

ELNA UPDATE

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Edited by the staff of the Central Office

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News from Europe

Europe is busily uniting on many fronts; it is merging currencies and taxes and adopting common rules governing everything from air pollution to the bacteria in cheese. But there is no such coming together on the linguistic front. The 15-country Union operates with 11 official languages – and each country wants its own to prevail and is adamant about protecting it. Efforts to streamline communication and to drop a few languages have got backs up all over the Continent. “The rule is that all languages of the Union are equal,” said Noel Muylle, director of interpretation at the EU headquarters. “So the right that all member countries may use their mother tongue is very, very deeply entrenched.” As a result, the European Union – which would fit into the United States with room to spare – maintains the largest translation staff in the world. Its executive body, called the European Commission, employs more than 1,900 full-time translators and interpreters, not to mention freelancers. Including logistics and support staff, the Commission’s language service employs 3,890 people, which is 11 per cent of its personnel. Last year they generated 1.2 million pages of translations. It is a gargantuan enterprise by any standards. The United Nations, with its 185 members, has just six official languages. At its New York headquarters, the UN employs about 420 translators and interpreters, fewer than one-fourth the number at the EU Commission in Brussels. And the European repertory is expected to grow. With talks under way on plans for ten Central & East European countries to join the Union, even ardent linguists agree that a Tower of Babel looms. “We’re facing five new languages in the next few years,” Colette Flesch, director of translation services at the European Commission, said glumly, citing Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Polish and Slovenian. “And there are another five further down the line. I don’t know of any other international institution that has to keep adding languages.”

No wonder then that every so often someone tries to shrink this enormous linguistic bureaucracy. Not long ago, France and Austria proposed that for most purposes the organization’s languages should be limited to five: English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. In other words, forget Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Greek, Portuguese and Swedish. [Is it a mere accident that the powerful languages strive to displace those less powerful? –ed.] This touched many a nerve of national pride. In the outcry that followed (led by the deeply stung Danes, Dutch and Greeks) the idea was shelved. “Of course, it’s an asset

having all those languages, but it can also complicate things,” Mr. Muylle said cautiously. He and others believe that it will be hard to change the rules, which date back to 1958, when the incipient Union had only six countries and four languages. [*International Herald Tribune*, Feb. 27 1999] [When will Europeans take seriously the possibility of solving this problem through education? If all EU countries were to introduce Esperanto into their school curriculum, all EU business and politics could take place in a single neutral language within a single generation. It could even be phased in well before that. –ed.]

Vernacular Software

The emergence of vernacular computing is imperative if benefits of the information age are to be extended to a vast majority of Indian population, according to a senior professor at MIT. “At present and for the foreseeable future, nearly 95 per cent population of the subcontinent is excluded from the information age by absence of vernacular software,” said Kenneth Kenniston, professor of human development at MIT. Mr. Kenniston said there are thousands of Marathi and Gujarati speaking merchants who own two or three shops and currently spend hours till midnight balancing their account books. They have the means and the need for computers which would do the job and get them home three hours earlier. But they do not have the technical know-how and the command of English language necessary to use any of the existing English language small business packages. “South Asia almost completely lacks readily available, affordable or usable vernacular software. Unless one speaks, reads and writes English, one cannot use a computer, one cannot use e-mail, one cannot access the web.” The dominance of English language perpetuates the powers of English-speaking elite, and widens the gap between those who already have and the vast majority of the Indian population. The issue of vernacular software, the MIT professor said, needs to be understood in a broader context, of the tension between global culture on the one hand and local cultures on the other. “The dominance of English as a computer language perpetuates existing inequalities and inequities in South Asia. It has already been called a king of linguistic imperialism.” [*Panjim Herald* (India), Jan, 12, 1999] [The advantage of using Esperanto for software and various commercial applications is that it is much easier to learn than English, and gives no special advantage to any nation or tribe. Of course, there will always be a need for vernacular software, even after the Fina Venko! –ed.]

Language Problems in Hungary

Despite all the good reasons why Hungary has become so popular with tourists – it's an interesting place and not too expensive – problems such as widespread overcharging at restaurants and pickpocketing have made vacationing there a hassle for many. In fact, crime against tourists in Hungary has become so bad that 15 embassies of the European Union made a formal complaint regarding it to the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To address these problems and to improve the nation's image, the government has introduced measures to help tourists in trouble. Of special note is this one: the government has dispatched multilingual students working as translators to Budapest's most popular areas to help distressed tourists report crime to the local police, who often don't speak any foreign languages and can seem standoffish and bureaucratic. [*The International Educator* Apr 1999] (This is yet another example of a problem which would be non-existent if educators would introduce a year or two of Esperanto into the normal school curriculum. Having a common language wouldn't end the crime; but it would facilitate reporting crime! – ed.)

