

# CAPTIONS

Official Newsletter Publication of the Colorado Association of Professional Interpreters  
P.O. Box 40664, Denver, CO 80204, [www.coloradointerpreters.org](http://www.coloradointerpreters.org)

Third Quarter 2004

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**EXTRA! EXTRA! CERTIFICATION FOR INTERPRETERS WHO WORK IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN SPANISH WILL SOON BE AVAILABLE - (see page 4 for details)**

## CHANGES IN COLORADO SPRINGS

CAPI is happy to announce that the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, El Paso and Teller Counties in Colorado Springs, has hired Tess Sáenz as its Managing Interpreter for their courthouse. As you may recall, CAPI members gave a series of presentations to Public Defenders, District Attorneys and Court Administrators throughout the State earlier this year, and as a result of this process, El Paso County decided to create the position now filled by Tess. In this position she will serve as the lead interpreter as well as coordinator for all interpreters and translators providing services to the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. As the newly appointed Managing Interpreter, one of Tess' primary goals is to ensure that all interpreters providing their services in both district and county courts are certified or the most highly qualified available.

After receiving her B.A. in French from the University of Texas, El Paso, Tess received her initial training in translation from the same University in 1984. She later attended the University of New Mexico's program for court interpreters as well as San Francisco State University's program for legal interpretation and translation in 1993-94. Tess was certified in 1986 by the state of New Mexico and later certified by the State of California in 1992, and grandfathered into the Colorado Certification list in 2002. Tess was born and raised along the U.S.-Mexico border, though she lived in Germany for 10 years due to her father's service in the Army. She worked extensively as a free-lance legal and conference interpreter, before moving to Colorado Springs in 2001 with her husband, Alan, and son, Diego. She has been working the past year and a half as a Language Specialist in both Spanish and French for the United States Air Force Academy and is very anxious and happy to return to the legal interpreting arena.

## Spanish Court Interpreter Certification

The CAPI Court Interpreter Certification Task Force announces the following dates:

- **Spanish Court Interpreter Orientation** will be offered September 11-12, 2004.
- **Spanish Court Interpreter Skills Building Class** will take place on Saturdays October 9 to November 6 at University of Colorado (Denver).
- **Spanish Court Interpreter Certification Exam** will be given January 22-23, 2005.
- **Spanish Court Interpreter Certification Exam** will be given again June 25-26, 2005.

To register for these events, go to [www.coloradointerpreters.org](http://www.coloradointerpreters.org).

## NOTABLE MENTIONS...

•Four people passed the Colorado Certification Exam (offered April 17 and 18). The newly certified Spanish court interpreters are: Ana Acosta-Miller of Lakewood, Clara Larson of Highlands Ranch, James Matyas (living in Puerto Rico) and Silvia Ruiz of Fort Collins.

•Vietnamese interpreter Kenny Hoang and his wife Kim are the proud parents of baby boy "Eric" born on July 20<sup>th</sup>.

•Spanish interpreter Teresa López and husband Giovanni are expecting the birth of their first child in late September.

•Spanish interpreter Cecilia Castro de Anderson has moved to the Washington, D.C. area. Her colleagues in Denver will sorely miss her. She and her husband Jeff are expecting a baby in early spring.

•Congratulations to Patricia Fiore Sprock (Spanish interpreter) and her teammates who won a State Tennis Championship!

•The written portion of the Federal Certification exam was given in Denver on Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup>. Good luck to those who are awaiting the results.



## **INTERPRETING AROUND THE STATE**

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*Vicki Santamaría, staff interpreter for the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial District in Longmont reports:*

Interpreters in the 20th Judicial District (Boulder County) are happy to find themselves in a new office suite at the Justice Center in Boulder. Their offices, one each for Miguel Buch, Kelly Musick, and Sean Stromberg, plus a waiting/common area, are part of the recently finished addition to the courthouse. Each office is roughly as large as the previous office, which housed all three interpreters and had no windows. The interpreters even got to pick the color their offices would be painted. A dedication ceremony for the addition, which includes several new courtrooms, hearing rooms and a new jury assembly room, will take place Sept. 14 at 4:00 p.m.

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*Denver District Court Spanish Interpreters wrote:*

A few months ago, a team of Spanish interpreters was working in a trial where the defendant and the victim spoke Spanish only and the defense attorney spoke some Spanish. The defendant and the victim were former husband and wife and the charge was sexual assault. Throughout the interrogation, the victim used the Spanish phrase *me obligó* ("he forced me"). The defense attorney asked the witness if she felt obligated and she responded "No. He forced me." During closing arguments, the defense attorney referred to the phrase *me obligó* as "I felt obligated" and added a comment about this being a cultural matter.

