

CAPTIONS

Official Newsletter Publication of the Colorado Association of Professional Interpreters
P.O. Box 40664, Denver, CO 80204, www.coloradointerpreters.org

4th Quarter 2005

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Membership News!

CAPI held its **Fall Meeting in Colorado Springs** on September 17, 2005, and was pleased with the great turn-out: many interpreters from Colorado Springs and Denver attended. Claudia Petterson reported on the local interpreting situation in Colorado Springs. Attendees completed a survey to help CAPI gain a better appreciation of the interests and motivation of its members (*please see the following article by Ana Acosta-Miller*), and a drawing was held for a free CAPI annual membership. Our congratulations to the winner: Vicki Santamaría of Longmont. In the afternoon, participants attended one of two continuing education sessions offered: Magistrate Evelyn Sullivan enlightened us about family law and Kate Warner shared her expertise in the field of physical therapy. The sessions were both informative and interesting. A big thank you to Tess Saenz and the entire Colorado Springs contingent who organized and helped make sure this meeting was a success!

Skills building classes: Good news! Anna Kelsey has offered to coordinate future Skills Building Courses for CAPI, making it possible for our organization to continue providing this important service for the interpreting community at prices well below for-profit alternatives. The 2006 Skills Building Courses (consecutive, simultaneous and sight translation) will be offered in August and September.

Continuing education: CAPI will continue to focus on continuing education opportunities in the coming year. The sessions held at the fall meeting in Colorado Springs were a big success. You should be hearing soon about a field trip to a crime lab in Denver, and hopefully legal translation workshop. Our apologies for the late cancellation of the October continuing education workshop at the Colorado History Museum, especially to those who traveled a great distance to attend. Unfortunately, both presenters cancelled at the last minute. Please check our website for future continuing education opportunities provided by CAPI and other organizations.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Just in! Alla Seletskaya is our newly certified Russian interpreter. We are still awaiting test results for other languages.

Anna Kelsey and Lee Ana Trujillo-López are now Federally Certified Interpreters.

Tatiana Contreras has been certified to translate from English >Spanish by the American Translators Association.

Great work colleagues!



Don't forget the CAPI **Holiday Party** scheduled for December 3, 2005, 6:00 p.m. at the Mercury Café in Denver! **You are not too late to get in your reservation, but send your check to CAPI today!** We will be joined again by the Colorado Translators Association – a great opportunity to meet and socialize with our translator colleagues! In addition, there will be great food, salsa dancing lessons, and dance music provided by our talented colleagues, DJs Jack Mudry and Samir Farah! So join us. For more information on how to lend a hand and for reservations, please contact Ana Mostaccero: amostac@reservoirmgmt.com.

CAPI dues, due in January! Support your profession and your favorite professional organization (CAPI, of course). Enjoy the benefits of being a member and renew your membership in a timely fashion. Dues (for the 2006 calendar year) are \$40. Download the Membership Form and remember to update your contact information on the CAPI website at <http://www.coloradointerpreters.org/Membership.htm>, and mail it with your payment to CAPI at PO BOX 40664, Denver, CO 80204.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

CAPI MEMBERS RESPOND TO SURVEY

by Ana Acosta-Miller

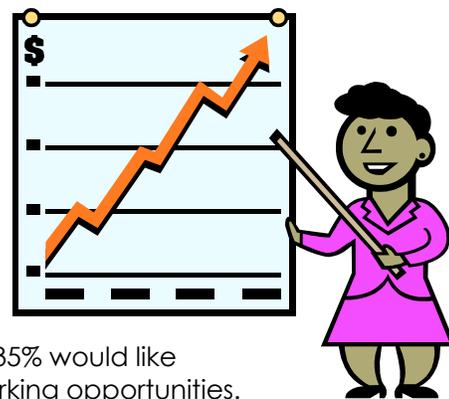
At the CAPI Fall Meeting held September 17th in Colorado Springs, the Board conducted a Membership Survey in order to receive feedback regarding services that CAPI provides and the desires of our members for other training opportunities. The following are the compiled answers given by thirty-one individuals.

Seventy-one percent of the respondents joined CAPI to keep updated on developments in the interpreting profession, while networking opportunities in CAPI attracted 49%. Of those who responded, 45% want their names included in the Association's directory and 41% want information about language certification programs.

The CAPI website (www.coloradointerpreters.org) is popular among participants: 90% say they are familiar with it, and almost 30% indicate they consult the site once a week.

