International Translation Day

By Kirk Anderson

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Hallmark has yet to grace International Translation Day with a greeting card, but that will not keep language industry professionals from celebrating. September 30 falls on a Saturday this year, so whether your patron saint of translation is St. Jerome, Xuanzang, or Étienne Dolet, you should have ample opportunity to remember the day and remind others of the importance of translation and interpreting.

For this year’s celebration, the International Federation of Translators (FIT) has chosen the theme “Many Languages—One Profession” in an effort to “draw attention to the professional nature of this occupation.” Since FIT’s establishment in 1953, International Translation Day has been observed on September 30, St. Jerome’s Day. For more information on the FIT theme, see www.fit-it.org/download/jmt-itd2006.pdf. To learn about the history of International Translation Day, see www.translators.org.za/indexes/english/jerome/jerome-history.html.

Around the world, in countless languages, linguists will be honoring their professions with conferences and events.

The Swiss Association of Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters is celebrating its 40th anniversary on September 29 and 30 in Berne, Switzerland, with a conference on specialized translation, terminology, and interpreting. For more information, see www.astti.ch/40years/index.html.

The Société Française des Traducteurs (SFT) promises regional events in France. To learn more, check out their main website at www.sft.fr (click on Réunions et rencontres). It is also worth noting that the proceedings of last year’s memorable SFT International Translation Day event, based on the FIT theme “Translators and Human Rights,” are forthcoming in the next issue of the association’s quarterly Traduire. A national celebration is also planned back-to-back with SFT’s annual meeting, to be held the first weekend of December this year.

In the Czech Republic, the Union of Interpreters and Translators (JTP) has scheduled its St. Jerome’s Day festivities for November 3-4, 2006.

“…Celebrate International Translation Day September 30…”

They plan to hold a literary event, lectures, presentations, debates and more, all free to members and non-members alike. For more information, visit www.jtpunion.org.

In Argentina, the Colegio de Traductores Públicos de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires will continue its tradition of honoring translators reaching the milestones of 25 and 50 years in the profession, and will also be awarding the prestigious Julio Cortázar prizes in literary translation, among other things. Check out their website at www.traductores.org.ar/nuevo/home/inicio.

Perhaps the best known Translation Day event of all is the one put on by the Organización Mexicana de Traductores (OMT). The X San Jerónimo conference will be held September 30 to October 1 in Guadalajara. For more information, see www.omt.org.mx

Long quiet on Translation Day, ATA and some of its chapters and affiliate groups are planning celebrations this year. Watch www.atanet.org/conf/2006 for details on the association’s annual conference, and be sure to click on “Chapters & Groups” for links to chapters, affiliates, and other groups.

Among them, the Upper Midwest Translators and Interpreters Association (UMTIA, www.umtia.com) is holding its fifth annual conference on September 30 in Bloomington, Minnesota. The New Mexico Translators and Interpreters Association (NMTIA, www.cybermesa.com/~nmtia) promises to continue its tradition of informal social gatherings to celebrate the day. Contact NMTIA President Uwe Schroeter (uweschroeter@comcast.net) if you are planning on spending Translation Day in Albuquerque, and the Colorado Translators Association (CTA, www.cta-web.org) is planning a literary reading, “If you can read this, thank a translator,” featuring CTA members reading well-known works of literature in their original languages and in English, to highlight the crucial role translators play in making world literature accessible to English speakers.

Educational Opportunities

But there is even more to International Translation Day than conferences, seminars, and awards. With translation and interpreting gaining attention in the mainstream news, there are growing opportunities to raise the profile of our professions, and the more the general public understands and appreciates what we do, the better off translators and interpreters will be.

For over five years, ATA’s Public Relations Committee has been working on a number of fronts to raise the public profile of translators and interpreters, and much of its work is available free of
charge. A visit to ATA’s website (www.atanet.org) suggests a variety of ways for translators around the world to celebrate International Translation Day.