The interpreters rose and asked the Court if they could approach with a language issue. After getting permission from the Court to do so, they stated on the record that the meaning of *me obligó* had been misrepresented by counsel since it means "he forced me" and not "I felt obligated." The judge reacted positively, thanking the interpreters for bringing this issue to her attention and ordering the jury to disregard the English version provided by counsel.

The Interpreter Coordinator for Denver District Court was notified of this incident and she mentioned it during a meeting she had with the judges the following week. They were interested in the occurrence and resolved to come up with a protocol for all interpreters to follow in cases like these. Hopefully, we will hear from them before our next issue of CAPTIONS comes out so we can let you know.

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*A certified interpreter from Colorado Springs wrote this about an experience in court several months ago:*

I was interpreting for a defendant during a trial for shoplifting. When we started, everyone introduced themselves and gave their backgrounds. I clearly stated my credentials and said I was Mrs. R's interpreter. The judge said that I would be 'representing' the defendant during the trial and I repeated that I would INTERPRET for her. Well, everything seemed really weird. Each time the judge wanted to say something to Mrs. R, she would say, " Ms. ----- , as Mrs. R's REPRESENTATIVE will you please...." I was getting real nervous about this whole ordeal and wanted the city attorney to say something but he didn't. I kept emphasizing that I was the

INTERPRETER. The clerk looked at me several times and smiled and shrugged her shoulders, like what can I do? At the end of the trial, Mrs. R was found guilty. I thought the case was not proven 'beyond a reasonable doubt' and you could see the judge wasn't completely convinced either. When the judge and clerk left the courtroom the judge told the clerk that Mrs. R's attorney didn't do a thing to help Mrs. R. and that she wasn't entirely convinced of Mrs. R's guilt. So the clerk said, 'Your Honor, I don't think you understand, but that lady only had an INTERPRETER not an ATTORNEY.'

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*Colleen Kent, from the Adam's County Interpreters Office, wrote:*

In Adams County there are four full-time Spanish staff interpreters, two who are certified and one who is partially certified. We interpret for all kinds of cases from traffic infractions, zoning violations, small claims and restraining/protection orders up to first degree murder. The system is basically set up to be similar to the process in Denver. We receive requests from the divisions that have interpreter matters, both Spanish and "exotic" languages. The managing court interpreter prepares a daily schedule in accordance with the requests received and the work is divided up according to ability and need. There are always traffic matters, such as DUIs, and usually domestic violence cases that are handled in county court. The felony matters are handled in district court by one of the two certified interpreters and include arraignments, pleas, motions hearings and trials. There are also traffic cases handled in traffic court on a daily basis. Calls are received in a central location and the next available interpreter goes to that assignment once she has finished the previous one. Appointments are coordinated with the Probation Department for misdemeanor and felony interviews and occasionally we help interpret for the Public Defender's and District Attorney's office outside of the courthouse. We also cover civil, domestic and small claims matters for a fee, usually requiring prior notice. We handle cases in Broomfield City and County as well, usually Tuesday afternoons and Fridays. The managing court interpreter arranges interpreters for the "exotic" languages for both Adams and Broomfield cases.

### ***Visit CAPI's website!***

You can find more information about upcoming events of interest to interpreters and translators, as well as resources for interpreters and those who are looking for an interpreter at

**[www.coloradointerpreters.org](http://www.coloradointerpreters.org)**

### News from the Court Interpreter Oversight Committee Submitted by Cathy Bahr and Julia Davis

The Court Interpreter Oversight Committee has met twice so far in 2004. At the first meeting, on January 23, 2004, Melinda Gonzalez Hibner and Cathy Bahr introduced Julia Davis to the group as CAPI's new representative and gave our own report on the last six months of CAPI's activities in the area of court interpreting and a preview of what's to come. CAPI was invited by Laurie Shera, District Administrator for the 17th Judicial District, to make a presentation on court interpreters at their state-wide meeting of court administrators in March. In addition, the two judge representatives present at the meeting expressed strong interest in getting CAPI on the agenda for their Judicial Conference in September. However, we learned at our second meeting (June 18) that we did not fit into the actual schedule, but that there will be an interpreter booth at the conference, which is scheduled to take place Sept. 19-21. CAPI is looking for volunteers to assist with the preparation of the booth and informational materials, as well as for interpreters who are willing to staff it during the conference.

There was also serious, animated discussion among the judges and the chief probation officer who is a delegate to the Oversight Committee for the need to get a mandate from the State of Colorado requiring the use of certified court interpreters, preferably in the form of a Chief Justice Directive, that is flexible enough to take into account areas of the state where no certified interpreter is available... yet! The CIOC has set the directive as a long term goal. In the immediate future, they have set two goals: that only certified Spanish interpreters be used for Felony I trials, and that all interpreters who are working in state jurisdictions be required to attend the Court Interpreter Orientation.

The CIOC also decided to go forward with the testing of interpreters in languages other than Spanish. For additional detail, see the final page of this newsletter.