UEA Nominated for Hilton Prize

The World Esperanto Association has been accepted as a nominee for the Hilton Humanity Prize, which is awarded by the Conrad Hilton Foundation "to honor a volunteer, charity, or non-governmental organization which has made extraordinary contributions to the relief of human suffering". The Hilton prize, a million dollars, is the largest humanitarian prize in the world. Recently it was awarded to "Doctors without Frontiers" and "Operation Smile". ELNA's education commissioner R. Kent Jones proposed UEA's candidacy, informing the Hilton Foundation that, unlike earlier winners of the Humanity Prize, UEA contributes to anticipate and remove causes of human suffering, rather than alleviating already-existing suffering.

And UEA is being considered again for the Nobel Peace Prize. This most important international Esperanto organization was among the five finalists for the Nobel Prize in 1987, Esperanto's Jubilee year. [from *UEA-informilo*]

Asian Esperanto Congress

The upcoming Second Asian Esperanto Congress will take place in Hanoi, Vietnam August 22.-26. It is extremely important that some American Esperantists participate, because the theme of "Working together for peace and stability" has a sub-theme of "The Vietnam War and its lasting effects". The organizers have specifically requested lectures, papers and other contributions from Americans, whether they directly participated in the war or not. Of special interest are analyses of how the Vietnam war is addressed in current history texts & popular culture and personal stories of individual's participation in or reaction to the Vietnam war. A history book based on the presentations during the Congress will

be edited by NISIO Tutomu tomtom@ann.hi-ho.ne.jp who is also the contact person for the Congress.

40 Years of Esperanto on Radio Poland

On the 4th of April, 1999, Radio Poland celebrated the 40th anniversary of their Esperanto broadcasts. These programs have just been expanded from four to twenty-nine minutes each; and they are now available through the internet! (see related article in this issue for contact information.)

The president of UEA sent the following congratulatory message to Radio Poland.

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Esperanto broadcasts at Radio Poland, with great pleasure I send to you and the entire staff of Radio Poland heartfelt congratulations from the Board of Directors of the Universala Esperanto-Asocio, and warm best wishes for the future.

Radio Poland has acquired a unique place in the daily life of the language Esperanto – indeed the word 'daily' has taken on a completely literal meaning. Your broadcasts are an incomparable example of the practical utility of the International Language to spread information about all aspects of life in Poland, about its history and culture, its economy and politics. This is indeed the main goal of your broadcasts; relative to this they fulfill a real need, because Esperanto speakers are naturally interested in the country in which Dr. L.L. Zamenhof was born and where the International Language first appeared. UEA is extremely grateful to Radio Poland that in addition to its major goal it also gives attention to information about the Esperanto movement. Radio Poland's coverage of Esperanto World Congresses has been truly unique, taking on this honorary task since the Zamenhof year 1959, which helped launch the broadcasts. The significance of your broadcasts has been immeasurable for the spoken culture of our language, and indispensable for those who can rarely or never participate in Esperanto gatherings. However, until now the listenership has been geographically limited; for example I, as an Australian, could only recognize with envy that the famous Radio Poland is a privilege of Europeans. Therefore I could scarcely imagine a better gift than the one you received: a full-length program on the internet! By means of the internet the Esperanto section of Radio Poland has become a worldwide service. UEA heartily congratulates you for this entrance into a completely new epoch of your history. I hope that the collaboration between UEA and Radio Poland, which has always been good, will become even more intense and take on new forms, from which all speakers of the language Esperanto will profit.

Happy birthday!

Kep ENDERBY,
President of UEA

Anybody wishing to send congratulations or thanks to Radio Poland can do so at pettyn@radio.com.pl.

NEW FROM THE BOOK SERVICE

ALIAJ TEMPOJ, *Edith WHARTON*. Trans. Edwin GROBE. Although Professor Grobe calls this series "Klasikaj usonaj noveloj" this is rather a little-known gem, which is indeed worthy of promotion to "classic" status. The original title is *Autres temps*. 1999. 23p. 215x175. Paper. USA. **ALI003**

AVENTUROJ DE TOĈJO SAŬJERO (Vol. 2), *Mark TWAIN*. Trans. Edwin GROBE. The second installment in an ongoing project. This is an easy way to read a great novel in a great translation. Revive a fine tradition of supporting literature by consuming it in small bites! 1999. 22p. 215x140. Paper. USA. **AVE003** **\$1.60**

