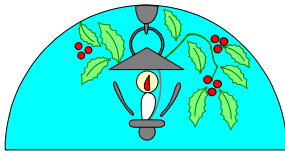


Felice Anno Nuovo!



January 8 meetings, party

AATIA feast rings in new millennium

AATIA WILL RING IN 2000 with a full agenda of meetings and a potluck dinner on January 8, which marks the traditional Russian New Year's day.

The Spanish Special Interest Group begins the day's activities with its regular 10 a.m. meeting at the Austin History Center. Then the general membership will gather in the same place at 1 p.m.

Translators and interpreters in sweats?

AATIA invites you to dress very informally to tune up the physical portion of your translating/interpreting machine: your body. For our January program, Yoga teacher Ellen Smith will get us breathing right and stretching right to optimize our translating and interpreting performance. She will also give us a brief overview of yoga.

The meeting will start promptly at 1:00 p.m. with the business portion, during which we will hear what the Board of Directors has planned for us this year. Come prepared to share translating and interpreting tips and experiences with your colleagues.

To cap the day's activities, bring your favorite foreign dish to a potluck dinner at the home of Mike Conner, 3213 French Place, 7-9 p.m. ★

Medical interpreter training scheduled

THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH will sponsor two courses for interpreters working in the medical environment.

The first, called Bridging the Gap, targets beginners who want to develop interpreting skills. Scheduled for January 24-28, it costs \$100 (scholarships are available) and is limited to 25 participants. The course covers basic interpreting skills, information on health care, culture in interpreting, communication skills for advocacy, and professional development.

The second course will be given twice, January 24-28 and January 31-February 4, and aims at those who are already trainers. They will polish general skills and particular challenges of training for the Bridging the Gap program. This course will cost \$1000 and is limited to 12 participants for each of the two sections.

Registration deadline is January 15 (after that date add \$75 to tuition). Please call 512-458-7494, fax 512-458-7527, or e-mail Elaine.Quinn@tdh.state.tx.us to request a registration form from Elaine Quinn - Texas Department of Health, Refugee Health Screening Program, 1100 West 49th Street, Austin, TX 78756. ★

Schwartz makes NYTimes list

MARIAN SCHWARTZ'S TRANSLATION of Nina Berberova's *The Book of Happiness* (New Directions) made the New York Times list of 1999's notable books, as reported in the Austin American-Statesman (December 12, 1999). Schwartz, who know Berberova, has also translated her latest book, *Cape of Storms*. ★

Would-be poetry translators: unite!

HAVE YOU EVER READ A POEM you just *had* to translate? Do you have a folder of poems you've translated tucked away somewhere in your office? Are you itching to try your hand at literary translation?

If you've answered yes to any of these questions, then come to the next meeting of the Literary Special Interest Group at 1207 Bickler Road on Wednesday, February 2, at 7 pm. Bring a short poem in the original, your translation-in-progress, and your questions and wonderings. We'll all pitch in and see what solutions we can find.

You can contribute something from any source language, but be sure to bring at least half a dozen copies so that everyone can join the discussion. Contact Marian Schwartz mbs@texas.net if you have questions or need directions. ★

Interpret in your pjs

LANGUAGE LINE SERVICES (formerly AT&T Language Line Services) is seeking experienced interpreters to work from their homes part-time or full-time anywhere in the US with benefits and professional development. Customers served include hospitals, law enforcement agencies, insurance companies, and government agencies.

All languages are needed, particularly Spanish and Asian languages. Send your résumé and availability to Lara Magnusdottir, Director of Interpreter Resources by e-mail to resume@languageline.com, or send a fax to 1-800-496-5331. Visit the website <http://www.languageline.com> or call 1-800-532-4441 for more information. ★

Austin Area Translators & Interpreters Association

<http://www.aatia.org>

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ACC T/I Series Draws to Close

THE TWO-YEAR CERTIFICATE PROGRAM in Translation and Interpretation, begun at Austin Community College in summer 1998, is nearing completion. The final course will consist of an internship in spring 2000. The program will then take a sabbatical until fall 2002.

