

# THE NORTHWEST LINGUIST



Volume 23 No.2, Spring 2009

## Letter from the WITS President

By Kenneth Barger

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The official elections results are in, and the WITS Board has a new member! Welcome Sheila Harrington, who has been serving as WITS Treasurer and Webmaestra for a while now. We are grateful to her for taking on these vital functions of the organization and are glad to have her on the Board.

Also reelected are Kamal Abou-Zaki, Veronica Barber, Vania Haam, Eugenia Munday, and Hernan Navas-Rivas. It will be a pleasure to continue to serve this Board during the rest of my term as President.

Turning to another distinguished group, there is a new generation of Washington State-certified and registered interpreters, as follows: For Spanish, Laura Behnke, Sindy Filler, Amalia Sancha Gomez, Maria Vera and Denise Whiteley; Vietnamese, David Neathery; Cantonese, Ping Lau; Mandarin, Marissa Hsu; Italian, Ambra Wadley; and Romanian, Marcela Pop. Congratulations to all these interpreters for their success in attaining this valuable credential!

David Neathery is the first new certified Vietnamese interpreter in many years, and he has some interesting thoughts on the process. See his article elsewhere in this issue for his insights.

So, what's in store for WITS for 2009? We are looking forward to a robust season of programs, so stay tuned for announcements

throughout the year. We plan to focus many of our efforts on Eastern Washington this year. Our Annual Meeting will be held in the Spokane area on May 30, and will feature Andrea Florissi instructing on consecutive interpretation. He was such a hit last year at our Annual Meeting in Bellevue, we decided to ask him back for the event this year.

Shortly thereafter, on June 20, Bilingual Power and WITS will cosponsor a continuing education event in Ellensburg. We'll start with two hours on ethics, led by yours truly, and then offer a four-hour course on the use of Latin and Greek vocabulary in the field of medicine, with Keo Capestany. Make sure to mark your calendars for both events, as I'd love to see you there.

This year's WASCLA summit will be in the Spokane area as well. The tentative dates are October 16 and 17. If you haven't been to a WASCLA summit, don't miss this one—they are a wonderful opportunity for providers and consumers of language services to get together. There are also many opportunities to learn and to enjoy the company of colleagues. Visit [www.wascla.org](http://www.wascla.org) for updates, and while you're there, consider signing up for reminders of the monthly WASCLA conference call.

These are only some of the many events that WITS and NOTIS will participate in during 2009. Keep an eye on the

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 A chapter of the  
**American Translators Association**

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Our voicemail telephone number is (206) 382-5690.

WITS has a Web page which can be visited at www.witsnet.org.

## NOTIS Notes

### New Members

C Henrik Brameus	Dutch > English English ⇄ Swedish
Barry Fatland	Portuguese ⇄ English Spanish ⇄ English
Thomas Lederer	Latin > English Latin > German German ⇄ English
Drew Long	English ⇄ Spanish
Hsiu-Li "Laura" McGilvra	
Camellia Nieh	Japanese ⇄ English
Anna Ocampo	English > Spanish
Yumiko Osawa	
Lidia Pinzas	
Dongwon Seo	English ⇄ Korean
Jin So	Korean ⇄ English
Fernanda Spratt	
Sandra Vazquez	Spanish ⇄ English
Yolanda Velasco-Haley	
Megumi Yamamoto	Chinese > Japanese Chinese > English Japanese ⇄ English

### Corporate Members

LC Interpreters

## Cultural Corner

By Laura A. Wideburg

"Why not write a Cultural Corner on chocolate?" asked Kenny Barger at the annual WITS Board meeting. "Everybody's interested in chocolate."

Chocolate is made from the cocoa bean, and the cocoa plant is native to the Americas. The word has become international today: *chocolat* in French, *Schokolade* in German and *qiaokeli* in Mandarin Chinese. Many people assume that the word is borrowed from Spanish chocolate, and it is true that Spanish was the medium from which this word entered the international arena. But the truth of the matter is that Spanish borrowed the word *chocolatl* from the Nahuatl language, a native language of Mexico. Nahuatl, not surprisingly, is also the language of origin for cacao (cocoa is derived from this word as well): *cacahuatl*.

Other words borrowed from Nahuatl which have entered the English language include tomato (*tomatl*), coyote (*coyotl*), shack (*xacatli*), avocado (*ahuacatl*) and the place names Mexico and Guatemala. Nahuatl is a major Aztec language and a lingua franca in Central America at the time of the Spanish conquest. Nahuatl is still spoken today and is one of the largest Native languages in the Western Hemisphere with almost 2 million speakers.

