



# THE TAPIT TIMES

TAPIT—The Tennessee Association of Professional Interpreters and Translators

Volume 2, Issue No. 2  
Fall 2008

The Tennessee Association of Professional Interpreters and Translators invites Practicing Medical Interpreters to

## Practical Health Care-Related Interpreting Topics

A training workshop presented by **Cynthia Roat, MPH**

and sponsored by **The Joy of Music Youth Music School**

Valuable workshop topics include:

- A terminology presentation that reveals a systematic and personal plan for building a bilingual medical vocabulary, with a view to using written and electronic resources for learning word meanings in English and equivalent words in another language,
- A look at interpreting interaction related to rehabilitation, specifically physical therapy, occupational therapy, and pain management,
- Basic anatomy, physiology of the musculoskeletal and nervous systems, and vocabulary common in rehab assignments will be stressed using practice dialogues,
- Basic information on the anatomy and physiology of diabetes, key vocabulary common to endocrinology and diabetes counseling followed by practice dialogues,
- "Shifting Gears" —An examination of the purpose of interpreted communication in relation to appropriate interpreter roles, ethics and standards of practice.

A dinner with presenter Cindy Roat is planned for Saturday evening. ■



**Cynthia Roat** is a consultant and trainer on issues related to language access in health care. She is the principal author of *Bridging the Gap*, currently the most widely offered training program for medical interpreters in the United States. Ms. Roat is a founding member of the Society of Medical Interpreters (SOMI) in Seattle, and is Chair of the Advisory Committee of the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC). She is also a national advocate for the field of health care interpreting and for language access in general. Cindy can be reached at: [cindy.roat@alumni.williams.edu](mailto:cindy.roat@alumni.williams.edu)

## Transcription and Translation (TT) Workshop, Coming Next Month

January 17-19, 2009—Belmont University—Nashville, Tennessee

Presented by **Judith Kenigson Kristy**

This hands-on, 17-hour training with well-known TT guru Judith Kenigson Kristy will cover all aspects of Tape Transcription and Translation theory and practice.

Participants will use their own computers and the listening equipment in the Belmont University Language Laboratory. The instructor will lecture on the fundamentals of this discipline, the state of current research in the field, important guidelines and ethical considerations. With regard to expert testimony, there will be a presentation on how to bullet-proof TT testimony so that it stands up to adversarial scrutiny.

The instructor will thoroughly discuss—and show through actual TT examples—the best listening techniques and TT protocols. Participants will install and learn how to use computer-based software for the tasks of sound manipulation and en-

hancement, transcription and translation. There will be group and individual transcription and translation practice with feedback from the instructor.

Cost: \$300 non-members; \$250 for TAPIT members. Register at: [www.tapit.org](http://www.tapit.org).

This workshop has been approved by the Tennessee Administrative Office of the Courts for foreign language credits and general credits. ■



**Judith Kenigson Kristy** is a Federal, Tennessee and Indiana State Certified Spanish Court Interpreter and a Co-Founder of TAPIT.

## Member Spotlight: Patricia Pringle, Ph.D.

By **Claire Peterson**

When you are born in a fully-bilingual country, learning other languages becomes the norm.

This was true for Patricia Pringle, who is featured in the "Member Spotlight" in this issue of the TAPIT Times. But in this case, Patricia also "walks the walk" by

performing Japanese Noh dance and song. During this interview, I was struck by the way one phase of Patricia's experience has flowed into a subsequent job opportu-

nity. Her career has developed from a path oriented toward academia to practical experiences with Sony and Panasonic.

These opportunities then led into the consulting and training programs, which now occupy 70 percent of her time.

The moral I see in her story is that seemingly unrelated

See Member Spotlight : Page 7



## TAPIT TIMES

Editor ..... Marvyn Bacigalupo-Tipps  
 Managing Editor ..... Diane G. H. Kilmer  
 Graphic Designer ..... Ronny Tipps  
 Webmaster ..... Ronny Tipps

## TAPIT

P.O. Box 91116  
 Nashville, TN 37209  
 (615) 824-7878  
[www.tapit.org](http://www.tapit.org)  
[info@tapit.org](mailto:info@tapit.org)