The program included the following courses: Introduction to Translation and Interpreting; Technology for Translators and Interpreters; Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Translation Skills; Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Interpreting Skills; Ethics and Business Practices; Internship.

144 students participated in these courses, consisting of approximately 300 hours of instruction. The students benefited greatly from the courses and many have become new members of AATIA. Two of the students have even served as AATIA Board members.

The success of these courses resulted from efforts of many AATIA members who generously devoted their time to prepare and present practical information as well as very useful exercises, glossaries and references. Many others helped by reviewing the students' translations and offering specific comments and guidance. Yet others provided ideas, guidance, and moral support. As coordinator for this program, and on behalf of the students, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the following for their contributions: Frank Dietz, Roberto Quiroga, Albert Bork, Fritz Hensey, Maurine McLean, Ben Maya, Marta and Michael Blumenthal, Leon McMorrow, Tony Beckwith, Marian Schwartz, Liliana Valenzuela, Mauricio Lopez, Genevieve Dell, Carlos Castro, Jack Pointeau, Ria Vanderauwera, Sheng-Jie Chen, Harvie Jordan, Beatriz Quintana, Ingrid Lansford, Pat Thickstun, Hans Huth, Vitold Napiorkowski, Antoinette Sixt-Ruth, Allan Adams of Adams Technical Translations, Vivian Carmona of Bilingual Services, Kim Vitray of Ralph McElroy Translations, and Amira Sutton of Austin/Travis County Health Department.

Very special thanks go to Georganne Weller, who left her many obligations in Mexico to teach an outstanding course here for one week, and to my co-instructor Françoise Pointeau for her invaluable support.

—Esther Diaz ★



Mi Buenos Aires Querido

By Tony Beckwith © 1999

ONE OF ARGENTINA'S BEST-KNOWN tangos is *Mi Buenos Aires Querido*. The lyrics promise that all one's cares will evaporate upon returning to "My Beloved Buenos Aires," and all one's troubles will vanish in her welcoming womb. As one of her wandering children, it had been many years since I last trod that hallowed ground. I was returning now with Lillian on my arm and a tango in my heart.

Is it just my imagination, or is there a tango for every Argentine occasion, even my return? The lyrics to *Volver*, drenched in the deco melodrama of the thirties, reassure me that "life is fleeting, and twenty years is no time at all"—a mere twinkling of an eye. In La Boca, the area the guide-books call the "working-class" district, we strolled down Caminito and the tango of the same name was in the air, singing its sad story of shattered dreams. Tango is the street opera of Buenos Aires, evoking sharply defined black and white images expressed in deliberate, stylish poses. With music that can sound erotic even when you

can't understand the words, according to Lillian.

I used to be afraid of "BA." Soon after I was born there we moved across the river, and I spent most of my youth in Montevideo, which was a much smaller place. But I returned frequently to visit my grandparents, and later when I traveled on business. To me, BA was always the Big City, the metropolis. When you were downtown you had to look straight up to see the sky. It was a long train ride into town from my grandparents' homes in the suburbs. The streets were crowded with people walking shoulder-to-shoulder, jostling, moving, riding the subway, surging across an intersection when the lights

changed, speaking with their hands.... I was returning after a lifetime spent in other parts of the world, and found the city to be far less threatening than I remembered. It actually seemed oddly familiar because, as I now realized, it looked just like London or Paris or Madrid.

The Avenida 9 de Julio is the widest thoroughfare in the world. It has a daunting number of lanes going in each direction, divided by islands with trees and statues and bus stops. Calle Florida, the paved over "walking street," is the central artery of a section of the city that is like a gigantic open-air mall. As usual, the elegance of the Argentines is everywhere apparent. Window-shopping is a pleasure in Buenos Aires. So is people-watching from, let's say, a marble-topped table on the sidewalk outside the Petit

Plaza café, where we sipped an espresso and nibbled on a buttery croissant, or *media luna*.

