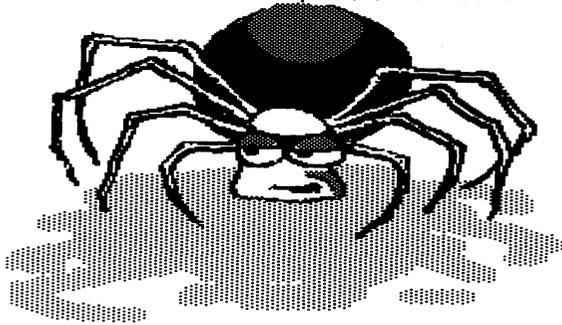


THE SPIDER'S WEB



County Court of Victoria

Mr Rapke: The second thing is, could I have Your Honour's leave to, during the trial, place a computer on the Bar table; it's a laptop computer?

His Honour: I don't think it will trouble me. Does it trouble anybody else?

Counsel: No.

His Honour: It will be quiet? It won't make noises and things like that?

Mr Rapke: No, it's not a barrister. (Victorian Bar News Vol 90, Spring 1994)

A message of dread

The Queensland Law Society and Public Trustee have recently combined a Wills campaign with the hard hitting PREPARE TO DIE message.

As well as winning some media awards, the message plastered over the rear of the taxis has apparently frightened witless quite a few Japanese tourists.

*Around the Traps
The Law Society of SA
Vol 16 No 11 December 1994*

The Criminal Lawyers Conference 1995 Bali



Cartoon from *Law Talk*
Law Society of New Zealand

Book Review

By Hugh Selby

Interpreters and the Legal System

*by
Kathy Laster
& Veronica Taylor*

From Page 12

But before we put too much emphasis on the need of NESB people to have an interpreter in a court or tribunal it should be noted that the provision of good interpreters at an earlier stage, for example, when the NESB client is first dealing with a government agency, might well forestall many of the matters that end up in tribunals or courts. The right to have an interpreter during police questioning is probably more significant - prevention of injustice being better than cure - than having an interpreter in court.

Recognising that interpreters are communication facilitators explicitly gives rise to recognition that interpreters make discretionary decisions and they must be openly accountable for the variety of roles that they play. That is, we must do away with a model which either forces interpreters into covert activity or pretends that interpreters are mere conduits.

No one can claim that there are sufficient competent legal interpreters around Australia. A serious attempt to improve the quality of legal interpreting must begin - aiming to create a much bigger pool of candidates who have high-quality, basic interpreter education and the option of undertaking specialised training in legal interpreting. Those of us who rely upon interpreters to meet the legal needs of NESB people, as legal practitioners or decision makers, must also be better informed about the nature, the demands and limitations of interpreting.

This book reflects a serious, balanced and insightful attempt to raise and discuss issues in legal interpreting by drawing upon a very wide range of earlier studies and reports not only in Australia, but also Canada, New Zealand and the United States. As a result it is an excellent basis for public discussion and education about the need for interpreters in our legal system and the costs, short and long term, or ignoring the challenge. So that you can contribute to this discussion read the book.

*Reprinted
with the permission of the
Victorian Law Institute Journal.*