BRETONA ESPERANTO-KORUSO (KONCERTO EN QUINTIN, 12 APRILO 1998). Although this is a small homemade project, the recording quality is surprisingly good; and the singing is superb! The songs represent a wide variety of styles, including several Breton songs, folk songs from other regions, a Renaissance song, a Negro spiritual, and two rounds by Kajto. CD. France. 1998. **BRE001** **\$13.30**

ĈI-SEMAJNE EĈ AJN-MISE, *Stefan MacGILL*. This quaint eclectic collection of short dramas, cartoons, jokes and satires is a natural expression of the world-view of Stefan MacGill. How might one better attract new Esperantists than by using the lure of humor? Lotsa fun for kids of all ages! 1998. 24p. 295x210. Paper. France. ISSN 0398-5822 **CIS001** **\$5.20**

D-RO SENESPERANTO SERĈAS LA BONANETOSON, LA, Arnau TORRAS I TUTUSAUS. Already famous for his bawdy and anarchistic comix, Arnau attacks the very roots of the Esperanto movement, as a detective searches everywhere in Esperantio for good feelings. Not as sexy as his previous volumes, but certainly just as wild and weird. 1998. 23p. 240x170. Paper. Croatia. ISBN 953-97576-0-6 **DRO001** **\$6.20**

ESPERANTO TEACHER, THE, *Mason STUTTARD*. Concise textbook with key to exercises. Very popular introductory textbook. Sixth edition. 1989. 104p. 165x115. Australia. **ESP017** **\$2.90**

HISTORIETOJ DE LA SIUOJ, *Luther Standing Bear*. Trans. William R. HARMON. Illustrations by Morton STOOBS. Everybody who liked the first volume (*Mia indiana knabeco*) will want this one, too! Not autobiographical like the previous book, this presents a collection of legends of the Sioux people. Many charming stories presented in polished and dignified translation. 1999. 59p. 215x155. Paper. USA. ISBN 1-882251-25-3 **HIS005** **\$4.80**

KAREL ČAPEK, Div. Trans. Josef VONDROUŠEK. Short description of the life and works of this great Czech author, with brief excerpts from several of his works. A good introduction to this world-quality author who is too little known outside of his own country. 1987. 32p. 205x145. Paper. Czechoslovakia. **KAR006** **\$2.00**

KIO NI ESTAS KAJ KION NI CELAS (KOMENTOJ PRI LA MANIFESTO DE LA MOVADO POR LA INTERNACIA LINGVO ESPERANTO), *Div.* A development of the themes of the Prague Manifesto, with historical and philosophical details which flesh out the structure of that crucial document. A must for serious proponents of Esperanto. 1999. 24p. 300x210. Paper. Netherlands. ISBN 92 9017 061 1 **KIO002** **\$7.40**

KONTO DE L' VIVO, *Paul GUBBINS*. Four short theater pieces from the author of ELNA's video course. Although these works are obviously intended as amusement (they are witty!), they also address current social issues. Good as reading, even if you aren't a member of a drama guild. 1998. 137p. 205x130. Paper. Belgium. ISBN 90 71205 76 2 **KON007** **\$17.80**

LONGA DAŬRO, LA, *Edith WHARTON*. Trans. Edwin GROBE. Perhaps Professor Grobe's appreciation of Wharton's works will lead some of us to rediscover these psychologically rich treasures. 1999. 22p. 215x175p. Paper. USA. **LON003**

MATERIALOJ PRI ESPERANTO-KULTURO (LINGVO KAJ MOVADO), *Przemysław GRZYBOWSKI*. A fine concise guide to the most important dates, addresses, courses, services, etc. relative to Esperanto and its movement. 1999. 20p. 205x145. Paper. Poland. **MAT003** **\$1.60**

NE KIEL MAIER! (INVITO AL REVIZIO DE NIAJ KONCEPTOJ PRI LA KONJUGACIO EN ESPERANTO), *Raymond SCHWARTZ*. A learned, but not at all dull, treatment of various grammatical niceties, including the participles -ata and -ita. Schwartz's elegant exposition simplifies many complex issues. 48p. 170x105. Paper. France. **NEK002** **\$1.50**

US Pin. The phrase "Salutojn el Usono" in green letters with the required green star. Ø43. USA. **PIN007** **\$0.90**

POLIMORFIA ARKITEKNIA, Solotronic. Nice post-modern music from the synthesizer artist Edu Vargas. His soothing baritone voice presents a wide range of melodic styles. Excellent texts by the "Iberian school" taken from their recent book *Ekstremoj*. Mostly dance music and "Euro-pop" with some mellow tracks. CD + 12-page booklet. 1999. France. **POL001** **\$17.50**