The food in BA was excellent. *Salpicón de ave* doesn't just sound better than chicken salad—it is. And the beef, of course, is hard to describe unless you've tried it. Once you have, you simply know that it's the best-tasting meat in the world. A true gastronomic treat is an Argentine steak with a couple of fried eggs on top and a side of french fries, and a green salad tossed tableside with olive oil and vinegar. For those who don't eat meat, Lillian would suggest a chubby *empanada* filled with sweet Argentine corn. Followed by an *alfajor*, a delicious pastry filled with *dulce de leche*, which is the dangerously addictive "milk jam" spread.

Having local friends certainly helped get us off the beaten track. Watching a polo match from the sidelines on a sunny Thursday afternoon was magnificent. We stood on manicured grounds, green in every direction, engulfed by the sound of thundering hooves, and the creaking of saddles, and the heavy breathing of horses. There are tangos about fast horses, of course, and about gambling with love, and winning, and losing. We listened to dozens of them one night in the San Telmo district. And walking home on lamp-lit cobbled streets, still under the spell of the city, who could blame us for singing *Mi Buenos Aires Queriiiiiiiiido!* ★

**Any way you translate it,
fine dining always means**

Green Pastures
RESTAURANT

Along Literary Lines



My Assault on the New York Publishing World

by Lilitana Valenzuela © 1999

HOW DO YOU GET YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR of those towering New York publishing houses? That was my first question as I considered my upcoming trip to the Big Manzana for the ALTA annual conference in October. Having already published two books of literary translation with a major publisher obviously helps, but the task still seemed daunting. Thanks to the sage advice of former NYC resident and literary whiz Marian Schwartz before, during, and after the conference, I was able to trace my own map with a minimum of wrong turns or missed opportunities. Here's how I tackled this:

First, I worried endlessly about what to wear, what the weather would be like, whether I needed a raincoat (hard to conceive of after 6 weeks of harsh drought in Central Texas), and

when I should get a haircut. I even learned how to apply make-up.

Then I turned to secondary matters, such as how to get an appointment. I have worked on occasion with

a well-respected literary agent in NY, so I e-mailed her for contact tips. She graciously obliged with the names of editors in major publishing houses working in Spanish for the U.S. market. With this valuable information in hand, I then looked up the publishers' addresses, history, phone numbers, and other pertinent information in the essential volume *Writer's Guide to Book Editors, Publishers, and Literary Agents*, by Jeff Herman (Prima, 1997-1998). In addition to the practical information, this book helped me tremendously in understanding the publishing hierarchy, and learning who owns whom, as well as which imprints or branches do translations.

Three weeks before the conference I composed a one-page letter to each of these seven publishers, in which I briefly described my background, mentioning the two books I have translated and how many copies have been sold to date. I offered my services as a literary translator, dropped my agent's name, enclosed a résumé, and let them know I'd be in New York on such and such a date and that perhaps we could meet. I told them I would be calling the following week. On a whim, I sent an additional letter to an editor I got from the book—a cold call if you will—of whom I knew nothing, but who ended up being the only publisher out of eight with whom I actually got an appointment.

I wrote the eighth letter to a Simon & Schuster editor with a Hispanic last name (a good omen). I let her know that I recently read and enjoyed the book *Gardens in the Dunes* by the Native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko published by her house and was wondering whether I might be able to translate it into Spanish. I then included all the other standard information previously

mentioned. Each letter went into a large brown envelope with my spotless résumé (an inadvertent mistake here or in the letter itself is “the kiss of death,” as Marian warned me), a color photocopy of the covers of my two previous books (it costs more than a B&W copy, but it’s well worth the extra attention you might get), a copy of a review of one of my books by Austin colleague Tony Beckwith, an article I wrote for the ATA Chronicle about some of the issues I had to deal with when translating *Woman Hollering Creek* by Sandra Cisneros as *El Arroyo de la Llorona* (Vintage Español/Random House, 1996), plus a copy of my ATA certificate of accreditation for good measure. I kissed the packets and sent them on their way.

