

CAPTIONS

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

Third Quarter 2002

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Upcoming Continuing Education Opportunities Brought to You by CAPI

The State of Medical Interpreting in Colorado

Date: Saturday October 5th
Time: 8:30 am - 12:00 pm.
Location: Franklin Building in Kaiser-Permanente Medical Center on 20th Ave., Denver.
Fee: CAPI Members: \$15; Non-CAPI Members: \$20. (You may register at the door but attendance is limited to 100 people.)

Overview: Find out how to become a medical interpreter, what different institutions are doing, and what the national trends in medical interpreting and certification are. A freelance medical interpreter, a representative of Pacific Interpreters, as well as speakers representing Kaiser, Denver Health, University of Colorado Health Science Center, and Boulder Community Hospital will discuss the present state of affairs for medical interpreters working in institutional settings in Colorado.

English-Spanish Advanced Simultaneous Interpreting Workshop

Date: Saturday, November 2nd and Sunday, November 3rd
Time: 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Location: Smoky Hill High School
Fee: *Full Attendees:* CAPI Members: \$195; Non-CAPI Members: \$225
Auditors: CAPI Members: \$97.50; Non-CAPI Members: \$112.50
(Attendance is limited to 15 full participants and 15 auditors.)

Overview: Renowned Argentine conference interpreter Ms. Rut Simcovich will be coming to Denver to facilitate a hands-on workshop/training, focusing on interpreting in a conference setting, designed to improve simultaneous interpreting techniques and vocabulary. The course will include some theory, but will mostly consist of actual practice, during which participants will be monitored by the instructor and given feedback on their work. Everybody will need a handheld tape recorder and cassette tape to record their work.

In addition to full participants, we are offering the opportunity for a limited number of attendees to audit this event. They will be able to participate in the practice activities but will not receive feedback on their work.

Registration forms can be found on our website!

ITEMS OF INTEREST

October 25-26, 2002, Cambridge, MA.

6th Annual Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association Conference "Unheard Voices" at Cambridge College.

Information: (617) 656-8133 or (617) 636-5212;

e-mail: joy.connell@dmh.state.ma.us or jdnickrosz@aol.com

November 6-9, 2002, Atlanta, GA.

43rd Annual Conference of the American Translators Association. Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Information: fax (703) 683-6122 or e-mail: conference@atanet.org

Congratulations to the following CAPI members on their recent professional successes:

- Jack Mudry passed the Federal Court Interpreter examination.
- Cecilia Castro de Anderson passed the Federal Court Interpreter examination.
- Susana Cahill earned English>Spanish accreditation from the American Translators Association AND passed the Federal Court Interpreter examination.

Next CAPI Meeting...

The next general meeting of CAPI will be held on **Saturday, October 26th**, in the basement meeting rooms of the Denver Public Library from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Annual NATI Conference

CAPI member Lee Ana Trujillo Lopez attended the 2002 NATI Regional Conference: "Bringing Down Barriers" held in August in Historic Downtown Lincoln, Nebraska and provided the following report:

I attended this conference, which covered a variety of subjects, from interpreting in the mental health setting to medical interpreting, from forensic transcription to slang, and the differences between the European and North American legal systems. Conference attendees included members of NATI (Nebraska Association of Translators and Interpreters), doctors and psychologists from social services agencies in Nebraska; others came from Maryland and a few from Denver, Colorado. NATI president Janet Bonet and various NATI members went out of their way to make us feel at home. We were able to visit part of historic downtown Lincoln, go to Lazlo's Brewery and Grill for a great Nebraska steak dinner accompanied by a sampling of different types of beers and "intellectual" conversation. It was a great place for networking and I left there with a desire to attend other conferences, whether locally or elsewhere, and to be able to learn more about our chosen professions. Last but not least, i.b.d. Ltd. Bookstore was present and was happy to help us give up our hard earned money in the pursuit of dictionaries. If you would like a more detailed report about the contents of the conference, don't hesitate to send an email to me at: jlopez746@earthlink.net.

Court Interpreter Oversight Committee

Cathy Bahr, one of CAPI's delegates to the Court Interpreter Oversight Committee, attended the CIOC's last meeting in June. The agenda included an overview of the Committee's accomplishments over the past year. Of interest to our membership is the growing encouragement within the Colorado Judiciary to use certified Spanish interpreters, whose compensation has been increased to \$30 per hour. There is also growing interest and use of telephone interpreting that is also being encouraged in the court system, especially for outlying courts or any courts that need interpreters for languages other than Spanish.

Visit CAPI's website!

