



## FALL-WINTER 2007

From the Administration .....2  
Stakeholders Discuss Certification  
for Healthcare Interpreters .....3  
ATA's School Outreach  
is for Interpreting Too! .....5  
Expert Panel on Testing and  
Certification of Interpreters .....7  
Medical Translation and the  
Health Care Interpreter .....9  
How Often are Interpreters  
Used in Federal Court? .....10  
Defining the Interpreter's Role in  
the Worker's Compensation  
Industry .....11  
Spotlight on ID Speakers .....12  
Interpreting Sessions Schedule ...15



© 2004 by Ryan Gallagher

## Dear Colleagues

Volunteer work is doubly rewarding: you fulfill your need to give something back to your community or colleagues and acquire knowledge that can assist you on your own personal endeavors.

Working for the Interpreters Division means ATA will count on you to monitor the radar and bring to their attention matters of importance related to your field. Organizations that represent our profession at different levels will contact you and request your opinion, share information, ask for resources or advice. Members will bring to your attention matters that are bothering them. Somehow you become larger than yourself and more aware of sectors within your profession that had never caught your attention before.

---

*The governance of a Division is not a representation of how good you are as an interpreter.*

---

All of the above requires commitment. Commitment involves time. How much time? I'd say about 10 hours a month. Sometimes they will come at you in a bundle; sometimes they will trickle over the weeks and days.

The governance of a Division is not a representation of how good you are as an interpreter. No. You do not get elected based on professional merits. What determines how good or how bad a job one does is the support received from colleagues and ATA—coupled with one's original enthusiasm, of course.

---

*Somehow you become larger than yourself and more aware of sectors within your profession that had never caught your attention before.*

---

Katharine and I are proud to have been entrusted with steering the helm and representing our colleagues in our professional arena. We hope our work has met with your approval, and we are looking forward to giving our support to the lucky two colleagues who will take the Division on to its future.

See you in San Francisco!

– Gio

# ATA's School Outreach Is for Interpreting Too!



by Gio Lester

My daughter is lucky to attend a very small neighborhood school. There are about 34 students in all. Two classrooms cover basic education from grades K-6. Her classmates are from varied backgrounds and many speak more than one language. Their parents have experienced the frustration of trying to teach their native languages to a new generation that frown upon them as a divisive element, rather than one that will give them an advantage.

This seemed to me to be the perfect venue for ATA's outreach program: I was once a parent in that situation and I could have used some help back then.

Let me digress a little. I have two children and they each speak more than 2 languages. My son, now 25, speaks English, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian. My daughter Rebecca, when she was 5 years old, spoke, read and wrote in English, Portuguese, Spanish and French. She has since dropped the French, but it was fun to hear her reading to us and to correct her homework assignments in all of those languages.

This is why on the morning of October 2, 2006 I was toting a bag



full of interesting goodies for her, her classmates, and her teachers, to help them embark on a language journey. And since I am also a translator, I decided to cover both professions in one presentation.

I chose *Baby Blues* by Rick Kirkman and Jerry Scott, one that covered something they were all very familiar with – I had to meet the attention span of 16 children as young as 5 and as old as 11. The drawing of the comic strip itself was appealing enough, and they all made guesses as to what father and daughter were saying to each other. I don't think the authors themselves could have been as creative!



Most of the children already spoke a second language, though not by choice, and my first challenge was to help them see that speaking another language was a positive thing, not a stigma. I started by introducing them to a comic strip in Portuguese.

We talked about writing in other languages and translating books. I showed the class some translated books and their originals, such as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and its Brazilian Portuguese translation, *Harry Potter e a pedra filosofal*, *The Little Prince* and *O pequeno príncipe*, a children's trilingual (Portuguese, French and English) dictionary, some comic books in Portuguese and Spanish, and a few other print materials.

Having both the original and the translation at hand proved to be a special treat for them. It was rewarding to see them trying to pronounce all those foreign words now that they "knew" what they meant. And Quino's *Mafalda* hit a special chord with some of the



**Giovanna (Gio) Lester** is the current Administrator of the Interpreters Division. She has been working in the T&I field since 1980, and holds ATA certification for Portuguese into English translation. She can be reached at [giolester@gmail.com](mailto:giolester@gmail.com).



children who could speak but not read Spanish. They were also surprised at some differences between Grandma’s Spanish (usually Cuban

teacher Vanessa. The children had many questions. How can the doctor treat a patient he cannot understand? How can a patient tell the doctor

that much needed language-bridge, and the children were thrilled!

For the next sketch Rebecca approached Natalie, a tourist, and invited her to play—in Portuguese! Natalie was at a loss, and almost angry with frustration until an interpreter stepped in. This time Felipe saved the day as the interpreter, helping Rebecca and Natalie communicate. Felipe’s older sister Bela (9) helped him by whispering the proper interpretation, which afforded me the opportunity to introduce another aspect of the profession—the many ways it can be done.

The school’s Directress, Ms. Ivonne Benitez, was given an imaginary gavel and robe, and was instantly transformed into an Immigration Court judge who was examining Vanessa’s case. It was a very short exchange directly between Judge and Respondent. The children enjoyed hearing their teacher called “Your Honor” and Rebecca’s Mom, “Madam Interpreter.”



**The Children’s House Montessori School  
Miami – FL – Upper Elementary Class, Grades 1-5**

From Bottom-left, clockwise: Vanessa, Sofia, Umma, Bela, Julia, Nicholas, Valentin, —, Alejandro, Gio Lester, Gabriel, Michael, Trevor, Laurel, Natália, Felipe, Carlos and Kátia. Photo courtesy of Rebecca Lester

in this part of Florida) and Mafalda’s Argentine usage.

Interpreting was introduced in a very hands-on manner. First we talked about different situations in which one might need the services of an interpreter: “at the doctor’s” and “traveling abroad” were among the suggestions.

Seven year-old Felipe posed as an English- speaking doctor who had to treat a Spanish- speaking patient, his

what is wrong with him if they don’t speak the same language? Here I came in as the interpreter providing

If you want to know what the cartoon says: ↓



Copyright King Features