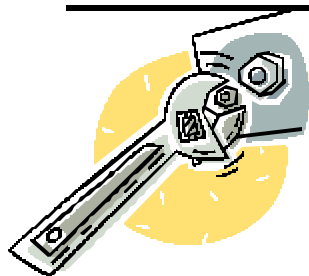


The Letter

of the Austin Area Translators
and Interpreters Association
September 2004



September 11 meeting

Nuts & Bolts, Part 2: the Agency Perspective

SEPTEMBER'S MEMBERSHIP MEETING will continue the theme introduced at the July meeting: how to make a

success of a freelance career in translation or interpretation. The focus on September 11, however, will be on interacting with language services companies—a major source of work for most freelancers.

Patricia Bown and Kim Vitray of McElroy Translation and Jorge Ungo of MasterWord Services will share their views on what goes into building and maintaining a good freelancer/company relationship and give some tips on what translators and interpreters should and shouldn't do in order to secure and keep securing work from companies. In addition, Vitray will report on the ATA Translation Company Division conference, held this summer in Austin.

The meeting will also feature brief remarks by the candidates seeking election to the AATIA Board of Directors in 2005. ★

Regional conference draws high marks

THE REVIEWS ARE IN: participants rated the conference a resounding success [see comments and pictures at www.aatia.org].

The Regional Conference on Translation and Interpretation Topics, held in Austin on July 30–31 and hosted by AATIA and the Houston Interpreters and Translators Association (HITA), attracted a total of 111 participants from all over Texas and in one case, Louisiana.

Fourteen concurrent sessions covered a wide range of topics, including workshops on Spanish grammar, conference interpreting, court interpreting, medical translation, healthcare interpreting, literary translation, and software localization. ATA-certified attendees were eligible to earn up to 10 continuing education points for their participation in the conference. Sixteen candidates sat for the ATA certification exam offered in conjunction with the conference.

During their spare time, conference-goers had the opportunity

to browse exhibits mounted by Austin Community College, InTrans Books, Jorge Ungo from MasterWord Services, the National Council on Interpreting in Healthcare, and Office Depot at 5300 Mopac.

Two new associations were launched during the conference: the Texas Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (TAJIT) and the Texas Association of Healthcare Interpreters and Translators (TAHIT). For more about TAJIT, contact Luis Garcia at info@crossculturalconcepts.com; for TAHIT contact Tricia Yacovone at payacovone@aol.com.

Many participants called for another conference in the near future. While there are no plans to hold one in the coming year, the AATIA Board is reviewing conference evaluation forms to identify topics for workshops in 2005. Suggestions include business and financial translation, legal translating and interpreting, software localization, grammar and style, ethics for translators and interpreters, and tools and methods for improving efficiency and productivity in translation.

—Laura Vlasman ★

AATIA/HITA conference notes

AT ITS AUGUST 14 MEETING, the AATIA board of directors thanked Esther Díaz and Laura Vlasman for their work planning the recent regional conference. A big thanks also goes to Anita Stauber Berthold for coordinating volunteers.

It also expressed appreciation to Odile Legeay and HITA for their collaboration on the Regional Conference and help with registration.

AATIA is also grateful to McElroy Translation and Maurine McLean for their financial contributions to the conference.

★

Esther Díaz's ATA certification workshop, held on Saturday, June 19th in anticipation of the exam sitting at the regional conference, drew 13 participants. After donating \$30 to Ventana del Soul for the use of their facilities, AATIA netted \$135 from the workshop.

★

In conjunction with the conference, Laura Vlasman proctored an ATA certification exam for 16 candidates on Sunday, August 1.

★

AATIA received six membership applications due to the conference and earned \$322 in sales of T-shirts, books, and book weights.

—Janet Peirce ★



Kudos

AATIA congratulates Traci Andrighetti, whose translation from the Italian of Adolfo Albertazzi's "The Devil in the Decanter" will appear in the August issue of *Words Without Borders*. ★

Austin Area Translators & Interpreters Association

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July meeting reviewed

Nuts and Bolts, Part I

EXPERIENCED LOCAL LINGUISTS provided members with helpful hints for the self-employed translator and interpreter at the July 10th AATIA membership meeting.

J. Henry Phillips discussed the impracticality of individuals purchasing yellow page ads at a cost of \$600+ in our modern world of the Internet. AATIA already has a yellow page ad citing the association's online Linguist Locator, giving members a much more effective way of advertising their languages and specializations.

Phillips also stated that translators and interpreters can create their own

websites for about \$50 a year to showcase their own voice, credentials, and résumé, making their services accessible to clients all over the world. The Writings link on Phillips' website portugueseinterpreter.com contains instructions for creating a \$50 website ("Every Man a Webmaster") and for setting up a PayPal account ("Get Paid Online"), which facilitates making and receiving payments even from overseas clients, in addition to allowing you to maintain and print out records in a variety of formats. He stated that PayPal was cheaper than electronic bank transfers when dealing with overseas clients.

Phillips suggested that the translator always have a signed contract or if possible arrange advance payment. Complaints regarding payment prac-

tices can be sent to the Consumer Protection Department of the office of the Attorney General of Texas. Ted's Payment Practices published by AATIA member, Ted Wozniak, www.trwenterprises.com/payment_practices.htm is a good place to start.

