judy Jenner: Business school doesn't teach you how to run a small business. Nobody tells you how to get your business license, or where to file paperwork, or which software to buy and how to get the most out of your computer for maximum return on investment. It really teaches you how to think about the economy as a whole, how it affects you, and how you can fit into it.

The entrepreneurship lessons that I teach are based on some of those things I learned in graduate school, but I really learned in the real world how to interact with your colleagues and how to build your business. Those are things I learned by doing, and everyone else can do it too.

I have no doubt in my mind that there is enough business for all of us. The Bureau of Labor Statistics forecast growth in our field last year, so I truly believe that we are stronger together, that synergy is an important part of our business. I think sometimes that small business owners have the tendency to keep things close to the chest. An example of that would be if, at the ATA conference, everybody said, "I don't want to present, I don't want to communicate what I know, I don't want to share it." There would be no professional development; there would be no conference. I am delighted and happy to share what I know and I love learning from others - we have a lot of collective wisdom and a lot of very smart people in our industry.

Having positive passion is another thing I've learned, and is something I feel really strongly about. You have to have positive passion about what you do. I think that's the biggest selling point you have - that you really like what you do. I really like what I do, and I think it shows.

Judy Jenner is a Spanish/German/English translator based in Las Vegas, Nevada, and Vienna, Austria, where she runs Twin Translations with her twin sister. She is also the vice-president of NITA. She hosts the popular Translation Times blog (www.translationtimes.blogspot.com). You can also find her at www.entrepreneuriallinguist.com.

Certification issue returns: When in Rome ...

By Rosa Burkard

Two topics sparked my interest at the ATA 50th Annual Conference in New York: interpreter certification programs, and the increasing number of words translators can translate with the newest translation memory software. My interest turned to concern as I realized that despite the fact that quality and efficiency are two of the main objectives being pursued, they are still being overlooked. On this occasion I will share my concerns regarding interpreter certification programs, saving the second topic for the next issue of *Bridges*.

We live in a country where you need certification to practice any professional activity, regardless of the academic (undergraduate or graduate) degrees you may have in your specific area of work. This is also true of translation and interpretation.

So far, this sounds reasonable. When it comes to language services, there are many people who do not have a university degree. We want to ensure that the best service will be provided, no matter what the circumstances.

Moreover, as the saying goes, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do". The problem is that a large number of people think they can pass certification exams merely because they know a second language – and sometimes that knowledge is doubtful. In a way, certification bodies send out a misleading message about this.

On the other hand, certification programs do not include any activities that would teach candidates the knowledge and skills they need to pass certification exams and be good professionals. The most they do is provide an indication of what candidates are expected to know. Those who fail the exams don't know why or what they did wrong. Sometimes they have to pay to find out.

To make things worse, in the U.S. there are not enough



Photo: Jorge Lucero

"The problem is that a large number of people think they can pass certification exams merely because they know a second language – and sometimes that knowledge is doubtful."

translation and interpretation schools. In short, people are left to learn the necessary skills on their own, which often results in a costly, frustrating vicious circle.

In my opinion, these are the main reasons why a large percentage of people fail translation and interpretation certification exams. As a trained translator and interpreter and an instructor of translation and interpretation, I know how important it is that people interested in becoming translators and interpreters go through a formal program that teaches skills before they attempt to take any certification exams. In this line of thinking, I think certification bodies, secondary educational institutions and professional organizations such as the ATA and AAIT should get together to develop teaching programs to offer to anybody interested in becoming a certified translator and/or interpreter.

These programs should not necessarily be a requirement, but at least candidates would have the option to receive training before they take certification exams. It is hoped that this would increase the number of people passing these exams.

Rosa Burkard, AAIT President, is an English-Spanish translator and a Georgia-certified court interpreter.

2010-2011 AAIT Board Elections

Candidates bring wealth of talent, experience



Bill Beverley-Blanco

For me, the decision to run for a Board position has been really quite simple. It was made out of a desire to serve, which is what my life has been about for the last 35 years and will continue to be about for years to come.