In between I was swamped with work, but managed to order new business cards and fine-tune my resumé. I also prepared several packets with my own poetry and fiction to slip to unsuspecting editors or literary agents at the conference.

The week before the conference I followed up via telephone. I kept a log of each phone call, whether I had left a message with machine or human, whether the editor I wanted was out of town, on maternity leave, or soon to leave the company. More than half of the editors had the great courtesy either to reply by e-mail or through their assistants, saying that they would keep my records on file for any future translation projects, but that at the moment there was no work for me. One editor didn’t reply at all and another one asked me to resend the materials to another person in the company. I also made an appointment with the project director at one of the museums for which I have done translations.

Once in NYC, I made some more phone calls to let the remaining

editors know that I was already in town and would be happy to meet with them at their convenience. I had a wonderful time in the city I hadn’t visited since I was 12, and I could feel my old “urban blood” from growing up in Mexico City begin to bubble. I arrived two days before the conference so as to have ample time to visit and go to appointments.

After the conference got into full swing the days were packed to maximum capacity and my attention divided between fascinating panel offerings and enticing city attractions. Toward the end of the week, after a call home, my family informed me that I had a message from someone who wanted to give me work. Here was my chance: an editor was actually excited to meet me and was positively impressed by my credentials.

It was Friday. The chances of actually meeting were slim, but I waited around the phone playing a miserable game of phone tag with the editor until finally we spoke. The only time she could see me was between 3 and 4 that afternoon, as she had an author from out of town and was busy showing her around and accompanying her to meetings with different people at the publishing house. I had agreed to read the story for the Spanish workshop led by Sam Zimmerman that required someone to imitate a Mexican sportscaster narrating a soccer game, but this was my chance, my only chance. I found Sam and explained my predicament. He generously let me wiggle my way out, and I was able to call the editor to confirm our appointment for that afternoon.

I was nervous, didn’t feel like eating, so I thought about walking around New York for 2 hours, but figured I would probably be too exhausted and too wired from all that city energy. So I did some yoga in the

hotel room (otherwise known as an Old World closet with a view), relaxed, and waited another hour. At 2 o’clock I set off on foot to cover the fifteen or so blocks to my destination. I was by now well oriented in the city, so it was an enjoyable walk. The autumn air was a bit nippy for us Texans, but the sun shone brightly through the grand architecture.

The meeting was promising and full of possibilities. The bright, young editor, a daughter of Ecuadorean immigrants, had just replaced the one I had found in the book and was eager to get to business and take the Spanish imprint, *Aguilar Libros en Español*, to new heights. She gave me a pile of books as samples of her publisher’s accomplishments in Spanish so far and said that hopefully she would soon have a project for me that would get my juices flowing.

I had done my homework and it had paid off. I didn’t yet have a new book project under my arm or a book contract in hand, but I had managed to get in the door with what had been, in essence, a cold call. I made other valuable contacts at the conference, including a literary agent from Writer’s House, a translator colleague from Barcelona, another colleague who lives in Mexico City, an art catalog editor, as well as other famous and not so famous translators, all equally passionate about languages, words and cultures. ★





More Freebies in Cyberspace

©2000 by Frank Dietz,
<http://www.jump.net/fdietz>

THE BUSINESS MODEL of recent Internet startups seems to consist in giving away things for free, losing a lot of money, and consequently making a killing on the stock market. But seriously, a number of free offers out there might interest you.

First of all, people sometimes ask me about the “free” computers they see advertised. Well, the problem is that these are only free after you sign a 3-year contract with an ISP. Considering that three years is a very long time in the development of the net (remember how “fast” your modem was three

years ago?), I would strongly advise against binding yourself to an ISP for such a long time, if you want to use this connection for business purposes.