## Inside This Issue

Practical Healthcare <i>Presented By Cindy Roat</i>	1
Translators Spotlight: Patricia Pringle, Ph.D. <i>By Claire Peterson</i>	1
Translation and Transcription Workshop <i>Presented By Judith Kenigson Kristy</i>	1
New Website Coming <i>By Ronny Tipps</i>	2
President's Letter <i>By Marvyn Bacigalupo-Tipps, Ph.D.</i>	2
East Tennessee TAPIT Members Active <i>By Ping Chen Cross, M.D.</i>	4
How to Do Business With the State of Tennessee	4
Members in the News: Nick Pérez	4
49th Annual ATA Conf. <i>By Ardis Nelson, Ph.D.</i>	5
"Medical Friday" <i>By Angela Mendoza</i>	6
Sign Language Interpreting <i>By Heather Lawson, CI/CT</i>	8
Calendar of Events	10
TAPIT Conference Offers Something for Everyone <i>By Elena Ottaway</i>	11

## Multilingual Glossaries and Other Goodies!

■ The English/Spanish Glossary of LAUSD Terminology, Second Edition, 2003, is good for educational jargon, administrative terminology relevant to schools, legal terminology for programs, and for laws applicable to schools. Good selections of procedural phrases from Roberts Rules of Order can also be found, as well as great terminology for juvenile issues addressed in Juvenile Court and Social Services. Besides proving to be a good resource for software and computer terms used in the educational arena, this glossary also offers a nice inclusion of psychological, behavioral and health terms.

[www.dsala.org/.../traducciondelosterminosusadosporeldistritoescolar.pdf](http://www.dsala.org/.../traducciondelosterminosusadosporeldistritoescolar.pdf)

■ Discover online newspapers from many Spanish-speaking countries, US papers in Spanish like the Wall Street Journal, Spanish media and newspapers produced in the US, and also news in Spanish and Portuguese from BBC and CNN.

<http://www.spanishnewyork.com/spanish-newspapers-in-spanish.html>

■ Strangely, Mexico is not included in the list above, but, rather, in resources. (See below.)

<http://www.spanishnewyork.com/spanish-newspapers-in-spanish.html#General%20Resources>

The resources button takes you to broadcast media programs and more newspapers in Spanish from all over the world. Mexico is here with an incredible range of local and national newspapers:

<http://www.zonalatina.com/Zlpapers.htm#MEXICO>.

## New Website Development in Progress

### Website Aims for January 1st

By Ronald G. (Ronny) Tipps

The goal for TAPIT's new website is that the site will be operational, on-line, and ready for use by January 1st, 2009.

The Website Committee has held several meetings with CentreSource, the website development company. We have evaluated four versions of the site map. The last one seems to be exactly what we need, down to the last detail.



Ronny Tipps will be the webmaster of the new TAPIT website.

CentreSource also has sent us "wire frames," basically a screen shot of each page as it will show up on the website. We have tinkered, changed, and modified various aspects of the site until it looks good to us.

We think the website will be user-friendly, providing lots of information, ease in joining the Association, and simple registration and payment links for special events and training. At this point, we are waiting for CentreSource to proceed with the next step.

This involves the actual coding, programming, and de-bugging.

Of course, we will have tests and "tune-ups" of the site before it "goes live." You can be sure you will be kept informed of future developments. Stay tuned. ■

**Ronny Tipps**, serves on the TAPIT Website Committee and is U.S. Army certified in spoken and written Japanese and can be contacted at: [ronaldg@bellsouth.net](mailto:ronaldg@bellsouth.net).

The other members of the Website Committee are:

**Kurt Snyder**, Co-webmaster  
[kurtis.e.snyder@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:kurtis.e.snyder@vanderbilt.edu)

**Marvyn Bacigalupo-Tipps**, TAPIT President  
[thespanishsource@bellsouth.net](mailto:thespanishsource@bellsouth.net)

**Nick Pérez**, TAPIT Treasurer  
[candelerol@comcast.net](mailto:candelerol@comcast.net)



**“TAMIT and TAPIT have agreed to share resources to foster more professionalism in the Tennessee Medical Interpreting Community.”**

## President's Letter

By Marvyn Bacigalupo-Tipps, Ph.D., TAPIT President

**G**reetings!

Since our highly successful 2008 Annual Conference is now behind us, we have been busy planning events for the rest of this year and 2009 – most of which have to do with training and professional excellence.

A milestone as we end 2008 is the TAPIT-sponsored Medical Interpreting Training in East Tennessee slated for November 22. We already have a full house.

Cindy will train us all day long at Joy of Music Youth Music School of Knoxville and then relax informally over dinner with us before heading back to the West Coast.

Medical Committee Chair Jeannine de la Torre Ugarte, along with many East Tennessee members of our Medical Committee, have been busy coordinating the myriad details involved in organizing this event. They have also been formulating goals and plans for future health care interpreter training in Tennessee. Some training will be done jointly with the University of Memphis M.A. in Public Health Program and the Tennessee Association of Medical Interpreters and Translator (TAMIT).

