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Country Profile: Colombia

2008 Spring Edition, Issue 3

*This issue is dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Garden*



*Welcome*

From Tom Garden, CEO

tom.garden@gardentranslation.com

Dear Readers,

Over the past several decades thousands of immigrants from all over the world have arrived in Minnesota to begin new lives without the fear of persecution and prejudice. For many of these new Americans adjusting to life in a new country means coping with: culture shock, a sense of loss, isolation, and language barriers.

Personally I feel grateful for the opportunity to help out these new immigrants adapt to life in Minnesota by providing qualified interpreters to aid with their communication needs.

We also value our relationship with our clients. Relationships cannot be sustained without integrity. Integrity means doing the right thing even if it is an unpopular decision. It means taking responsibility for mistakes and maintaining a high ethical standard despite temptation. It means being honest with yourself, your colleagues and your clients no matter what. In today's business climate it is vital to pause and think how you treat your fellow human being and how you will be remembered.

When I was a young child my father gave me a poem to read that I have never forgotten. If I may I would like to share it with you:

### **The Man in the Glass**

When you get what you want in your struggles for self  
And the world makes you king for a day,  
Just go to a mirror and look at yourself  
And see what that man has to say.  
For it isn't your father or mother or wife  
Whose judgment upon you must pass,  
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life  
Is the one staring back from the glass.  
Some people might think you're a straight-shooting  
chum  
And call you a wonderful guy.  
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum  
If you can't look him straight in the eye.  
He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest  
For he's with you clear to the end  
And you've passed your most dangerous test  
If the guy in the glass is your friend.  
You may fool the whole world down the pathway of  
years  
And get pats on the back as you pass  
But your final reward will be heartache and tears  
If you've cheated the man in the glass.

*Unknown Author*



"The country of fantastic treasures" is what the Spanish conquerors called this country when they stepped ashore in 1499. Colombia is the fourth largest country in South America and is one of the continent's most populous nations. Colombia, founded in 1819, has substantial oil reserves and is a major producer of gold, silver, emeralds, platinum and coal. Colombia is located in northwestern South America and is bordered to the east by Venezuela and Brazil and, to the south by Ecuador and Peru. Despite some of the challenges that face this populous nation, Colombia is a thriving society with a rising middle class and some of the best health care and universities in South America.

Up to the time of its independence in 1819, the country's vast resources were ruthlessly plundered and its original American Indian civilization was destroyed. Gold, jewels and metals were taken from this land by the Conquistadors and taken to Europe. As a result many of the ancient Indian civilizations disappeared into oblivion.

Over the centuries a unique culture was created, combining American Indian traditions and the European cosmopolitanism, the African mysticism and the Latin American beauty of ceremonies. Colombia has a uniform language - Spanish and a uniform religion - Catholicism. Colombia also boasts the second largest Spanish speaking population of the world after Mexico. The population of Colombia is approximately forty- three million people, representing an ethnic mix of European and an indigenous population which migrated from North and Central America.

"The country of princes and beggars" is a name often associated with Colombia because of its extreme degrees of social contrasts from wealthy to poverty. The social contrast within the country is reflected in the works of artists such as Fernando Botero and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the well-known author of the novel "One Hundred Years of Solitude".

Colombia is a beautiful and complicated country with a unique and unforgettable culture which affords its citizens a special way of life. While security in Colombia has improved significantly in recent years, violence by armed groups and outlawed organizations continues to affect the quality of life in Colombia. Many Colombians now live in the United States with the hope of a new life and prosperity.



Alejandro Rieger is a Spanish interpreter who has been working with Garden & Associates for a little over two years. Although born in Minnesota, Alejandro spent most of his life living in many countries in South America. Alejandro's father worked for the United Nations and as a result, Alejandro and his family had to move from place to place, including Ecuador, Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, and Colombia. Alejandro lived several years in Colombia, where he attended the University of Colombia in Bogota (the country's capital) studying medicine. Bogota is a beautiful city says Alejandro and he misses its beauty as well as the Colombian lifestyle. According to Alejandro, Colombians are cheerful, religious, patriotic, and hard-working. They love women and football. They enjoy life and appreciate all that it has to offer. Although there has been a civil war for 70 years, Colombian people hope that they'll create greater and strong country when they have peace.