The sound combination "tl" in Nahuatl should be well-known to Pacific Northwesterners. It is the sound which appears in "Se-a-tl", the Luhotsheed name for the Duwamish leader from whom the city of Seattle derives its name.

Prior to European arrival, there were thousands of Native languages spoken on this side of the planet, of which barely 300 remain as living languages spoken by at least one person. In the United States, the largest languages are Navajo (*Diné*), with 200,000 speakers, Ojibwe, Cree and Lakota. The languages which had the most influence on American English are Algonquin languages (including Wampanoag spoken by the Wampanoag Nation, whose people aided the Pilgrims in 1620 and who still live in Massachusetts today) and Lenni-Lenape (spoken by the Lenni and Lenape Nations previously known as the Delaware, and found in the Central Atlantic states, including the area where Washington, D.C. is now located).

Just think, every time you bite into a piece of chocolate or sip a cup of cocoa, you are using a word you have received from the Aztec Nation and the Nahuatl language!

## WITS Gets Involved!

By Milena Calderari-Waldron, WITS Advocacy Committee member

In January 2008, at the height of the spike in gas prices, Snohomish County announced their intention to slash interpreters' minimum rates by 50%, going down to \$50 per hour with a one-hour minimum. The vast majority of qualified interpreters refused to work for these new, lower rates. The lack of willing interpreters, together with new, higher rates in many other local jurisdictions, such as King County, led to a quick reversal of this new payment policy.

At the time, many of us who work in Snohomish County did not feel supported by our professional organizations. Then something momentous happened at the WITS 20th anniversary party: Several interpreters met with WITS President Kenneth Barger and WITS Advocacy Chair Claudia A'Zar to voice their disappointment with the lack of WITS involvement. At that meeting, WITS leadership committed to becoming more involved in improving interpreters' working conditions. Shortly thereafter, I was invited to join the WITS Advocacy Committee. Thus I started becoming more involved with different issues that affect our daily working lives.

By far the most personally rewarding involvement was in the efforts surrounding Senate Bill 5140, which would provide certified interpreters to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) patients for their health care needs. Currently many LEP patients use their friends, family members or even children to help them. This results in expensive and sometimes tragic consequences. This bill was written by a grassroots organization called Washington CAN. I went to their meetings, helped in the drafting of the bill, received training in lobbying, went to Olympia where I met with my district's Senator and Representatives, and eventually ended up testifying in front of the Health Care Committee. A copy of my testimony appears at the end of this article.

Advocacy comes from the Latin "advocare", which means to speak on behalf of. I truly have found my calling in advocacy and I have embraced it with the passion characteristic to Argentines. I believe in brainstorming and love to receive everybody's ideas. I tend to write them all up and eventually I submit them to the WITS Board in the shape of lengthy reports for them to make a decision on something. So please, if you have any issues of contention, please contact me via e-mail or phone. I am always at your disposal. At this time I am involved in the following issues:

- WASCLA's Online Interpreter Directory
- WASCLA's Interpreter and Translators Survey

- Lobbying for legislation favorable to interpreters
- Improving quality by supporting the hiring of credentialed interpreters
- Promoting understanding of credentialing among employers
- Understanding the do's and don'ts of independent contracting
- Establishing hiring guidelines for prospective employers

This year the board unanimously decided to give their full support to SB 5140 and sent e-mails to all WITS members urging them to contact their representatives directly. It is crucial that we interpreters mobilize ourselves and lobby our politicians to pass legislation favorable to us. Just like the Snohomish County episode demonstrated: United we stand, divided we fall!

*Milena's testimony before the Senate Health Care Committee:*

"Madame Chair, members of the committee, my name is Milena Calderari-Waldron. I am a Court and DSHS Medical and Social Services Certified Interpreter and a member of the Advocacy Committee of the Washington State Court Interpreters and Translators Society, better known as WITS.

The magnitude of this moment is not lost on me. You see, I grew up under dictatorship. My presence here today, in front of you all, is what makes America great. And this Language Access Bill here is all about American greatness.

I am here for those who can't speak, who can't be understood, can't be heard. As a professional interpreter I should be there when the oncologist tells the patient he has cancer. I should be there sight translating the surgery consent which protects the health care provider from lawsuits and informs the patient about what's to come. I should be there when the pediatrician explains immunizations to a mother. I should be there when they obtain DNA evidence from a rape victim. I should be there when the genetic counselor tells a pregnant woman that her unborn child has Down syndrome. And I also should be there when she terminates the pregnancy or decides to carry it to term.