Because continuing education is an important focus of CAPI's efforts, the survey included a number of questions that related to that topic. Scheduling conflicts are the number one reason why 61% of respondents had not attended the CAPI Skills Building Courses. Over half of the attendees prefer weekend classes lasting from 6 to 8 hours. Respondents are interested in improving in different

professional areas, such as conference and community interpreting. In addition, 74% of survey participants want medical interpretation courses and 84% consider vocabulary-building skills useful to professional development. 65% expressed interest in business development as freelance interpreters. The vast majority (84%) wants CAPI to provide continuing education courses at discounted prices for members, and 35% would like to see more networking opportunities.



CAPI summer and winter holiday social activities are important for 26%. Many expressed a willingness to help organize them and to volunteer on an ongoing basis. Nineteen percent expressed an interest in the committee on continuing education, 13% in the medical task force, 10% in publications and 3% in outreach.

The CAPI board thanks everyone who answered the Membership Survey.

www.coloradointerpreters.org

Be sure to check the CAPI website regularly for updated training opportunities, job announcements, and general information. It also includes great links that may be of use in your work. CAPI periodically shares announcements with its members and contacts. If you haven't been receiving them, make sure we have your current e-mail address! Contact info@coloradointerpreters.org

JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be sure to check the CAPI website for regular updates on available interpreting positions. Go to www.coloradointerpreters.org → Resources → Job Announcements.

Interpreter Positions

Children's Hospital in Denver is seeking full time and on call interpreter/translators, as well as a Bilingual Staff Assistant. For more information please go to www.thechildrenshospital.org, click on Employment, Professional/Technical, or contact Maria Caciagli (Medical Interpreter Coordinator) at 303-864-5864 or Caciagli.maria@tchden.org

Spanish Translator Positions

Lionbridge is seeking temporary in-house translators. Interested candidates should apply to boulder_employment@lionbridge.com

Syntes Language Group, Inc., a translation, localization and interpreting company with national clients, is expanding fairly rapidly and is looking to fill 3 positions immediately. For more information contact Juliana Braunagel at juliana.braunagel@syntes.com, or fax a letter of interest and résumé to 303-779-1232.

State Judicial Job Listings

Check the Colorado Judicial Branch webpage for updated listings on employment opportunities with the state: <http://www.courts.state.co.us>.

COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM NEWS

by Melinda González-Hibner

Training and Testing:

The testing cycle for 2005 is almost complete. The Court Interpreter Program (CIP) offered three Spanish court interpreter orientations and one orientation for interpreters working in languages other than Spanish this year. The oral test for interpreters working in languages other than Spanish was given in September, and results should be coming in soon. Fourteen interpreters working in Vietnamese, Russian, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Arabic were tested. The oral test for Spanish language interpreters will take place on November 19-20. Twenty-nine Spanish language interpreters are scheduled to take the test. The 2006 training and testing schedule is posted on the CIP webpage at www.courts.state.co.us.

Reciprocity of certification with other states:

States that are members of the Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification met in Seattle this past October, and one of the hottest topics on the agenda was reciprocity of court interpreter certification between member states. A special working group devoted to the issue of reciprocity was formed, and specific recommendations regarding this issue will be developed over the coming year.

Other Projects

In the interest of augmenting the number of qualified interpreters available to the courts across the state, as well as allowing for more flexibility in coverage of traffic and misdemeanor cases in the metro area, a roster of "professionally qualified" interpreters is being developed. The "professionally qualified" roster will be made up of interpreters who have undergone basic orientation training and have scored above 65% on all three parts of the oral certification exam. Professionally qualified interpreters will have to comply with the same continuing education requirements that certified interpreters must follow in order to remain listed on the active rosters of interpreters used by the courts. It is expected that the professionally qualified interpreter roster will be fully operational by March of 2006.



Speaking of continuing education, Chief Justice Directive 05-05 establishing continuing education requirements for continued certification and/or listing of court interpreters was signed on August 24, 2005 and is now posted on the CIP website. The first reporting period for continuing education hours will close on January 31, 2008. Valid training received from January 2005 will be accepted. All necessary forms as well as a list of approved continuing education sources should be posted on the website beginning January 2006.

Ron Olson: Moving on from the Denver County Interpreters' Office

by David Fletcher



Ron Olson

Ron Olson, the steadfast and unflappable staff interpreter at the Denver County Interpreters' Office is leaving after eleven years to work as an independent contractor. Recently Ron sat down to talk about his experiences, and to reflect on the changes that have taken place in court interpreting since he began working in the field in the late 1980s.

The Spanish language and a bi-cultural environment have been part of Ron's life since his birth in Salta La Linda, Argentina, to a missionary family. Ron lived in small towns in northern Argentina for the better part of his first 17 years. He learned Spanish as a child by participating in village life (his was the only English-speaking family in town), social activities through his parents' church, and by hanging out and chewing sugar cane with playmates in the neighborhood. Home-schooled for much of his early education, Ron left Argentina in 1975 to attend Wheaton College where he graduated with a B.A. in Cultural Anthropology. Ron came to Denver in the early 1980s, enrolled in the Denver Seminary and was awarded a Master of Divinity.