If you want to spend the day educating your clients, see the excellent brochure Translation: getting it right, originally developed by former ATA Public Relations Committee Co-Chair Chris Durban for the U.K.’s Institute of Translation & Interpreting, which is available in a number of languages. For downloadable U.K. English, Czech, French, and German versions, see www.iti.org.uk; for U.S. English, see www.atanet.org/publications/getting_it_right.php; and for Dutch and Catalan versions, see www.vrouwennetwerkvertalersontolken.nl/Pdf/Vertaalwijzer%20definitief.pdf and www.atic.cc. An Italian version will soon be downloadable from the Italian Association of Translators and Interpreters website (www.aiti.org).

To educate the next generation of translators, interpreters, and their clients, ATA has launched a school outreach program, encouraging language professionals to make presentations on the language professions at local schools and universities. Visit www.atanet.org/ata_school for more information and for ready-made presentation materials for all educational levels.

**Talking Points**

Perhaps the greatest stride ATA has made in raising the profile of translation and interpreting has been in its work with the media. In the words of ATA Public Relations Committee Co-Chair Kevin Hendzel, “If you want more work in this industry, if you want to earn better rates, if you want to have professional recognition, the public must know you exist. They must know you are necessary. They must know you are worth the money you charge. They must know that they are in very deep and serious trouble without you. These are our talking points. This is what we tell the media. Endlessly.” And word has gotten out. For a sample of ATA’s media outreach efforts, see www.atanet.org/pressroom/ata_in_the_news.php

The message is simple: translation and interpreting mistakes can be costly, even disastrous. The bottom line is that you cannot risk getting the translation wrong. It is critical to hire qualified professional translators and interpreters to get the job done right.

And this is just the beginning. To recognize International Translation Day, you can do countless...
The Michigan Translators/Interpreters Network (MiTiN) was started as an informal network in 1991 by local Michigan translators and interpreters. The association officially adopted its current name in 1995. MiTiN now has over 140 members representing over 34 languages. Our members are translators, interpreters, agencies, educators, and others interested in the translation and interpretation profession. We are an active organization located in the center of the automotive industry and Midwest manufacturing belt, and many members have particular expertise in these areas as well as in other technical and nontechnical fields. MiTiN became an ATA chapter in 2004.

**Goals**
- To promote the continuing education and development of interpreters and translators.
- To promote networking among interpreters and translators, including interaction and support of similar organizations.
- To operate a referral service through the publication of a membership directory, with an online version available to the public.
- To promote and publicize professional standards and practices.
- To promote and support the general development of cross-cultural communication skills.

**Benefits**
- *The MiTiN Newsletter* (published monthly).
- Monthly meetings.
- Informative events and networking opportunities.
- Annual membership directory. This directory puts end-users directly in contact with language specialists. The directory is free and there is no referral fee. The directory is also published online at www.mitinweb.org/directory.cfm.

**Membership**
- **Professional** ($40): Professional members may vote, attend all meetings and functions, and hold any office or position in MiTiN.
- **Corporate/institutional** ($50): The head of the company or language department, or his/her designee, may vote, attend all meetings and functions, and hold any office or position in MiTiN.

Please note that all applications are subject to approval by MiTiN’s board of directors, and timely payment of annual dues is required for continuing membership. Annual dues for the following year are payable each December 1. Members are not invoiced for annual dues, so please mark your calendar. For complete membership information, including an application, go to www.mitinweb.org/membership.cfm.

**Quick Facts**
- **Acronym:** MiTiN
- **Established:** 1991
- **Mission:** To serve members through education, networking, and promotion of the translation and interpretation professions.
- **Area Served:** Michigan
- **Newsletter:** *The MiTiN Newsletter*
- **Website:** www.mitinweb.org
- **Phone:** (248) 344-0909
- **Fax:** (248) 344-0092
- **E-mail:** info@mitinweb.org
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Things: write a letter to the editor of your local paper; request that International Translation Day be proclaimed by your local, state, or federal government; throw a party; hold a parade; or—why not?—print up some greeting cards of your own.