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## Letter from the NOTIS President

By Laura A. Wideburg

January 2009 was truly a “trial by fire” month as I negotiated my feet into the large shoes which Larissa Kulinich left behind. Not only were there new members on the NOTIS Board which had to be brought up to speed, but there was also the need to appear before the Senate to testify in favor of SB 5140 and deliver a letter of support within three weeks of taking office! It was intimidating to appear before such an august body of politicians, but I was eager to show NOTIS’ support for our medical interpreters.

In order to understand our sister organization, WITS, much better (since I work in the translation side of the business), I attended WITS’ January Board meeting as well as the WITS Program Committee at the end of January. This gave me the wonderful opportunity to meet the movers and shakers at WITS face-to-face.

The Northwest Linguist also had to come out that January, and with the able assistance of Rosa Benzedú Allen manning (womaning?) the fastest layout in the Pacific Northwest, the issue made it into the hands of the members on time!

Katrin Rippel has been meeting with the World Trade Center in Tacoma (the only certified WTC in the Pacific Northwest) as part of her Outreach Committee endeavors, and she and I met with Mariam Anderson on April 7th to discuss ways that NOTIS and the WTC Tacoma can work together. The WTC often receives requests for translators and interpreters, and is eager to join us in connecting potential clients with highly professional and qualified translators and interpreters.

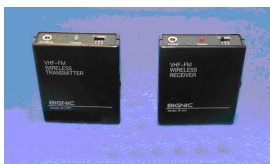
Our program committee has been extremely busy finding opportunities for our members to continue their professional education, receive ATA credits if needed and network with colleagues. See the calendar for the upcoming exciting events and much thanks to Andrea Brugman and Jamie Lucero for their hard work! In addition, the MedSIG (Medical Special Interest Group) would like to make sure to inform everyone that their Forums are open to all NOTIS and WITS members with interest in medical interpretation and translation. We have an exciting year ahead and I look forward to sharing it with you as NOTIS President!

### Wireless Communications Equipment for Interpreters

The use of wireless equipment for simultaneous interpretation frees the interpreter from having to sit next to the listener. The interpreter can now move to a spot offering the best hearing and visibility, where the interpreter can concentrate on the message without interruptions or distractions.

Although some courts provide this type of equipment for its interpreters, availability is not always guaranteed. And many courts and other venues don’t even offer it.

**For less than \$100, interpreters can now have their own set of wireless transmitter and receiver, including microphone and earphone.** In many instances, the rental of similar equipment for just one day exceeds this purchase cost.



TN Communications offers dependable, long-lasting wireless equipment. Equipment is very light and small and easily fits in a shirt pocket. Transmitters and receivers come with a one-year warranty.

In addition to our VHF single-channel equipment, we offer VHF 3-channel equipment and our newest addition, UHF 16-channel equipment. We also have battery chargers and optional headset microphones and headphones.

Visit [www.tncommunications.com](http://www.tncommunications.com) for product specifications and availability. Or you may call 1-888-371-9005 or email [info@tncommunications.com](mailto:info@tncommunications.com) for more information.

## The Benefits of the \$10 Website

By Judy Jenner, *The Entrepreneurial Linguist*

In the era of social media and Web 2.0, it is more important than ever for language services providers to have a web presence. As businesses, we have to meet customers' needs, and when looking for services, most customers default to Google. While there are many fantastic ways to promote one's business online, the first and most crucial step is having a solid website. All future web strategies (search engine optimization, blogging, etc.) will build upon that. Your website will allow you to expand your client base and will let you reach potential customers who would otherwise not know that your business exists.

Many language professionals don't have websites because they can be quite expensive, which presents a significant barrier to entry. In addition, it's oftentimes low on the to-do-list in most people's busy professional lives. Many of us also feel quite content with the customers we have or are already working at maximum capacity. From a profit-maximizing point of view, increasing your customer base is always something to strive for, especially if you can find clients who are highly desirable (for instance, who pay your stated rates and pay promptly). In my experience, it's really been financially rewarding to broaden one's reach, expand the marketing strategies and target new clients. In terms of price-sensitivity, it's a lot easier to command your desired rate from a new customer than trying to adjust your rates (for inflation, for instance) with existing customers. This isn't to say that all customers you find online will be more desirable than your existing ones (yes, you will most likely get some fraudulent inquiries), but trying it is certainly worth a few hours and a few dollars. If you invest only a few hours a year and \$10 into your website, you'd only have to generate a few hundred dollars in business to break even, which is a very realistic goal.