Then of course, there are more free e-mail accounts (<http://www.hotmail.com>) and homepages (<http://home.netscape.com/sitecentral/index.html?cp=hom11psit>) than you can shake a mouse at. Pretty much every portal and search engine now offers these services for free. Note, though, that they may have size restrictions (YahooMail, for instance, gives you 3 MB for your e-mail account) and that you still need an internet service provider to connect to the net first.

One solution to the access problem is to download the free Internet access program from AltaVista (<http://microav.com/>). This allows you free 56K modem access with local

access numbers in many US cities. The price you pay for it is having to watch a small advertising area on your screen while the program is running. While this is probably not suitable for your main business account, it could be a

solution for travel, when you don't want to pay long-distance charges to dial into your local or regional ISP company's server (many ISPs let you temporarily forward your e-mail to a web-based account, such as YahooMail or HotMail).

If you want to send voicemail over the Internet, you can download RocketTalk (<http://www.rockettalk.com/>). This program lets you record a message and send it anywhere on the planet. You will need a Windows-based computer and a microphone, while your recipient, of course, needs an e-mail account and a Windows-based computer with speakers. The message simply shows up in his or her e-mail inbox and can be launched by double-clicking (Warning: if your recipient pays a lot for connection time, this might not be so economical, as sound files can be large).

Finally, there is a way to make free phone calls (within the USA) over the Internet. You need the Dialpad applet (<http://www.dialpad.com/>) and a computer with microphone and speakers. The advantage is that you can call any regular phone. The disadvantage is that there is some echoing sound in the connection—but then, it's free.

One last word: all of these services want certain marketing data from you (age, interests, etc.), so that they can target their ads. That's the price you pay for the free services. While I would not necessarily recommend them as your main services (after all, when you demand good customer service, you have more leverage as a paying customer), they could serve as a temporary solution or an addition to these services. ★

Free t/i e-mail

WebTranslators offers free Web-based e-mail to translators and interpreters, along with a new bulletin board and links to resources at <http://www.WebTranslators.com>. ★



Top Ten Traits of Good Translators

or How to Behave Nearly Perfectly (in the Eyes of a Project Coordinator) in the Unlikely Event that You Are Not Already Doing So

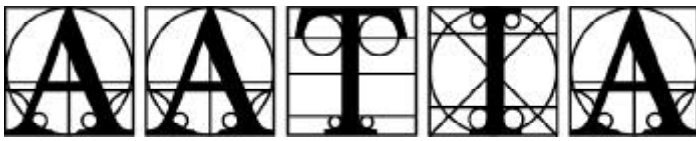
*As suggested by Patricia Propst,
Ralph McElroy Translation Company*