We are highly encouraged by the progress, albeit slow, that is being made in raising and maintaining standards in court interpreting. The members of CAPI who have been active in our education and outreach efforts are to be applauded for their contribution to these measurable gains.

Cartoon submitted by Isabelle Houlbreque



### WHICH I MAKE HIM ARRIVE AT YOU

By: Mirtha Nebeker, U.S. District Court Staff  
Interpreter, Tucson

Believe it or not, computer translation programs have existed since the late 1950s. They have improved a lot over the years but still leave a lot to be desired, especially if the translated text involves a lot of colloquialisms and jargon. This exercise was a lot of fun to do! I typed in the same sentence in each one of the following translation engines: Alta Vista, Google Language Tools, Free Translation SDL International, and X10 Dictionary, with the following results:

Original sentence: ***Con todo el respeto que se merece, espero poder contar con un poco de su tiempo para que pueda leer esta carta, la cual le hago llegar a usted.***  
(With all due respect, I hope to be able to take a little of your time so you can read this letter which I send to you.)

Alta Vista: **Yet the respect which is deserved I hope to be able to count on a little time so that it can read this letter, which I make him arrive.**

Google: **The respect that is deserved I hope yet to be able to count on a little its time so that it can read this letter, which I make him arrive at you.**

Free Translation SDL: **With all the respect that deserves I expect to be able to count on a little time so that can read this letter, which I cause I arrive you.**

X 10 Dictionary: **The respect that is deserved I hope yet to be able to count on little its time so that it can read this letter, which I make him arrive at you.**

(Borrowed with from the "ACIA Communique," Summer, 2004, with permission the author.)

#### The following individuals serve as CAPI Officers and Directors...

Cathy Bahr - Co-chair  
Melinda González-Hibner - Co-chair  
Emy López - Treasurer  
Tonya Johnson - Secretary  
Isabelle Houlbreque - Director  
Ruth Warner - Director  
Elia Simón-Marín - Director

## ***Great news for interpreters working in languages other than Spanish!!***

CAPI is pleased to announce that on September 18, 2004, *for the first time ever*, **interpreters working in languages other than Spanish will be able to take the State Court Interpreter Certification Exam administered through the National Center for State Courts**. As part of its commitment to the highest interpreting standards in its court system, the Administrative Office of the Colorado State Judiciary will offer the certification exam to interpreters working in Russian, Vietnamese, Arabic, Laotian, Korean, Cantonese, Mandarin, Haitian Creole and Somali. Additionally, a 16-hour orientation will be offered in advance of the certification exam for **interpreters working in ALL languages but Spanish**.

Because state certification is the only professional credential available to interpreters working in these languages at this time, interpreters who become certified or partially certified will stand head and shoulders above non-certified interpreters in every court venue: municipal, county, state and federal. Additionally, interpreters who become certified will probably have the opportunity to travel to other states to cover state and federal proceedings when certification is required, as the number of certified interpreters in these languages is still very low at the national level. Regardless of certification, any interpreter attending the 16-hour orientation will benefit from a great training session and improve their professional skills!

So, if you are an interpreter who works in a language other than Spanish and you are ready to take your profession to the next level, here's your chance! If you work in one of the languages listed above, we urge you to give the certification exam a try. If the test is not yet available in your language (a Serbian test is presently being developed), don't despair -- just attend the orientation that is required to take the test and be ready when your test comes on line. Plus, reap the benefits of a great training program. Remember, when no certified interpreter is available, the roster of interpreters maintained by the state gives preference to those interpreters who are partially certified, followed by those who have attended the orientation, so regardless of your language combination you have nothing to lose and much to gain from attending the orientation!

**PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND FORMS.**

### ***CAPI needs your help. Please take note of these volunteer opportunities.***

- ⇒ **Joint CAPI/CTA Holiday Party Coordinator.** Contact Melinda at [intospanish@mindspring.com](mailto:intospanish@mindspring.com).
- ⇒ **CAPI Snack Coordinator.** Contact Emy at [emy.lopez@judicial.state.co.us](mailto:emy.lopez@judicial.state.co.us).
- ⇒ Volunteers are needed to provide **hospitality** to interpreters who come to a CAPI event from a distant corner of the state.
- ⇒ **Writers**, who could tell an interesting anecdote about their interpreting experience, or bring news about what is happening in their corner of the world are needed for CAPTIONS.
- ⇒ **Committee members**

## **NEXT CAPI MEETING**

Mark your calendar! The next CAPI general meeting will be in Fort Collins on September 25, 2004. More details will be forthcoming.

If you have any news or reviews to share with the readers of Captions, please send it to Ron Olson at [rolson@coloradointerpreters.org](mailto:rolson@coloradointerpreters.org) so that it can be included in the next issue.