Contrary to popular belief, creating a website doesn't have to be expensive or time-consuming. Thanks to the smart folks at Google who created Google Apps and Google Sites, you can register and manage

a website for as little as \$10 a year. While you won't have a top-of-the-line website, you will get an easy-to-manage site with an associated e-mail account that gives potential clients a quick overview of your services and qualifications. My recommendation is to at least include sections on About, Contact, Services, Rates, Qualifications, Clients, etc. Be sure to keep things simple and easy to navigate: your goal is to make sure the customer contacts you after visiting your site.

Sign Up at Google Apps (<http://www.google.com/apps/intl/en/business/index.html>) for the standard edition. There is even a video tutorial ([http://www.google.com/a/help/intl/en/admins/resources/setup/setup\\_video\\_s1.html](http://www.google.com/a/help/intl/en/admins/resources/setup/setup_video_s1.html)). After a few minutes, you can activate your e-mail account and start building your new website with Google Sites. You will not need the help of a web developer to get started: building a website is as simple as editing a document. If you have any questions, the well-structured Google help center (<http://www.google.com/support/sites/bin/topic.py?topic=14991>) is a good resource.

Supporting fellow small businesses and entrepreneurs by hiring a web designer is also a good bet. If you are ready to spend a bit more, look for a local specialist, who should be able to build a basic website and maintain it for a few hundred dollars.

### Brief biography:

Judy Jenner is a Spanish and German translator who runs Twin Translations out of Las Vegas and Vienna, Austria, where she was born. Judy grew up in a trilingual household in Mexico City and has lived in the US since she was a teenager. She holds an MBA in Marketing from the University of Nevada Las Vegas and is a frequent presenter on business-related translation topics. An early adapter of localized content, Judy ran the Spanish-language translation and content department of a major travel website for more than five years. She pens a translation blog, *Translation Times*.

## Life after Certification: Becoming an Invisible Interpreter

By David Neathery.

Washington State certified Vietnamese court interpreter

Kaizen is a Japanese term for gradual, unending improvement, doing little things better; setting -- and achieving -- ever-higher standards. Or, stated differently, kaizen learning or improvement is bite-size in magnitude but significant in impact. These kaizen steps sometimes lead to breakthroughs or milestones. Kaizen is totally contrary to the adage “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” Kaizen is the building block of the Toyota’s JIT (Just-in-Time) Production System, continually pushing for gradual improvements to stay ahead of the competition. For the legal interpreter, kaizen means that our learning and improving doesn’t stop when we obtain court certification; rather, it has only just begun.

My ultimate objective is to become an invisible interpreter — an interpreter who is so proficient that he simply vanishes during the source language-target language exchange, as if the interpreter didn’t exist. This is a somewhat daunting objective, but as long as I make a kaizen improvement along the way, I provide a better service for the listener (the by-product of which is increased marketability for me). Here are some of my thoughts on the major milestones or components to becoming an invisible interpreter.

### 1. Flipping the language pair

The question becomes: What would it take for me to become a certified court interpreter in the foreign country for the same language pair in which I’m certified here in the States? It doesn’t mean I have to physically travel to the foreign country to get certified there, although that would be a commendable effort. I just have to recognize and focus my training on those portions of the certification, training, and hands-on experience in which by nature, I don’t have enough practice. This means becoming proficient in foreign-to-English sight translations (which is the opposite of what the interpreter usually does: sight translate an English document into the foreign language). It also means learning simultaneous interpreting into English.

### 2. Cultural competence

Language is intrinsic in culture and culture is inherent in language. They simply exist side-by-side. Culture may be seen as beliefs, values, customs, behavior, food,

clothing, art, music, and much more. It does take time to become versed in these macro-cultural components. As a simple example, let’s look at the concept of time. Asians to this day more or less still rely on the sunrise-to-sunset notion of time. As such, to an Asian, “P.M.” [Latin: post meridiem — literally “after noon”] is a very limited clock time from about noon to 3 pm, “evening” is from 3 to 6 pm, and “night” is anything from after sunset around 6pm to sunrise the next day. Unless we’re conscious of this cultural concept of time, a client might say that the time was in the evening when it was only 4pm and the literal interpretation would lead most Americans to understand that the time was after 6 p.m.

Some colleagues who work in Asian languages shared their comments on the notion of time. Paul Tu, California and Washington certified Vietnamese court interpreter and former WITS and NOTIS board member, notes that “To many Vietnamese the notions of distance and time are very relative. For instance, distance measured in inches, feet, or car lengths may be problematic; also, one second and one minute are often the same, just a short amount of time. This, I think, is tied to the old traditions of getting up when the rooster crows, going to work as the sun appears on the horizon and going home when the sun goes down, without relying on watches or clocks. For measurements, people used hand span (*gang tay*) or arm length (*sai tay*).”