Ron's interest in language interpreting started when a poet friend asked him to translate his poetry from Spanish to English. He was fascinated by the challenge of discovering precise definitions to convey meanings in poetry. He began to focus on the possibility of working in judicial settings after being called to jury duty in Denver. Though not selected to serve on a jury, he was hooked by the intricacies of *voir dire* and realized that he might have the skills for interpreting. At the same time, the Justice Information Center was looking for qualified interpreters to meet the growing demand for interpreters in the courts. Ron was hired by JIC as a staff interpreter in 1988 and worked there for five years. He was among the first to be approved as an interpreter in the initial Spanish screening test offered by the Denver County Courts in 1989, and later passed the first certification test sponsored by Judge Irving Ettenberg and these Courts.

Ron moved to the Denver County Interpreters' Office in 1993. At the time he was one of only two public employees working as full-time language interpreters in Colorado. Over the years Ron has had the thankless task of scheduling contract interpreters, accommodating competing demands and smoothing ruffled feathers. To accomplish this, he helped to develop what is arguably one of the best systems for pooling and allocating interpreter services in the nation. He has been an active member of CAPI and the National Association of Judicial Interpreters and Translators. He was involved in the development of the NAJIT e-mail forum with the goal of advancing the quality of judicial interpreting. Through it all, Ron has had a direct role in helping raise standards for interpreters. "When I started," he relates, "interpreters didn't always get paid, and the courts had no idea of how to manage things, or how to relate to interpreters. Over the past decade interpreting has evolved into a well-defined professional activity."



"Moving On" party for Ron

As for the future, Ron looks forward to interpreting in a variety of settings, including the medical field, developing his woodworking skills – he is making wooden bowls – and spending more time with his wife Mary and youngest son Martin. The two older children, Nick and Isaac, are out on their own. As he says, "The time has flown while I've been here; the kids are grown. It's time for a change." On behalf of all contract interpreters in Denver:

Thank you, Ron, for a job well done!



Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

Professional Sign Language Interpreting

What is interpreting?

Interpreting, simply stated, is receiving a message in one language and delivering it in another. Not as simple as it sounds, interpreting is a complex process that requires a high degree of linguistic, cognitive and technical skills. Professional sign language interpreters develop interpreting skills through extensive training and practice over a long period of time. Interpreters continue to actively improve their skills, knowledge, and professionalism through membership in RID. An increasing number of interpreters have completed college or university interpreter education programs, earning associates, bachelors, and/or masters degrees in interpreting. Some interpreters have also obtained advanced degrees in related fields such as linguistics or cultural studies. Sign language interpreting is a highly specialized field; simply knowing both sign language and English does not qualify a person as an interpreter. The professional sign language interpreter is able to adjust to a broad range of deaf consumer preferences and/or needs for interpretation. Some deaf individuals use American Sign Language, a natural language with its own grammar and structure that is distinct from English. Others prefer a form of signing that more closely follows the grammar and structure of spoken English. The professional interpreter is expected to work comfortably along this wide spectrum. Sometimes it is necessary to have two or more interpreters working simultaneously in order to satisfy the preferences and needs of a varied audience. On occasion, one of the interpreters may be a deaf individual or a person fluent in a language other than English or American Sign Language. Interpreters should be aware of and sensitive to ethnic/cultural and linguistic concerns.

Where professional interpreters work

Interpreters work in a variety of settings and situations. Many interpreters work in private practice; they are self-employed. From scheduling assignments to handling billing, the interpreter is responsible for all business aspects. The private practice interpreter may also receive assignments through interpreter service agencies. Others interpreters are salaried staff of an agency, institution, or corporation. Still others interpret in educational settings—from pre-school to graduate school and any level in between. Interpreters work in settings as intimate as a private therapy session or as public as a televised address at a national political convention. The interpreter must be a versatile, flexible, skilled professional.

Interpreting Credentials

In the field of interpreting, as in other professions, appropriate credentials are an important indicator of an interpreter's qualifications. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) awards certification to interpreters who successfully pass national tests. The tests assess not only language knowledge and communication skills, but also knowledge and judgment on issues of ethics, culture and professionalism. An interpreter may hold one or more certifications. Information on certifications is available from RID. Some common sign language interpreting certifications are:

- ❖ CI - Certificate of Interpretation
- ❖ CSC - Comprehensive Skills Certificate
- ❖ C - Interpretation Certificate
- ❖ CDI - Certified Deaf Interpreter
- ❖ CT - Certificate of Transliteration
- ❖ SC:L - Specialist Certificate: Legal
- ❖ TC - Transliteration Certificate

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The Colorado World

The Broader Interpreter World (cont.)