I see the position of Director as an opportunity to contribute as one who is a relative newcomer to the language services profession, but who has immersed himself completely in it over the past two years.

While I am new to the profession, I do have experience in collaborative leadership of organizations; I bring to the AAIT my 20 years of leadership as an officer of the Medical Services Corps of the U.S. Army.

I also bring to the AAIT the perspective of a student pursuing professional post-graduate certification in translation and interpretation through the program at GSU. My master's degree is in education, specifically curriculum development, another area of knowledge that could be of use to the Association in developing new seminars and workshops for the benefit of our members.

Additionally, I bring the dual perspective of working both as a freelancer and as a team member at a local translation agency that is as new to the industry as I am.

I am active in MING, and if elected to the Board I would be glad to serve as a liaison between the two organizations to bring them closer together.

If what I bring with me is of value to the Association, it is my humble desire to contribute it for the advancement of the organization and of the profession.

Edurne Chopeitia

Life in Uruguay until 1997: Licensed psychologist (no license in Georgia) and a master in business administration, both degrees earned at accredited universities in Uruguay. She worked as an assistant professor in clinical psychology, had a private practice, was a consultant in executive recruitment and held a position as director of marketing.



Life in the US: over 7 years as a marketing and sales director for Latin America within the medical devices industry. When her personal life demanded more flexibility, she pursued the appropriate certifications and moved into perinatal education, which in turn helped her develop a solid career in the art and science of medical translation and interpretation. The applied combination of her passion and expertise in clinical psychology, cultural diversity, adult education and marketing allows her to deliver fun, interesting and fact-filled classes, presentations, and training courses and to build a healthy rapport with colleagues, customers and health care providers.

Currently pursuing a translation certificate at Adelphi University, Edurne trusts in scientific knowledge, research, creativity and the brain's ability to adapt and learn. She believes the journey toward professionalizing our craft starts with self-awareness and collaboration; continues with gaining independence from the market forces that traditionally rule the business (owning our own profession); and culminates in developing resources and forums for interconnectedness.

Edurne currently lives in Holly Springs with her family. She loves to read, write, and explore new technologies, languages, photography and the psychology of natural human experiences across cultures.

Loana A. Denis



Loana is a Georgia Certified Court Interpreter and has been a corporate member of AAIT since 2002. In addition to legal interpreting, Loana also has a strong background in the areas of healthcare and community interpreting. She

completed the Training of Trainers with "The Community Interpreter" in fall 2009, and as an interpreter trainer she has been dedicated to the development of skill-building tools for interpreters.

As a vice president of LATN, Loana manages interpreting and translation services, where her responsibilities range from performing industry analysis and forecasts, strategic growth and implementation of policies consistent with the ATA and NCICH Code of Ethics, to professional development for interpreters.

2010-2011 AAIT Board Elections

Loana is also involved as a volunteer in The Voice of Love Project, a pro bono program created to develop a three-day interpreter training program to serve survivors of torture, trauma and sexual violence.

In addition to being a member of AAIT, Loana is also an active member of ATA, NAJIT, NICHC, IMIA and MING. She holds a degree in economics and a master's degree in business administration from UVA's Darden School of Business.



Gabriel Rueda

Gabriel's background is in the technical and business fields. He holds degrees in mechanical engineering (BSME) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and business administration (MBA) from Kennesaw State University. He practiced both professionally for over eighteen years with engineering firms and multinational corporations as an engineer, project manager and regional sales manager for markets in Latin America. He is the current treasurer of AAIT.

Since 2005 he has worked as a court interpreter and medical interpreter in the Atlanta area. As a certified court interpreter he primarily serves the superior courts of many metropolitan Atlanta counties. In addition he contracts as technical translator and as a conference interpreter.

Since becoming a member of AAIT he has attended conferences and networking opportunities and spread the word about the profession. He wants to raise AAIT's profile in the field and sees his organizational skills and his volunteerism as strengths that he brings to the AAIT Board.