On the other hand, Alan Lai, Washington State certified Cantonese court interpreter and Crime Victim Service Director at the Chinese Information and Service Center, points out that “Your observations on the notion of time are true to some Asians but not necessarily to all. It depends on the individual’s upbringing, education and socialization in the US. Overall, it is not wrong.”

Kwang Chough, Washington State certified Korean court interpreter, notes that “The time concept is indeed different. The Korean interpreters get together and talk about these issues.”

Another cultural example is the multiplicity of terms of address in Asian languages based on sex, age, kinship

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and social status. For example, “uncle” exists in Vietnamese as *cau/chu/bac/duong*, and “aunt” as *di/co/mo/thim*, depending on whether the uncle or aunt is on the mother’s or father’s side, older or younger, an in-law, or from North or South Vietnam. The Chinese have similar differentiations for aunts and uncles and four different terms for cousins, depending on the relationship.

On a smaller scale, interpreters can become more culturally sensitive and perhaps have some fun along the way. An example of a kaizen activity is creating a list of equivalent Vietnamese-American idioms and slang.

My list is only about a page long, but it was started from scratch a few years back. Sometimes I would go on for days, weeks, or even months without adding any new entries, but each time it happens, it’s a monumental event. The significance is not just simply knowing the equivalent expression, but also understanding the cultural and historical derivations behind the expressions, in both languages! As a bonus, sometimes the colloquial or slang expression has its roots in a third language or culture! As an interpreter, I do not attempt to explain the colloquial expression but rather state its nearest equivalent expression in the target language. The reason is simple: the client is entitled to hear the expression as if it were spoken in his or her own native language. Of course, if I’m caught off guard and unaware of the equivalent expression, I “explain” it in the interpretation, which is fine, but not optimal, because that gives the meaning but not the impact. Hence, this is an opportunity for me to do behind-the-scenes research and possibly add a new entry to my list, and use it next time.

Why is “kick the bucket” equivalent to “go sell salt;” “getting a taste of your own medicine” to “your own stick hitting you in the back;” “tie the knot” to “cross the river;” “lip service” to “the document is in his shirt pocket but he announces from his pants pocket;” “beating around the bush” to “circling in three countries;” “keeping up with the Joneses” to “have elephant, get angel;” “splitting hair” to “stir up the leaves to find the bug;” “counting sheep” to “yawn the flies.” In this last expression, if I were to interpret and explain “counting sheep” as “being bored to death,” it would do the trick but only give half the picture, for the client is not only “entitled” to an available equivalent expression but to experience its impact, as well. Why sheep and why flies? Culture.

If figuratively go on tip-toe when interpreting equivalent slang expressions including vulgarisms, epithets, and

street lingo. Any expression containing the word “cool” or “dig” has situation-specific implications in both the source and target languages. Then, here are a couple of straightforward equivalent slang expressions whereby, if I don’t know the equivalent expressions, I only render, at best, only the message content but with very little or no message impact: having it out, asking for it, being an ass. With this last expression, there is no choice but to use the equivalent Vietnamese expression *ca chon* (“bad” tomato). Otherwise, I’ll be “up the creek” if I were to try to explain the expression in Vietnamese with any reference to anatomy whatsoever!

### 3. Becoming an empathetic interpreter

To me, to become a proficient interpreter, and more importantly, to provide better service to my client, I need to be empathetic. Thus I can anticipate my client’s utterances or train of thought, subconsciously preparing my interpretation, and then interpret. What’s my client’s understanding in terms of being guilty: “simply being accused of something,” “preponderance of the evidence” or “beyond a reasonable doubt”? I try not only to walk in my client’s shoes but to also be in tune with the situation at hand. To give an example, I remember my first time interpreting at a trial was a very strenuous experience, as I was constantly playing the catch-up game with interpreting, being caught up and thrown off in the trial protocols of objections, rebuttals, and so forth. Thus, I had to do some homework in the area of trial dynamics including rules of evidence (relevant, material); impeaching a witness for competency and credibility (history, contradictory statements); when leading and hypothetical questions are allowed or not allowed; the five hearsay exceptions. By being empathetic to my client and to the situation, I can interpret much more effectively, for example, by anticipating the objections and rebuttals, and meanwhile mentally preparing the standard interpreted phrases and to either give them as-is or with some minor adaptations as needed. So, interpreting in this way is not just the mere translating of terms, but it is the processing and understanding of the message and rendering this message with the same intent and impact, as if the interpreter were invisible.