TAMIT and TAPIT have agreed to share resources to foster more professionalism in the Tennessee Medical Interpreting Community. The most visible result of this cooperative spirit will be the TAMIT web page within the new TAPIT website. It is hoped that the members of each association will benefit from the Medical Registry, which will include TAMIT and TAPIT medical interpreters, the TAMIT and TAPIT newsletters and other publications and news of interest to both contingencies.

To kick off 2009, a most ambitious and thorough training will occur on Martin Luther King weekend at Belmont University in Nashville. Over a period of three days, Judith Kenigson Kristy will train a small group *hands-on* about all the ins and outs of audio transcription, translation and expert testimony in this highly technical, specialized field of evidence preparation.

In the meantime, look for announcements of future medical interpreting training in different venues of our state to round out the year.

You may have noticed a new name and professional look of the *TAPIT Times* this issue. We are now relying on our new Managing Editor, Diane Kilmer. A counselor, writer, and veteran editor in her own right, Diane has come at a critical time in our growth to help coordinate and manage each issue of our publication and put her professional imprimatur on it. Please send Diane your ideas for articles and suggestions on content at DKilmer101@aol.com. Diane is a joy to work with and is going to keep us on track as we publish four issues a year.

Normally, TAPIT does not express opinions about politics, whether in our nation, state, or community. However, the English-Only Referendum in Nashville-Davidson County on January 22, 2009 warrants an exception. We believe it is ill-advised and urge members of this county to vote to defeat it.

Last but not least, please come to the TAPIT Holiday Party on Saturday, December 13, from 4 -8 pm at my home: 1708 Gale Lane, Nashville. You are all invited to bring friends and family and share in the festive spirit and fun. My very best wishes to all of you during the holiday season. ■



**Marvyn Tipps, Ph.D**  
*is the current TAPIT president and is a freelance certified court interpreter in Federal and State Courts.*

## TAPIT Members Active in East Tennessee

By Ping Chen Cross, M.D.



Ten current and prospective TAPIT members in the greater Tri-Cities area held a founding meeting on October 3, 2008 at Joan Wagner's lovely home in Johnson City.

TAPIT members Ping Cross and Ardis Nelson initiated this activity to provide local interpreters the opportunity to get to know one another, exchange field knowledge, and raise awareness of TAPIT. The evening was enjoyable, including the delicious food contributed by everyone. All the attendees agreed to make it a regular event every first Friday of each quarter.

The next meeting is planned for January 2, 2009 at Carmen and Tony Vaquer's home in Johnson City. For more information, contact Ping Cross ([ping.cross@charter.net](mailto:ping.cross@charter.net), (423)926-0993). ■



*Dr. Ping Cross, educated in China as a radiologist, also holds a Master's degree from the School of Pharmacy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is fluent in Mandarin Chinese and English.*

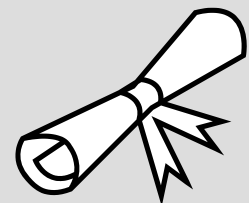
## How To Do Business With The State of Tennessee

In order to be included on the State of Tennessee's bidder list, it is necessary for you to complete the vendor registration process. You may visit [www.tennessee.gov/generalserv/purchasing](http://www.tennessee.gov/generalserv/purchasing) and select "Doing Business with Tennessee" on the left hand side. You may register to be a vendor "online" from there. A copy of the application has been attached for you convenience. If you choose to complete the online version, it is recommended that you fill your answers on the paper form and have it handy for the electronic application. (The application will time-out after 10 minutes of inactivity. For further assistance you may contact the bidder registration office at 615 741 6875 or [Vendor.Registration@state.tn.us](mailto:Vendor.Registration@state.tn.us). ■

57

## MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Congratulations to **Nick Pérez** on becoming a Tennessee State Court Certified Interpreter in Spanish. Nick spent many hours studying and practicing for the oral exam and it paid off!



*Nick is an accountant by profession and is the current TAPIT Treasurer.*

## ATA Hosts 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Florida

By Ardis Nelson, Ph.D.

Nearly 1,300 were in attendance at the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the American Translators Association (ATA) held November 5-8, 2008 in Orlando, Florida, with speakers and participants from all over the world.

On Wednesday, fourteen pre-conference seminars were held on a variety of topics from mental health terminology to translating for the asset management industry. Sessions on Thursday through Saturday focused on eleven languages and fourteen areas of specialization. There were up to seventeen concurrent sessions at any given time on topics from language-specific topics to medical and legal translation and interpreting, terminology and pedagogy.