He would like to see more diversity in the AAIT membership and have the Board explore fundraising initiatives.

Neitcha B. Thomsen

As an elementary school student, Neitcha was moved to Mexico and often interpreted for her parents. Neitcha graduated from the University of Texas in Austin. Besides Mexico, she has in Japan and Australia before settling in Atlanta, Georgia. She has been a school interpreter for the Dekalb County School System since 1999, currently working at Woodward Elementary School. Her volunteer work includes serving as board member for Dialogo Latino; interpreter for Emory



physicians with Honduras Outreach; interpreter for Good Samaritan Clinic; PTA president, Dekalb School of the Arts; and chairperson, Dekalb School of the Arts Task Force, obtaining an allocation of \$10 million in SPLOST funds.

Neitcha enjoys working in the emerging field of school interpreters and seeing the professional development of this new field.

Amanda Williams



Amanda Williams is a French to English translator and holds a translation certification from Georgia State University. Amanda's native language is English, and she has been speaking French for 14 years. She became fluent in French by participating in several study abroad programs and by working as an English teaching assistant in France. Amanda also speaks and writes Spanish.

Amanda specializes in international business translation, particularly in the field of international trade, supply chain, and trade compliance. After completing Georgia State's translation certification program, Amanda launched her own translation company, Mirror Image Translations, LLC, which offers French to English translation services. Currently, Amanda works part-time as a translator attempting to expand her client base and also works for a South American company as an import compliance administrator. Amanda's international business specialization comes from over five years of experience working for an international organization in sales, operations/supply chain, and import compliance.

Election FAQs

Who is in charge of the elections? The Nominating Committee comprises **Cecilia Santamarina** (Chair), **Floralba Chinchilla** and **Jack Nowicki**.

What is the deadline for voting? Ballots received by **Tuesday, February 8, 2010** will be tallied to complete the election process for the AAIT Board of Directors. No proxies will be accepted in this process.

How do I vote? Submit your electronic vote via e-mail to Jack Nowicki at expertranslators@bellsouth.net

When will the results be announced? Election results will be announced via e-mail and will be made official during the AAIT Annual Banquet.



A message from our PR Chairman

Dear AAIT members,

We need your help in promoting our organization. Do you have any contacts in the business community that you can share with us?

It seems to us that it would be a natural extension of what we do if we were to reach out to local and national business associations, especially the chambers of commerce of specific countries, like the Chinese Business Association of Atlanta, the Turkish American Chamber of Commerce, or the German Chamber of Commerce. Here is what we would like:

1) An opportunity to speak to the members of your organization. We can give them a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation describing who we are and how we can help your organization.

2) A table at an event of your organization to share information on AAIT and answer questions from people who are curious about our profession or who are interested in becoming an interpreter or translator.

3) Reciprocal links between your organization's website and the AAIT website.

So, if you are a member of one or more of these types of organizations and you are available to help us reach them, please let me know.

Also, if you have any suggestions about organizations we should be approaching or if you have any creative ideas on how to promote our Association, all proposals will be seriously considered. Please contact me at abernal@aait.org.

Thanks so much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Adrian Bernal

Call for nominations for the

AALS 2009 Professional Ethics Award

Created and co-sponsored by Garry Guan of A-A Language Services (AALS) and presented by the Atlanta Association of Interpreters and Translators (AAIT), this award is intended to advance professional ethics among translators and interpreters and set examples to be followed by current and future generations of language professionals.

The AALS Professional Ethics Award recognizes translators and interpreters in the state of Georgia who exemplify high standards of ethical behavior in their everyday professional conduct and in response to specific crises and challenges, and raise awareness about the role that professional linguists play in bridging linguistic and cultural gaps.

Nominations must be sent in no later than February 14, 2010.

An information flyer on the award and a nomination form are available on the "Awards and Scholarships" page of the AAIT website at:

http://aait.org/Awards_Scholarships.htm