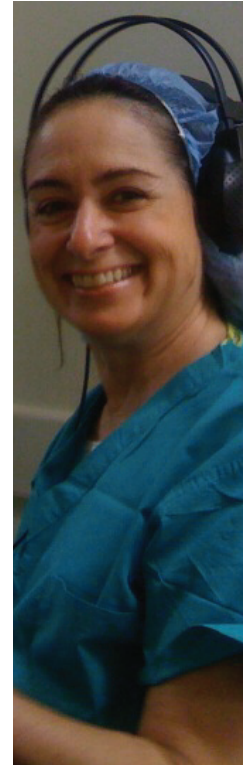

Blood and Scrubs

By John Speck – Conference Sales Manager



As Conference Tech for ProTranslating the last three years, I've become accustomed to some unusual work environments, from agricultural fairs to art galleries, boardrooms to museum theaters, and plenty of elite hotel ballrooms. We get called to do interpretation anywhere you have people speaking or discussing a topic in more than one language. As a result, I've done plenty of equipment set-ups in a wide variety of places, but nothing quite prepared me for our latest contract: simultaneous interpretation of a hysterectomy to be broadcast live to the world via Internet. "No problem," I thought when I received the email from our conference coordinator, "they have a media services department. I'll set up in a doctor's lounge and let the hospital's AV department deal with the blood and guts." Much easier said than done.

I arrive at the hospital just before lunch, and call our contact. Bethany from marketing comes down to the valet and meets me as planned. Her attire, a little surprising for someone in her position, is scrubs. The plot thickens. I load up our trusty cart with 200 lbs. of gear (everything I might need, depending on the type of cable on which they send me the interpreter's feed) and push off towards the elevator, following my helpful new associate. On the second floor we come to an ominous pair of electric doors that say: Medical staff only. Do not enter. "Just through here," Bethany says, waving her security badge and walking me through the automatic doors. Then she stops and motions. "You can put your scrubs on through there." She points me to the male doctors' locker room. So much for avoiding the gore! It would prove to be another chapter in my ever-expanding array of professional experiences.



Once again, our crack team of interpreters succeeded, delivering a flawless interpretation on the fly, with all of the appropriate medical jargon from their thoroughly researched glossary. The hospital had scrubs my size and it certainly didn't hurt to have an extra layer of clothing to protect against the glacial cool of the A/C in the hall next to the operating room. Thankfully, for sanitary reasons, I was not allowed to set up inside the operating room proper. I love the wonders of modern medicine, but I have never been a big fan of watching blood and guts, particularly not in person. Blocking out that part of the experience, I would have to say it was a great opportunity to learn and grow as a team, and it certainly supports what they told me my first week on the job: There is never a dull moment in the Conference Department at ProTranslating. ■