The ATA conference is an essential meeting for learning about the latest in translation and interpreting, both of which are growing fields in the US. Although attending the conference can be expensive, it is a good investment. Some of the activities are available to all without additional cost, such as the opening reception, the daily poolside continental breakfast, and the Network Nibbles social hour. Also available are the Job Marketplace and Exhibit Hall, where translation agencies, software companies and InTrans Books have booths, along with a station for free, seated massage. One night the Wordfast software company shuttled attendees to the House of Blues for a free dinner.

Because the magnitude of this event is overwhelming, my review will just point out the highlights and focus on the sessions that I attended. Since I received funding from East Tennessee State University to attend this conference in order to research translation and interpretation pedagogy, my comments will be on sessions in that category.

### Teaching translation and interpretation

A popular topic across the board was strategies and techniques for teaching translation and interpretation. Conference sessions provided lots of practical ideas as well as opportunities to share ideas with colleagues. Presenters from Europe and South America pointed out that these fields of study have a much longer tradition in their countries than in the United States, and that translation studies are seen as a necessary prerequisite for interpreting. A primary concern for teaching is placing emphasis on comprehension, which can be developed by using listening exercises, such as stating the main idea or paraphrasing a passage, as well as using split attention exercises.

A session on "Techniques for Teaching Translation Online" by faculty from the New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies drew a capacity crowd. A surprising fact for many was that you can hold a live, synchronized forum online, during which the teacher speaks to students who could be anywhere in the world. One of the presenters purports that there is actually more participation in an online course than in a regular classroom, due to the requirement that students post

comments on a regular basis. Also, online instruction is not teacher-centered. It is claimed, rather, that the teacher is a facilitator.

### Young bilinguals

Members of the ATA Research Forum offered a double session on "Young Bilinguals as Language Resource and Language Brokers," in which they outlined a project designed to address health disparities by increasing the diversity of the health care workforce. The researchers introduced basic translation and interpretation skills and information about the health professions to high school Spanish students in a Texas school, based on the premise that heritage children who serve as the family interpreter may have skills that could be developed into a profession, given the right curriculum and encouragement to value their bilingualism.

An especially noteworthy ATA program is the "School Outreach Contest," whose winner receives recognition and a free registration for the following year's conference. In order to increase interest in our profession, taking the time to present a career in the translation and/or interpreting field in a school near you may reap inestimable benefits. The ATA makes it really easy to do this by having ready-made materials available on their website. For further information go to [www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org).

An interesting fact I learned is that, despite a sprinkling of undergraduate and masters degree programs in translation and interpreting across the nation, there are only two doctoral programs in Translation Studies, just recently begun in the US: the University of Binghamton in New York State began in 2004 and recently graduated their first doctoral candidate; Kent State University began in 2007 and is the only University in the US that offers a comprehensive BS, MA and Ph.D. in translation studies.

As for interpreting studies, there are no doctoral research programs in the US, and only three in the world, at the Universities of Ottawa, Geneva and Paris, respectively.

### Medical interpreter news

On the final day of the conference I learned some exciting news for the medical interpreting profession from Izabel Arocha, President of the International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA). She said that a language-neutral written exam that will be part of a new certification program for medical interpreters will be launched next year. Look for more details on this topic in the next issue of *The TAPIT Times*.

Next year the ATA will celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its conference October 28-31 in New York City, where it began. ■



Ardis Nelson, Ph.D.

*Dr. Ardis Nelson is a professor at East Tennessee State University and is a Tennessee state certified court interpreter. She can be reached at: [ardis@charterin.net](mailto:ardis@charterin.net).*

## "Medical Friday" Hits the Mark at TAPIT Conference

By Angela Mendoza

Another great TAPIT Conference Medical Friday, held mid-September in Nashville, has come and gone!

In the past these special conference events planned specifically for medical interpreters have offered food, fun, training, and networking—and this year was no different! We kicked off the day with coffee (a necessity, of course) and an update from the Medical Committee. Marvyn Bacigalupo-Tipps, our president, informed us of much work that will be done this year with the Medical Committee and urged us all to become more active in TAPIT and its committees.

### Building medical vocabulary

Next, we wasted no time beginning our first training session with our guest speaker, Esther Diaz. She started off the day with a fun activity to get us warmed up and get us thinking. She passed out lists of abbreviations used frequently in the medical field and asked us to work in groups to identify the abbreviations on the list. Even though I was seated with some of the best and brightest medical interpreters in the field, we only identified about half of the terms on our list. Esther used this list to help us build our vocabulary. She also taught us some techniques for identifying medical terminology that we may encounter in our interpretation sessions.