PRO IŜTAR, H. A. LUYKEN. Original novel about Jews in ancient Babylon. The usual themes and style of the author, "positive" and "negative" heroes, and transposition of puritanism into an era which didn't know of it. The profoundly spiritual nature of the author inspired this interesting and worthwhile book. 1924. 304p. 190x125. Bound. Germany. **PRO010** **\$7.70**

STICKER SHEET. Each sheet contains sixteen 20mm and two 45mm circular multicolored stickers with the word ESPERANTO and a small green star. S. Korea. **STK003** **\$1.10**

ŜTONA URBO, LA, Anna LÖWENSTEIN. A brilliant new historical novel set in first-century Rome. A Celtic slave girl sees advanced civilization from her "primitive" point of view. Carefully written using only official words, completely avoiding neologisms. Vividly portrays differences between Druids, Romans, Christians & Jews. 1999. 350p. 205x130. Paper. Belgium. ISBN 90 71205 77 0 **STO00** **\$33.30**

VESELIN DAMJANOV KONCERTAS EN KANADO. What a variety is found here! Opera arias and folk songs from Russia and Canada. Richly nuanced singing and fine piano accompaniment. Lyric sheet includes all Esperanto texts (over half), but omits several songs in other languages. Audiotape. Canada. **VES00** **\$19.00**

Esperanto Radio on the WWW

There are now several WWW sites where one can hear Esperanto spoken by means of a program called Real-Audio. There is a nice & simple greeting from HOŠIDA Acuŝi, president of the Hokkaido (Japan) Esperanto League. www2u.biglobe.ne.jp/~HEL/index.htm. This site also shows the written text of the greeting, so you can follow along as you hear the pronunciation. The German Radio station Deutsche Welle has recently put on their site an excerpt from Goethe's *Faust* dramatically read in Esperanto. It is at www.goethe-bytes.de. Once there, you must click on "Archiv" and then choose "Aus Faust I der Osterspazierg..." This also shows the text being read. And as mentioned elsewhere in these pages, Radio Poland is now producing a 29-minute Esperanto segment every day! Find it at their site www.wrn.org/ondemand.

Certainly there are many more sites than these which allow you to hear the international language, but this is a good start. BTW most web browsers allow you to access these audio files; if you have problems, you can download Real Player for free from www.realaudio.com.

International Academy of the Sciences Grows

The International Academy of the Sciences (AIS), located in San Marino, is expanding beyond Europe's borders. In Mexico a branch of the Academy has been founded which promises to become an affiliate with full rights. Thanks to the efforts of Professor Ruben Feldman-Gonzales there have already been several series of lectures in various Mexican universities under the aegis of AIS. Also in Europe AIS has added more arenas to its already impressive list of participating campuses, as Bydgoszcz Poland and Berlin Germany will host AIS courses this year. [from Reinhard Fossmeier of AIS]

New Esperanto Words

The consulting commission of the Academy of Esperanto, having received requests for appropriate translations of several modern words, has issued the following recommendations:

inline skates – unuvicaj ruĝuoj; snowboard – glitotabulo, unuobla skio, neĝtabulo; skateboard – rultabulo; halfpipe – duontubo; mountainbike – montobiciklo, montarbiciklo, terenbiciklo; gameboy (trademark) – ludkomputil(et)o; cell phone – poŝtelefono; CD player – kompaktdiskilo; portable CD player – poŝdiskilo

The consulting commission emphasizes that these are recommendations, and not yet final decisions of the Academy. Of course, the Academy and the Esperanto community are constantly inventing new words as new objects, attributes, activities and relationships come into existence and/or awareness. This kind of question can be sent (only in Esperanto!) directly to the director of the commission: Stefan Maul

Pferseer Str. 15
DE-86150 Augsburg
Germany

e-mail: maul@newsfactory.net

Editor's Red-faced Retraction

In the last issue of ELNA Update, Miko Sloper, one of the editors, introduced a pair of "corrections" into one of the cited texts. As several careful readers have pointed out, the original figures were fine, and therefore needed no correcting! The assertion was made that within a field of eleven languages, there are 110 directions of translation; the editor wrongly changed this to 220. The original author also referred to 400 directions of translation between 20 languages. This was wrongly changed to 760; the actual number is 380, which readily rounds up to 400. Mr. Sloper wishes to express his embarrassment, and apologize for whatever consternation this may have caused.

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