1. **Have a résumé that can be scanned for pertinent points.** Your native language, language pairs, and years of experience as a translator ought to be immediately visible to any reader flipping through a stack of résumés.
2. **Have your fax on at all times.** Maybe not literally, although that certainly is appropriate. The point is to be accessible. If you are not immediately available by phone during business hours, then you should be checking your fax, e-mail, and/or voice messages frequently throughout the day. Many times it is not possible to wait even a couple of hours to hear from a translator about availability for a specific job.
3. **Keep up with the industry.** Be the expert on linguistics, resources in content area, and the tools of the trade (software). Know where to look for answers. Let the industry change around you only if that is the result of your business decision to more narrowly define your niche in the market!
4. **Say “no” when necessary.** Decline a project if you are truly reluctant to do it. If you can’t handle a project for whatever reason, say so (and give the reason—that helps your client learn more about what you do best). There nearly always is another workable solution for the party trying to talk you into accepting the job.
5. **Take your turn on “nuisance” jobs.** On the other hand (referring back to number 4), go ahead and say “yes” every now and then when your reluctance to accept a project is because it’s one of those jobs that’s of the unpleasant-but-someone’s-got-to-do-it variety. The client to whom you occasionally say “yes” will not want to totally alienate you by sending you only nuisance jobs.
6. **Give advance notice of looming disaster.** Disasters always seem to be related to delivery schedules. If you know that you will have to miss a due date for any reason, it’s better to warn your client sooner rather than later. It’s helpful if you can provide a reason for the disaster that will be useful in explaining the delay.
7. **Miss only one deadline per job.** Some a project seems fated to suffer unavoidable setbacks from the moment it first crosses someone’s mind. Even so, credibility (your client’s and your own) deteriorates rapidly if Plan B has to be followed by Plan C and so on.
8. **Turn in jobs early!** If you happen to complete a project early, go ahead and deliver it to your client. Your client learns more about how quickly you can work (and also knows that you might be available for more work).
9. **Express your preferences.** Help your client get to know what suits you best by offering information about your preferences—what you really enjoy; what dictionaries you have; how you prefer to receive work, get messages, etc.; if you’d rather volunteer for a root canal than translate a certain subject; if you always or never work on weekends; if you translate nights so please don’t call before noon...anything! You’ll have a better chance of getting more interesting projects in a less irritating manner.
10. **Teach your client.** If you find yourself mentally listing all the things you wish your client knew, go ahead and offer some free education. Translator coordinators particularly welcome your expertise on matters that will help them fine-tune their skills in providing accurate information about language, word count, and content. Also, your clients who are not the end users like to pass along helpful information to their own clients. The people that generate the demand for translations sometimes have no practical knowledge of what transpires between order and delivery and sometimes know just enough to make things difficult. In many cases, it’s the translators who can best initiate a flow of useful information to help remedy this situation.
11. **Bring up problems.** A mutually beneficial business relationship requires an ongoing investment of time and energy by all parties. One of the most rewarding aspects of any good relationship is dealing with problems in a professional manner. If you value the business relationship, it’s worth bringing up problems, and your client should do the same with you. ★

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AATIA welcomes visitors to the Austin History Center (AHC) at 9th & Guadalupe on the 2nd Saturday of odd-numbered months for general meetings and even-numbered months for board meetings.

EVENTS IN AUSTIN

- JAN 8** 10 a.m. SpanSIG meeting, AHC. Info Harvie Jordan 444-8537
1-4 p.m. AATIA regular meeting, AHC. Info 707-3900
5 p.m. Rowdy Translators SIG meeting. Dog & Duck Pub, 17th & Guadalupe.
7-9 p.m. Foreign Food Potluck Dinner, 3213 French Place. Info 474-7012
- FEB 2** 7 p.m. LitSIG, 1207 Bickler Road. Info Marian Schwartz 442-5100 or mbs@texas.net
- FEB 6** 1-3 p.m. RussianSIG. Info Jane Chamberlain 453-1486 or candide@io.com
- FEB 12** 2-5 p.m. AATIA board meeting, AHC
- MAR 11** AATIA regular meeting & SIG meetings

Website switches server; services directory shifts to online database

YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE when AATIA's website moved to a new server on December 1.

"Besides saving the association some 50% of the monthly fee," said Webmaster Eric Brooks, "the move will allow the online services directory to shift to a searchable database, making it faster and more convenient for clients to find member translators and interpreters." The new directory should be in place soon after the first of the year.

In a related area, an association-wide bulletin board will be inaugurated sometime in January. Replacing the current e-mail notification system coordinated by Albert Bork, the new system will let members send one e-mail to a single address for forwarding to the entire list of AATIA subscribers. Details will be provided when the system is in place. ★

Plan ahead for future ATA conferences

Orlando, Florida September 20-23, 2000

Los Angeles, California October 31-November 3, 2001

Atlanta, Georgia November 6-9, 2002

Page 8

The AATIA Letter

January 2000

DR. ASLAN ASLANIAN
ARMENIAN, FARSI, DARI, PASHTU, ARABIC

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