Before lunch we also enjoyed a rousing discussion about the digestive system and some common diseases associated with it. Esther Diaz's presentation included a review of the anatomy of the digestive system; she also showed us how to access some online resources to further our knowledge in this area since independent study is an important skill for an interpreter to develop. I enjoyed Esther's presentation and her fun approach to help us learn. I also appreciated the great reminder that school is never out, even for the pro!

### Certification process developing

During lunch, Esther Diaz, our keynote speaker, brought us up-to-date on the current status of efforts to create a certification process for medical interpreters. At the conference last year attendees participated in a survey that the NCIHC (National Council on Interpreting in Health Care) conducted regarding development of a certification process. Much work is ahead of us, but based on the information provided, leaders in our profession are moving in the right direction. The best part to me was hearing that some groups are working together now and forming coalitions to tackle the great task ahead. Even within our own state's borders, TAPIT is working together with other associations

and groups like TAMIT (Tennessee Association of Medical Interpreters and Translators). This collaborative effort will take us far. Like the old T.E.A.M. acronym says: Together Everyone Achieves More!

### Interpreting for children

After lunch we heard from Marvyn Bacigalupo-Tipps and Marc Friedman about interpreting for children and how these encounters can be different than interpreting for an adult. In reality, very little information has been published about this topic, but Marc shared a few tips for us from a guide used by Phoenix Children's Hospital. He also shared from his vast experience as an interpreter at Saint Jude's Hospital. Marvyn

Esther Diaz's presentation included a review of the anatomy of the digestive system; she also showed us how to access some online resources to further our knowledge in this area..

presented a case that she had consulted on and reiterated the importance of staying within our role, regardless of the circum-

stances we may encounter. This presentation was a perfect segue into our Round Table Discussion about "Issues in Health Care Interpreting." The Round Table discussion, moderated by Marc, was quite lively and touched on topics from billing to encountering another colleague in a session to the need for errors and omissions insurance, to name just a few.

### Interpreting for women's health

We ended the training part of the day with a session that Esther Diaz taught on Women's Health. Esther made this session informative and fun, even for those of us who regularly work in an ob/gyn clinical setting. She incorporated a segment on sight translation and asked us to practice in small groups. I enjoyed the practical application part of this session as well as the basic anatomy review. I also appreciated the additional vocabulary that I learned by hearing my colleagues from different parts of Latin America comment on how a particular phrase or term is said in their country.

Throughout the day we had short breaks and opportunities to network with other professionals in our field. Also available to us in the exhibition area were different vendors offering resources to help us succeed in our careers. I must also mention how great the Massey Business Center is and what a nice place Belmont University is to hold a conference. All in all, the day was a grand success and I look forward to attending next year's conference. I hope to see you there! ■

*Angela Mendoza is a staff interpreter at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and has been a member of TAPIT since 2004.*

*She can be reached at:*

[angela.mendoza@Vanderbilt.Edu](mailto:angela.mendoza@Vanderbilt.Edu)

Continued from page 1

## Member Spotlight....

*“It was natural to go to school in the country where I was raised, and then to study abroad in Japan, the subject of my research.”*



Patricia Pringle, Ph.D.

ATA Certified Japanese to English translator.

activities can provide valuable tools, as when studying under the Noh Dance master helped Patricia work with Japanese senior business managers.

**Q: Where did you grow up and what was your first language?**

**A:** Ottawa, Canada. English

**Q: When and how did you become interested in other languages?**

**A:** My grandparents emigrated from the Soviet Union just after the revolution. They spoke very little English (in hindsight, they probably spoke it fairly well), so there were a lot of animated family gatherings that I didn't understand.

**Q: Why did you choose to learn Japanese?**

**A:** No particular reason, other than it was a rare language spoken by people who lived in a beautiful country. I guess it was after Expo 70 in Osaka.

**Q: One often hears how difficult it is to learn Asian languages, as they are so different from European-based languages. Was it hard for you to achieve proficiency?**

**A:** Yes, I work at it every day.

**Q: What was it about the Japanese language, literature, culture and people that captivated and enticed you to devote most of your life to it?**

**A:** I guess it is because the language is very flexible. It can be very precise and direct, and also very vague. It lacks pronouns. Japanese culture is more non-verbal and non-confrontational than American culture.