Check us out at
www.coloradointerpreters.org.

by Ron Olson

Reflecting on Professionalism

Reflecting on Professionalism

Interpreters in Colorado have recently taken great strides towards being part of a profession that is respected and given value in our society. We must continue to analyze our professionalism as court interpreters. It is easy to stay in the ruts worn by habit and fail to strive for the ideal of our ethical code. Each day we face the dilemma of responding to the urgent demands made of us while doing the task properly. This need to balance can be a source of stress, as we strive to keep to our resolve to interpret as we should, yet still provide the service people ask of us.

When I began interpreting in Colorado in 1989, I noticed that a hair stylist in this state had more professional requirements than did a court interpreter. But things are changing. What is it that makes our trade a profession rather than merely a job? Webster's dictionary defines a profession as: "a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation." Other distinguishing characteristics of our profession are: established processes for certification or licensure, professional organizations, codes of ethics, and a form of loyalty among its practitioners. A profession is able to define its own expertise in a way to weed out the less qualified. In this light we have much reason for optimism.

We can look positively at the present market for interpreters. The public has begun to realize the importance of using qualified interpreters. Many who use interpreters ask about certification or training when choosing an interpreter. There is even some formal training available for interpreters in Colorado. We have a professional organization that is strong and actively promoting the interests of interpreters.

How can we maintain this upward movement? By looking carefully at our own practices. It is easy to criticize others and point out past problems in our field. The more productive approach is to examine our own actions. I must ask myself questions such as the following: Am I acting like a professional in the way I do my business? Do I work with integrity with regard to the product of my work? Do I dress the part and carry myself as a professional? Do I show respect for my colleagues? Am I working each day to improve my skills?

Many of us were given an oath to interpret by Chief Justice Mary Mullarkey in October of 2000. We are all aware of the Interpreters' Code of Ethics. Our oath has no expiration date. Do we actively uphold and promote the code of professional ethics? If there are obstacles to working with integrity, do we act to change things? For example, if asked to interpret for someone who we cannot hear, what do we do? On discovering a mistake in our interpretation, how do we correct the error? When someone using our services asks us to explain something or to give advice, do we have a tactful and constructive response ready?

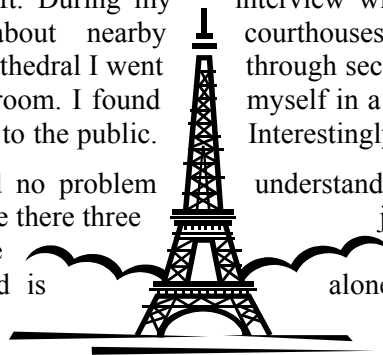
If we want to improve working conditions we must take control. Ours is a profession, not a job. Only if we work as professionals can we expect others to treat us as such. We have advanced. Our profession has gained respect. If we work together, and if we each take responsibility for our own part, we will be able to continue the forward momentum of our profession in Colorado.

Visit to a French Courthouse

By Isabelle Houlbrière

I thought something positive might result when I filed a police report regarding my stolen wallet. During rush hour in Paris, the subway conductors regularly announce the presence of "les pickpockets" and a stern warning to be alert. In July, I had become yet another victim of petty theft. During my local "Commissariat", I inquired about nearby mere one block away from this famous cathedral I went A guard told me I could enter any courtroom. I found a hard bench in the limited space allotted to the public.

The first case dealt with forgery. I had no problem first language. But wait a minute. Why are there three wearing robes, others not. Is anyone seems to be taking notes. The accused is have an attorney? Yes, it turns out she room, also wearing a robe. Shouldn't



interview with a police officer (polite and efficient), at the courthouses. The very next day, I headed to Notre Dame. A through security and found myself in a 20th century building. myself in a smaller room and took an uncomfortable seat on Interestingly, the acoustics were excellent.

understanding the criminal issues. After all, French is my judges? Who are the others up there? Some are keeping track of what is being said? Someone alone in front of the three robed people. Does she has one but she is the one on the other side of the the attorney be standing next to the defendant?

I realized then and there that I would have been an incompetent interpreter had I been asked to interpret for this defendant. My greatest weakness was not of a linguistic nature since I am a native speaker. My great flaws were not understanding the system, not knowing what this procedure was (or any other) and, those nasty acronyms and proper nouns that plague us all.

In another courtroom, a prisoner appeared in front of three robed individuals in a case dealing with assault. His French was poor. Again, I heard too many acronyms I did not recognize. My curiosity reached its peak. I got up and tried to whisper a few questions to one of the guards. "Il est interdit de parler" [No talking allowed]. Okay. I sat down again and thought this defendant should have an interpreter.

Before leaving the building, I asked one of the guards in the hallway a few questions. It helped a little. He did mention that interpreters are available and registered with the courts.

I left in an excited state, stimulated by what I had seen, intrigued by all I needed to learn and convinced that I would certainly not put my name on any list. Next time (and there will be a next time) I plan on learning more about the French legal system and, I'll make sure to watch out for petty thieves in the Paris Metro.