One way I work towards this goal is by getting involved with the community. On a pro bono basis, I’ve been teaching Vietnamese to Vietnamese American school-age students from grades six through nine at Hong Bang Vietnamese Language School in Renton (which sub-leases the

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## Bellevue Community College T&I

By Ellen Whiting

Bellevue Community College has a translation and interpretation (T&I) training program that, in addition to offering academic certificates in translation and interpretation, offers a variety of excellent continuing education courses and workshops for T&I professionals. One such recent workshop was presented on April 4th by BCC T&I Program Manager and regular faculty member Jamie Lucero, who is also a professional French-English translator. It was titled “Computer Tools and Methods for Great Translation Performance.”

The phrase “machine translation” conjures up horrible visions of mangled sentences, nightmarish syntax and unintelligible garbage, which is the wave of the future, or so we’ve been told. Anyone who has ever been asked to “edit” such a piece will readily agree that it is often much easier to start from scratch and just write a good translation without the dubious help of the machine.

But Mr. Lucero presented an outstanding, information-packed workshop that dispelled those fears and showed how the freelancer can use the available technology to his/her advantage without sacrificing quality, but rather to make the work experience more pleasant. Topics covered included how to keep your computer running at top efficiency, how to increase your typing speed using keyboard shortcuts, how to use translation memory for consistency, how to convert files from one format to another, various software that is available, some free of charge and some for very affordable prices, and how to make sure you are getting paid adequately and not being pushed around by the client. I heartily recommend this workshop to anyone who is a freelancer, who wants to keep up with the rest of the world and learn how to use available technology to his/her advantage.

For more information on the program, go to: <http://www.gotobcc.com/translation/>

You can also contact Jamie Lucero by email: [jlucero@bellevuecollege.edu](mailto:jlucero@bellevuecollege.edu) or by phone at: (425) 564-3177.

## IN MEMORIAM



We mourn Steven Kimball, who passed away on March 2, after a long fight with leukemia. Steve held the rare distinction of being certified as a Washington State court interpreter in two languages, Spanish and Russian, in addition to being federally certified in Spanish. He was admired for his knowledge, as well as for his kindness and positive attitude, even as he endured the ravages of his illness. Steve became more and more interested in climate-related issues, writing a blog at [www.climaticidechronicles.org](http://www.climaticidechronicles.org) under the pseudonym Johnny Rook. This web site now features a moving tribute to him, and some interpreters have made a donation to this group in his name.



Suzanne Weinmann was one of the first generation of Washington State-certified Spanish court interpreters. She shared her knowledge and expertise freely with her Yakima-area colleagues, mentoring and guiding other interpreters during her long career. In addition to her contributions to our profession, she was active in several area churches and in the community. Cancer took her from us on March 7. Expressions of condolences to friends and family may be sent to Dora Ornelas, Yakima County Superior Court, 128 N 2nd Street, Yakima, WA 98901. Memorial donations for medical expenses may be made to the Suzanne Weinmann memorial account at Yakima Valley Credit Union.

## Meeting our Members

By Katrin Rippel

In every issue of the Northwest Linguist, Katrin meets a NOTIS / WITS member and presents the interesting aspects of each member's life and how they entered into the field of translation and interpretation. Who knows, next issue you may be the one she meets!

### Message on Vision and Realization — meeting Jonas Nicotra

There is this one familiar person and name one can see on the scene and behind the scenes at NOTIS: at events and workshops, at NOTIS board meetings, and in emails sent via NOTIS Office Manager — Jonas Nicotra. Energetic and with an open smile, he is coping not only with numerous duties but also with his illness, a cancer he was diagnosed with years ago.

Jonas Nicotra was born in Brazil, where he grew up in a trilingual environment of Italian, French and Portuguese. He went to an American school, adding English to his language pool. When he was 18, he came to the US to continue his studies. Later on, he went to France and Switzerland, where he has family, to further his studies and to teach as well. Nevertheless, Seattle and the Pacific Northwest became his final destination.

Brazilians are multi-taskers, Jonas said with his smile. When he was young and ready to get his driver's license, his father suggested a professional one so that he could have a profession to fall back on if necessary.

With that practical ability in his blood, he has obtained certificates in many areas such as translation and interpretation as well as computer technology. He also has had training in acting, music and sound technology while playing in a band in Los Angeles. He has even done some runway modeling as well! His experiences in acting, in addition to his trained ear for phonetics and the finesse of dialects, made him an excellent voice talent in the English and Portuguese languages, leading him to become the narrator for a documentary which was shown all over the US and Latin America.