**Q: Where did you study as an undergraduate?**

**A:** The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

**Q: Did your major or minor have anything to do**

**with your decision to pursue an M.A. in Japanese literature from the University of Toronto in Canada, a Ph.D. in Japanese Theater from the University of Hawaii, and four years at a post as Visiting Scholar at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Japan?**

**A:** Yes, I was a Japanese major, so it was natural to go on in academia. At that time, there was no emphasis on anything other than scholarship or maybe diplomacy in the curriculum. There were no courses in Business Japanese, for example, but several in classical Japanese, even of different classical periods.

**Q: Why did you choose to pursue advanced degrees in three different countries?**

**A:** It was natural to go to school in the country where I was raised, and then to study abroad in Japan, the subject of my research. The University of Hawaii happens to be the premier university to study classical Japanese theater in the West, perhaps the world. Until recently, Japanese universities did not offer theater studies. Theater was a hobby.

The Japanese government and several Japanese corporate groups actively support Japanese Studies abroad. Many Japanese universities are open to foreign graduate students.

**Q: You appear initially to have followed a path toward a career in academia. Was that your ultimate goal? Why did it change?**

**A:** It was my ultimate goal, but I was not a brilliant researcher, and not a particularly good language teacher. I much prefer working with people who need some immediate solutions to problems they are facing.

**Q: What caused you to**

**embark upon a business career?**

**A:** I had the opportunity to work for Panasonic Mobile Communications' cell phone design center, which was near my house. In Atlanta, that is a big draw.

**Q: Do you have formal training in Business Administration?**

**A:** No.

**Q: When did you know you wanted to be a translator?**

**A:** I was about 18, I think. I read a translation of Yukio Mishima's *Runaway Horses*.

**Q: Why did you choose the written rather than the spoken word for your career as a linguist?**

**A:** I love writing, and seeing the words on the page. I don't think that fast on my feet.

**Q: How many years did you work in Japan? Where? What did you do? Was it hard to find work? To be a part of Japanese corporate culture?**

**A:** I worked in Japan for six years. I first worked in Tokyo for Sony Corporation. Later I worked in Osaka and Kyoto, doing odd teaching jobs while studying Japanese theater.

**Q: When did you decide to do cross-cultural consulting and training and how long have you been doing it?**

**A:** I was hired by Panasonic to head their technical translation and interpreting group. After a short time, it became clear that many of the communication issues, particularly in meetings, were the result of a mismatch of cultural assumptions and expectations, so I started to address those. I worked for six years at Panasonic, and now two and one-half years for Japan Intercultural Consulting.

**Q: Did you find that your**

# Sign Language Interpreting

## By Heather Lawson, CI/CT

Sign language interpreting is a broad term used to describe the facilitation of communication between a person who can hear and a deaf or hard-of-hearing person.

In some ways sign language is very much the same as spoken language interpreting and—in some ways—distinct from it. Sign language interpreters work with a variety of languages and communication systems, work in many different settings, and face several unique challenges, compared to spoken language interpreters.

### Professional certification

Sign language interpreting got its professional start in 1964 with the formation of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID.) Today's interpreters follow a Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) developed by RID members and have certification options through RID. The CPC addresses issues such as confidentiality, functioning within one's own skill level, proper conduct during an assignment, respect for consumers and colleagues, proper business practices, and professional development.

Once certified, an interpreter must follow the CPC and maintain certification through lifelong learning by earning continuing education units (CEUs) at various workshops, college courses, or by individual research and study. Although RID certification is not required to practice sign language interpreting, more and more deaf people are requesting certified interpreters for their appointments and more agencies are contracting almost exclusively with credentialed interpreters (RID or otherwise certified).

### Communication methods vary

Sign language interpreters have a wide variety of communication methods they may use with a consumer. Interpreting occurs between English and American Sign Language (ASL). This is the language that is native to the Deaf community and is a fully developed language, not simply a manual code of gestures for English. Deaf or hard-of-hearing consumers may use one or more of many manual or oral systems in order to communicate. Interpreters will transliterate with one of these systems to facilitate communication.

In the signed spectrum several systems are used that break from ASL grammar and become more and more like English. In addition, there are two primary methods of interpreting that assist with lip-reading: one manual and one mainly using just the lips.

Beyond these, several special methods of signing are used with deaf-blind consumers, most of these falling into the category of "tactile interpreting." This is a hands-on-hands approach to communication. Moreover, interpreters must be knowledgeable of Deaf culture and the Deaf community while interpreting between deaf and hearing people. Any one interpreter may be skilled in all or just a couple of these methods.