The Association has played the leading role in establishing a national standard of quality for interpreters and is committed to continued professionalism in the practice of sign language interpretation. Local interpreter service agencies, individual interpreters or the Association's national office can provide information on certified interpreters and interpreting throughout the United States.

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CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF

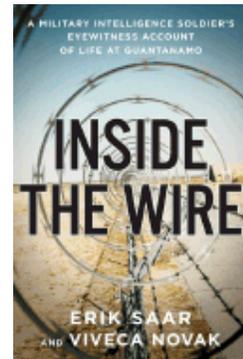
The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID) uphold high standards of professionalism and ethical conduct for interpreters. Embodied in the Code of Professional Conduct (formerly known as the Code of Ethics) are seven tenets setting forth guiding principles, followed by illustrative behaviors.

The tenets of the Code of Professional Conduct are to be viewed holistically and as a guide to professional behavior. The code provides assistance in complying with the code. The guiding principles offer the basis upon which the tenets are articulated. The illustrative behaviors are not exhaustive, but are indicative of the conduct that may either conform to or violate a specific tenet or the code as a whole.

When in doubt, one should refer to the explicit language of the tenet. If further clarification is needed, questions may be directed to the national office of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.

TENETS

1. Interpreters adhere to standards of confidential communication.
2. Interpreters possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific interpreting situation.
3. Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the specific interpreting situation.
4. Interpreters demonstrate respect for consumers.
5. Interpreters demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns, and students of the profession.
6. Interpreters maintain ethical business practices.
7. Interpreters engage in professional development.



Book: Inside the Wire is an account of a young army linguist's experiences working inside the U.S. terrorist detention camp in Guantánamo, Cuba. This is a revealing account of the challenges facing interpreters in extremely difficult situations. Written by Eric Saar with Vivica Novak. Available at the Denver Public Library.



Film: The Interpreter directed by Sydney Pollack. Political intrigue and deception unfold inside the United Nations, where a US Secret Service agent (Sean Penn) is assigned to investigate an interpreter (Nicole Kidman) who overhears an assassination plot. Available on video and DVD.

MISINTERPRETING THE SPANISH INTERPRETER

RECOUNTING A NOT SO NORMAL DAY IN COURT

based on Vanessa Wood's recent experience

What is an interpreter's worst nightmare? For me it is being grilled on the stand about my choice of words, credentials and work experience in the middle of the very trial for which I am interpreting.

This actually happened to me at a recent jury trial in which a Spanish speaking defendant, accused of choking his spouse (third degree assault and domestic violence), was being questioned on the witness stand about the incident. Suddenly, while I was interpreting his testimony, what had begun as a normal day turned not so normal.

One of the lawyers called for a sidebar conversation with the judge. I felt very uneasy because I could hear that they were discussing my use of terminology, but could not make out what they were saying. A short while later, the defense attorney abruptly told me that her client did not understand the Spanish word that I was using for 'to choke', and asked me to spell and define it. The D.A. insisted that this be put on the record. I explained to the judge that a common Spanish term for 'to choke' is 'ahorcar'.

Apparently, the defendant had mistakenly heard 'otorgar' meaning 'to give or to grant' instead of 'ahorcar'. Besides, the defendant

understood *otorgar* to mean "having a family conversation". This totally skewed his understanding of the questions and context. I suggested to the judge that we check the word in a bilingual dictionary, or that we use a different, and perhaps clearer Spanish term for 'to choke', such as '*estrangular*'; but, neither the public defender or the D.A. would agree. At this point, things went from not so normal to weird.

I found myself, to my total surprise, called to the witness stand. I was questioned, under oath, about my credentials, work experience and the topic at hand. I stood my ground and was firm about my use and definition of '*ahorcar*'. At one point I was asked, "What do you think the defendant understood?" Fortunately, the judge immediately sustained the public defenders' objection to this question.

As a final irony to this tale, just as the judge was dismissing the jury for the day, one of the jurors announced that she was a Spanish teacher, born in Spain, and she thought my use of the term '*ahorcar*' perfectly acceptable. Thank God for juries! As a further twist, the proceeding later ended in a mistrial due to other issues; but colored, no doubt, by our simple misunderstanding.

How would you have reacted? Should interpreters be called to give testimony on the stand about their use of words? CAPI would appreciate hearing from you about challenging ethical situations. Please share with us your own interpreting dramas, as we can all learn from each other's experiences. Send your articles to captions@coloradointerpreters.org.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Spanish Interpreter David Fletcher is a grandfather! His first grandson, Ruemer, is now three months old!