Jonas is a member of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (French and Portuguese). He has studied US / European business law and contracts, accounting, economics, management of international trade

operations, human resource management, instructional technology, localization and internationalization, and the medical field, especially natural medicine, oncology, epidemiology, and chiropractic. Jonas has an M.A. in Portuguese linguistics and pedagogy from the University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and holds B.A.s in French, Romance Linguistics, and International Studies from the University of Washington in Seattle. "Some classes overlapped, so why not pursue all the B.A.s at the same time?" Jonas comments with simple logic.

He also has a Master of Education, with focus on adult & higher education, TESL, instructional technology, and human resources management from the Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA. Jonas has developed curriculums for various institutions, consulted on international matters and, of course, translated Portuguese < > English and French into English and Portuguese.

He serves on various Boards and Committees, one of them NOTIS where he helped as a director and was the Program and the Outreach Co-Chair. This year he became Office Manager of NOTIS and is responsible for all office affairs and operations of our organization. He is also currently a member of the Washington State Department of Health Prevention Planning Committee, dealing with prevention and education of HIV and other STDs statewide.

The most intriguing and ongoing project for him is the development of a textbook and exercise book for learning Portuguese. "I couldn't find one single book so far that is really good and efficient in teaching and learning Portuguese," Jonas says. His focus is on comparative syntax and phonetics. He has studied the patterns of first and second language acquisition, and applying and adjusting these patterns to the learning of Portuguese. This long-term project is also one reason for his next goal: a PhD in computational linguistics / instructional technology for better realizing his vision by developing training software.

Ongoing self-enrichment, constant learning and love for teaching, together with a passion for technology, education, medicine and law, are just a few of the many ingredients for Jonas' active life. He has used them for overcoming obstacles, healing his body and soul and fulfilling his life's mission. Considering how much he has accomplished so far, do you think anything could stop him now?

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calendar in *The Northwest Linguist* and at our respective web sites for more information.

Finally, we have begun to discuss the possibility of a mentoring program. This is in its earliest stages at this point, so we need your ideas. We are interested in ways of connecting mentors with mentees or study partners with each other, in order to help more interpreters and aspiring interpreters to pass the different exams. If you have suggestions in this regard, or if you wish to be a mentor or have a mentor, please contact me or Milena Calderari-Waldron.

That wraps up my letter for this time around. I'm off to meditate on the many things I love about interpreting. Let's make it a great year for interpreters and for WITS! our respective web sites for more information.

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I do not judge, nor sides I take.  
I do not explain, nor do I convince.  
I just repeat what has been said,  
Omitting nothing, including everything.  
I am the voice that speaks for you,  
Yours and theirs too.  
And though only me you think you hear,  
It's all of them that you will hear.

Thanks for your time.

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facility from Anthony Catholic School). The class is two hours long every Sunday, tracking with the local school schedule. The curriculum is a scaled-down education for "native" Vietnamese students in basic reading and writing in the Vietnamese language, plus understanding and writing Vietnamese poetry and advanced composition that I throw in for a change of pace. Also on a volunteer basis for Helping Link (in Chinatown), every now and then I teach a 10-week accelerated Vietnamese-as-second-language class to adult Americans or Vietnamese Americans. This class usually runs two hours, two evenings a week. Every so often these two classes run concurrently, and my schedule becomes hectic: work as interpreter in the day time, teach two evenings a week and on Sunday, and prepare for classes and grade homework in between. Nonetheless, I'd equate volunteering to "give and you shall receive" for in providing service to others I'm enriched personally from a cultural and linguistic standpoint.

#### *Acknowledgements*

I want to extend my appreciation to two additional colleagues who have provided invaluable feedback and suggestions to me while writing this article: Kenny Barger (Federally certified Spanish court interpreter and WITS President) for his overall support, feedback and encouragement for writing the article; and Sam Mattix (Washington certified Laotian court interpreter and registered Thai court interpreter, former WITS President) for his insightful comments and editing of the article.

#### **Jokebox**

A translator receives a request to translate 600 words.

Client: How long will it take?

Translator: About a week.

Client: A week? God managed to create the entire world in that time!

Translator: Well, take a look at the world and then take a look at my translation!