### ASL needed in multiple settings

Any place a deaf person needs to communicate with a hearing person, an interpreter can be used. In interpreter training programs, interpreters are taught to interpret in a multitude of settings including medical, mental health, legal, educational, religious, business, platform/conference, performance arts, and now through video in many of these settings or for video phone calls. Sign language interpreters are found at appointments with insurance agents, open house nights at schools, board meetings, Broadway productions, and routine physical exams in the doctor's office.

Laws are currently in place guaranteeing deaf people (classified as "disabled") the right to an interpreter in many of these settings, usually paid for by the company, doctor's office, or school system. For situations in which the law does not apply, deaf people may hire their own interpreters (weddings, shopping for an engagement ring, etc.). Some interpreters specialize in one or more of these settings; others are willing and able to interpret in almost any setting.

### Facing special challenges

Because of the nature of sign language interpreting and working with deaf individuals, certain challenges must be addressed. Sign language interpreters are prone to injury due to overuse of the hand, arm, shoulder, neck, back muscles and joints. Therefore, interpreters are encouraged to stretch before and after assignments, evaluate the biomechanics of how they work and the ergonomics of how they live, and keep their bodies generally in good shape with exercise. For lengthy (two hours or more) or intense assignments (e.g. legal proceedings, deaf-blind interpreting), interpreters are paired into teams. The interpreters take turns, with one doing the signing while the other monitors

for accuracy and assists with hearing the speaker for about 20 minutes, then swapping places.

Logistics of the meeting space or interpreting area are also vital. Sufficient lighting and sight lines are necessary for the deaf participants to be able to see the interpreter. Interpreters must also be in a place where they can be heard by the hearing participants. Often a sign language interpreter sits or stands next to the speaker, not the deaf person, in order for the deaf person to be able to see both the speaker and the interpreter comfortably.

Finally, there are times when a deaf interpreter is necessary in order to serve a deaf person who has little understanding of any language in the US or communication system. This deaf interpreter is skilled in using natural gestures, props, or picture drawing in order to facilitate communication for non-standard sign users, foreign sign language users, or deaf individuals with limited communication skills.

### Same goal

Although there are differences in where we have come from, whom we serve, and how we serve those populations, sign language interpreters and spoken language interpreters are very similar. We both work with a variety of languages and regional forms of languages in multiple settings. Sign language interpreters have a few challenges due to the modes of communication we use and the population we serve, but spoken language interpreters have their own challenges. We may have different backgrounds, but in the end we all have the same goal: facilitated communication. ■



*Heather R. Lawson holds a BA in Sign Language Interpreting from Maryville College, as well as Certificates of Interpretation (CI) and Transliteration (CT) through the Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf (RID)*

*for English, American Sign Language and Spanish. She can be contacted at:*

[hrlawson@natureofascension.org](mailto:hrlawson@natureofascension.org)

Continued from page 7



## Member Spotlight....

**background in Japanese Noh dance and voice helped you to assimilate other aspects of Japanese culture?**

**A:** The Noh world is very conservative, but it is organized in a similar way to a large Japanese corporation. Working with a Noh master prepared me for working with Japanese senior managers.

**Q: Is it hard to get established as a consultant and trainer? Is one country easier to work in and do business than the other? Do the U.S. or the Japanese companies respond best to your trainings?**

**A:** I'm not sure if it is hard or easy to get established as a consultant and trainer. My work has flowed naturally from my previous positions; I have not actively looked for this work. I have heard that relocation companies hire consultants to teach Americans who will take assignments abroad.

**Q: Why did you to settle in Louisville? Are there many opportunities for your consulting and training in that area?**

**A:** We moved to Louisville when my husband took a job here. I do relatively little work in this area. There are few Japanese companies in the city of Louisville, probably because of the 2 percent employment surtax.

**Q: How often do you travel to Japan?**

**A:** About once a year.

**Q: What are some of the hardest cultural concepts to teach American or Japanese management?**

**A:** Americans have difficulty understanding Japanese subtlety. Japanese have difficulty with Americans' insistence that everything should be put openly on the table, discussed and decided.

**Q: Does being a woman have certain advantages, as far as consulting and training go in either of the two countries? If so, what are they? Are there barriers in either country that you have perceived?**

**A:** It is interesting that you mentioned gender. I believe women are more effective as consultants because, generally, women are better listeners. I have not experienced any barriers in my field of consulting.

**Q: Currently, what would be the proportion of work you do in consulting, training, translation, interpreting, other?**

**A:** Right now, my work is 70 percent consulting and training, 15 percent translation, 5 percent interpreting, and 10 percent writing.