Alejandro decided to move back to Minnesota, to pursue his medical career. While going to school Alejandro works as a Spanish interpreter. According to Alejandro, interpreters and health care professionals provide an important and necessary function here in Minnesota and abroad. Alejandro feels that both medical providers and interpreters have the obligation and the opportunity to help people, and that what he enjoys the most.



# CLIENT Q & A



Every month we invite questions and comments from you, our clients, about our policies and the interpreter-client relationship. We are ready to help...

**Q:** How do I provide feedback for the interpreter's performance? Garden & Associates wishes to ensure a quality experience for our clients. Clients are encouraged to complete our interpreter feedback surveys to assist us in evaluating our services to you. You may fax the feedback forms to 952-922-8150 or you can contact our recruitment department at 952-351-9113 or 952-351-9111.

**Q:** Can I request the interpreter to make a reminder call to the patient? It is Garden & Associates policy that our interpreters call the patient the night before the appointment to remind him or her of their appointment. We ask our interpreters to make several attempts to notify the patient about their appointment the night before or the morning of if necessary. These confirmation calls have dramatically reduced patient no-shows for our clients. When requesting an interpreter from Garden, please be sure to give us an accurate phone number of the patient and if possible, a home and work/cell number as well.

**Q:** How can I request an interpreter for an after hour emergency? All after-hours requests (6 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. M-F and 24/7 Weekends) are handled by Dr. Janeth Guerra. Dr. Guerra can be reached by phone at (612) 619-6030 or by pager at (952) 235-1716. Dr. Guerra also works on holidays when our main office is closed.

To submit a question or comment:  
Inessa@gardentranslation.com or sarah@gardentranslation, Subject line: Q & A

## Did You Know?



**Garden & Associates, Inc. offers clients the option to request interpreters on line! Fast! Efficient! No Paper!**

Please go to [www.gardentranslation.com](http://www.gardentranslation.com) and click "Request an Interpreter Online". To receive a step by step process of how to request an interpreter online, click on the link "How do I use the online request system?"



Garden & Associates, Inc. also offers Corporate Communication Instruction specializing in teaching English as a Second Language and developing communication and language skills needed to function effectively on the job. The program covers accent reduction and pronunciation, teamwork skills, and cultural training.

**Garden & Associates, Inc. also offers certified American Sign Language interpreters.**



## *Minnesota Cultural Events*

### **Upcoming Cultural Events in Minnesota**

#### **Debashish Bhattacharya**

**Friday, April 11th at 8:00 p.m.**

The Cedar Cultural Center

416 Cedar Ave S.

Minneapolis, MN 55454

Award winning Indian musician plays wide array of music ranging from classical to the blues.

#### **Rochester World Festival 2008**

**Friday, April 11th at 7:00 p.m. and**

**Saturday, April 12th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Mayo High School

1430 SW 11th Ave

Rochester, MN

Dedicated to celebrating diversity through dance performances, international buffet, and continuous music.

#### **Mankato International Festival**

**Sunday, April 20 from 11:00am – 4:00pm**

Mankato East High School

Mankato, MN 56001

The International Festival will include a flag parade, singing, dancing, a style show, food booths, cultural displays, children's area for making crafts, a silent auction to raise funds for the festival and vendors selling cultural items.

#### **2008 Festival of Nations**

**Friday, May 2nd from 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.**

**Saturday, May 3rd from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.**

**Sunday, May 4th from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

RiverCentre

175 West Kellogg Blvd.

St. Paul, MN

97 different ethnic groups from around the world share their food, crafts, and traditions.