## Events Calendar

Date	Event	Details	Location
May 16-17 2009	Building your Business Professional Development for Translators and Interpreters	<a href="http://www.atanet.org/pd/business/">www.atanet.org/pd/business/</a>	Washington, DC
May 13-17, 2009	Association of Language Companies (ALC) 7th Annual Conference	<a href="http://www.alcus.org">www.alcus.org</a>	Austin, TX
May 15-17, 2009	National Assn. of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators (NAJIT) 30th Annual Conference	<a href="http://www.najit.org">www.najit.org</a>	Scottsdale, AZ
May 18 - 22, 2009	Simultaneous Interpretation Seminar with James Nolan	<a href="mailto:jamespnolan@aol.com">jamespnolan@aol.com</a>	Coral Springs, FL
May 28-29, 2009	National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC) 3rd Annual NCIHC Membership Meeting	<a href="http://www.ncihc.org">www.ncihc.org</a>	Las Vegas, NV
May 29, 2009	De Chile a Chihuahua: Reformas Procesales Penales en América Latina Video presentation	<a href="mailto:tina.williamson@courts.wa.gov">tina.williamson@courts.wa.gov</a>	Seatac, WA
May 30, 2009	New England Translators Association (NETA) 13th Annual NETA Conference and Exhibition	<a href="http://www.netaweb.org/cms">www.netaweb.org/cms</a>	Boston, MA
May 30, 2009	Wordfast 1	<a href="http://www.notisnet.org/program/notiscal.asp">www.notisnet.org/program/ notiscal.asp</a>	BCC Bellevue, WA
May 30, 2009	WITS Annual Meeting and Consecutive Interpretation/Note-Taking Workshop	<a href="http://www.witsnet.org">www.witsnet.org</a>	Cheney, WA
June 6-7, 2009	ATA Portuguese Language Division (PLD) 13th Annual ATA-PLD Mid-Year Conference	<a href="http://www.pldata.net">www.pldata.net</a>	Amherst, MA
June 12-14, 2009	Delaware Valley Translators Association (DVTA) New York Circle of Translators (NYCT) National Capital Area Chapter of ATA (NCATA) 3rd East Coast Regional Conference	<a href="http://www.dvta.org">www.dvta.org</a>	Philadelphia, PA
June 20, 2009	Plato and Cicero at the Clinic/ Ethics Workshop	<a href="http://www.witsnet.org">www.witsnet.org</a>	Ellensburg, WA
June 20-21, 2009	Upper Midwest Translators & Interpreters Association 2009 Conference	<a href="http://www.umtia.org">www.umtia.org</a>	St. Paul, MN
June 26- 28, 2009	Interpreta 2009	<a href="mailto:info@notisnet.org">info@notisnet.org</a>	Mendoza, Argentina

## Events Calendar (continued)

Date	Event	Details	Location
July-December 2009	TIP-Lab Twentieth Spanish Translation/ Revision Workshop	<a href="http://www.witsnet.org/programs/TIP-Lab20thworkshop.pdf">www.witsnet.org/programs/TIP-Lab20thworkshop.pdf</a>	Online
July 6-10, 2009	Simultaneous Interpretation Seminar with James Nolan	<a href="mailto:jamespnolan@aol.com">jamespnolan@aol.com</a>	Ottawa, Canada
July 30 - August 1, 2009	10th Annual ATA-TCD Mid-Year Conference	<a href="http://www.ata-tcd.com">www.ata-tcd.com</a>	Quebec City, Canada
August 1, 2009	WITS/NOTIS Picnic	<a href="http://www.witsnet.org">www.witsnet.org</a> or <a href="http://www.notisnet.org">www.notisnet.org</a>	Magnolia Park, Seattle, WA
July 31, 2009	De Chile a Chihuahua: Reformas Procesales Penales en América Latina Video presentation	<a href="mailto:tina.williamson@courts.wa.gov">tina.williamson@courts.wa.gov</a>	Seatac, WA
August 28, 2009	De Chile a Chihuahua: Reformas Procesales Penales en América Latina Video presentation	<a href="mailto:tina.williamson@courts.wa.gov">tina.williamson@courts.wa.gov</a>	Olympia, WA
September 12-13, 2009	Tennessee Assn. of Professional Interpreters & Translators Annual Conference	<a href="http://www.tapit.org">www.tapit.org</a>	Nashville, TN

For more international, national, and local events, please see: [www.notisnet.org](http://www.notisnet.org), [www.witsnet.org](http://www.witsnet.org), [www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org)

## NOTIS / WITS Board Meetings

Organization	Date & Time	Location	Contact
NOTIS	May 15, 2009, 6:30 p.m.	TBD	<a href="mailto:info@notisnet.org">info@notisnet.org</a>
WITS	May 28, 2009, 7:30 p.m.	telephonic	<a href="mailto:kennethbarger@q.com">kennethbarger@q.com</a>
NOTIS	June 20, 2009, 6:30 p.m.	TBD	<a href="mailto:info@notisnet.org">info@notisnet.org</a>

All Board Meetings are open to the membership of their respective organizations.

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