**Q: As you look back, what do you wish you had done differently when choosing your educational programs and setting up your business?**

**A:** I sometimes wish that I had studied Japanese history or sociology rather than Japanese literature and theater, simply

because graduates in history or sociology are not expected to teach Japanese.

**Q: How well do you feel that colleges in the U.S. in general, and the Southeast in particular, prepare students in their Japanese language programs for the kind of work you are doing now?**

**A:** I think they are doing an excellent job of preparing students for a variety of jobs using Japanese. The University of Kentucky has been given approval for a Japanese Major, starting this year.

**Q: What advice would you give an American student who wanted to become a translator or interpreter of Japanese?**

**A:** I would tell them to go to Japan on the JET program, offered by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and choose to be placed in a rural school district. That is the best way to learn fluent Japanese quickly. Then I would probably recommend the Monterrey School of Foreign Languages.

**Q: Do you use CAT tools for your translations? If so, which ones do you use and on what kinds of jobs/projects? Do you train translators to use CAT tools? Do you do more translation into or from Japanese?**

**A:** I use TRADOS for most of my translations. Even when the job does not really need the memory aspect of TRADOS, I like the proofreading and checking features, as well as the termbase lookup. I only translate Japanese to English.

**Q: You do a lot of highly technical translation. How did you master the concepts and terminology?**

**A:** I worked in-house, so I had access to the readers of the documents I was translating. I could ask them about the concepts face to face. At the beginning, when I would get stuck, I would pick up the phone and call my husband, who is an engineer. I gradually did this less and less over time.

**Q: Tell us about your role now as a contributor to professional journals in your field.**

**A:** I am writing a chapter for a book on Japanese puppet theater because I love the theater and like to share what I have learned with people who are interested in reading the book. ■

TAPIT member Patricia Pringle can be contacted at: [patricia@pringlejapan.com](mailto:patricia@pringlejapan.com).



# Calendar of Events

## 2008

### November

22 TAPIT Medical Interpreting Workshop with Cindy Roat, Knoxville, TN

### December

13 TAPIT Holiday Party, Nashville, TN

## 2009

### January

17-19 TAPIT Tape Transcription & Translation Workshop with Judith Kenigson-Kristy, Nashville, TN

### February

19-20 Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Written Exam

### March

16-20 Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Spanish Oral Exam

13-15 Mid-America Chapter of ATA (MICATA) Symposium, Overland Park, KS

### April

4 TAPIT Long Legal/Medical Consecutive Interpretation Workshop with Holly Mikkelson, Memphis, TN

6-10 Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Languages Other Than Spanish

### May

15-16 NAJIT Conference, Scottsdale, AZ

21-22 Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Written Exam

### June

2-5 Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Spanish Oral Exam

### August

20-21 Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Written Exam

### September

11 TAPIT Medical Friday, Nashville, TN

12-13 TAPIT Annual Conference, Nashville, TN

7-11 Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Languages Other Than Spanish

30 International Translation Day

### October

5-9 Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Spanish Oral Exam

### November

12-13 Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Written Exam



## TAPIT Conference Offers Something For Everyone

By Elena Ottaway

**“I felt elated to see how smoothly the conference went and how professional all the presenters were.”**



**Elena Ottaway** is a Tennessee state certified court interpreter in Spanish and English. She can be contacted at: [elenaottaway@att.net](mailto:elenaottaway@att.net).

The Tennessee Association of Professional Interpreters and Translators (TAPIT) Sixth Annual Conference met expectations and more during the September 12-14, 2008 weekend at Belmont University in Nashville.

The weekend was full of sessions on interpretation, translation, business management and general practice issues. As a TAPIT Conference Committee member, I felt elated to see how smoothly the conference went and how professional all the presenters were. The sessions I attended were very educational. The presenters worked very hard to bring helpful information that we could use in our businesses.

The "Business of Freelancing" presentation by Rob Cruz made me realize how much work I have to do in order to run my own business

properly. The "English-Spanish Terminology for Immigration Matters" presentation by Leticia Mason was very helpful and it was great to get the special Glossary which will come in handy in my court interpreting practice. The Round Tables, a first this year, were the best way to exchange ideas, delve deeper into specific topics, and get to know colleagues better. One of the best parts of the conference is networking.

I look forward to an even better 2009 TAPIT Conference. Many good ideas came out of member evaluations, in which you asked to have a variety of programs. We have already started working on planning just this aspect during our first 2009 Conference Committee meeting held Friday, November 7. ■