Pat Thickstun stated that the most important thing about running a business is to have an accounting system, such as Quicken, in place. It is essential that the translator/interpreter submit an invoice when a job is completed. Thickstun's invoices state that "Payment is due within 30 days." She said that when she was not paid for one translation job after a significant period, she contacted the client, telling him that she was going to count it as a tax loss and that she would be sending

him a form 1099. The client paid.

She mentioned that if you deal with large files, such as Power Point files with graphics, you can rent space on the Internet through such virtual drive websites as **swapdrive.com** and **xdrive.com**.

Thickstun discussed the importance of “social capital,” the translator’s relationships with other people. When you receive payment, always thank the client. When you cannot do a job, offer to help the client find another qualified translator. Finally, she said that you cannot network too much, in other words, “network until it hurts.”

Marian Schwartz gave a brief presentation on how to break into literary translation.

She said that websites and yellow page ads are not necessary for the literary translator. The publishing industry tends to be “old school,” and for that reason, prospective clients would not think of looking for you or hiring you on the basis of websites or yellow page ads.

In a sense, even the established literary translator has to audition every time. Schwartz stressed the importance of forming relationships with authors and publishing houses. Many such publishers work with agents, and it is difficult for translators to get an agent. Having credentials such as a PhD will go a long way in giving you more credibility.

The American Literary Translation Association (ALTA) publishes guides such as “Breaking Into Print” and “Getting Started,” which are available online at the association’s website **literarytranslators.org**. Schwartz stated that the beginner should start small by publishing a short story or a poem in a lesser known magazine and work his way up. If you want to translate a novel by a particular author, start by translating one of his short stories. Other ways to get started include entering literary contests or applying for grants.

Literary translation opportunities are most often gained by personal con-

tacts and networking. Meeting other writers, editors, and translators at conferences, literary festivals, and readings can often go a long way. At the ALTA conference beginners may receive advice from experienced translators and other.

In addition to Russian-language resources, Schwartz cited several general works which have proved useful in her field: the Penguin Rhyming Dictionary, the Oxford Companion to Classical Literature, and LINGVO, an electronic dictionary to which you can add your own cards, merge them with the dictionary, as well as annotate where you got information and how you used it.

Although as unable to attend the meeting, Leon McMorro, an experienced translator for 30, years sent a handout with tips for freelancers.

McMorro’s handout said that now, more than ever, translation agencies are seeking translators who have education or training which match a particular job, in addition to language expertise. Agencies can now do so easily with access to large databases. One general manager stated that 99% of his agency’s work load is finding clients, while only about 1% of their effort is finding freelancers to do the work.

Therefore, it is important for freelancers to do the following:

- Highlight any previous work experience in their résumés, matching it to translation document types (e.g., manuals, advertising brochures, medical records, etc.)
- Work steadily at getting a job area skill in addition to translation skills. Courses at ACC and private technical schools can get you a “job title” within a short time and are well worth the time and money investment.
- While working toward acquiring a second career skill (becoming a

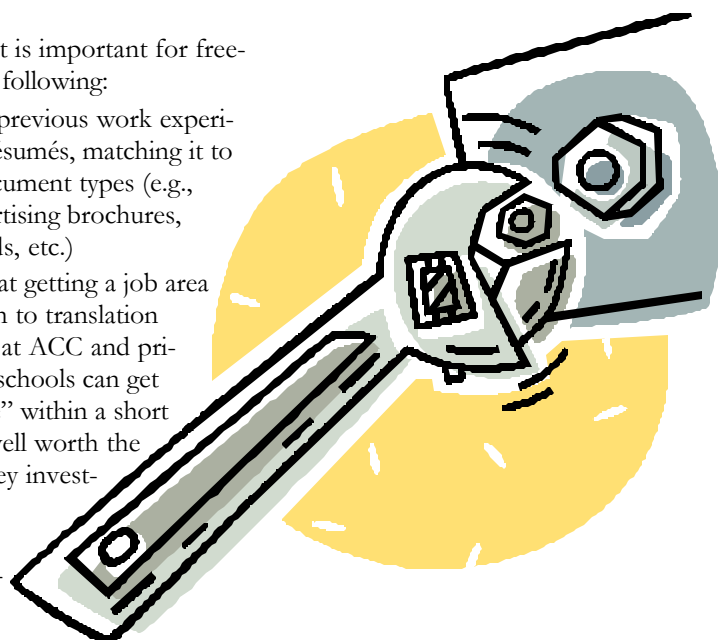
“language plus” translator), take any opportunity to do volunteer work in your preferred field. Even before you get a job title, it is wonderful if you can claim some job area experience.

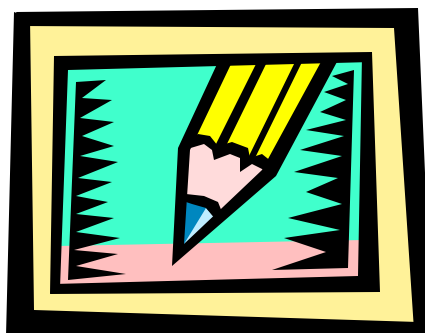
- Business, law, medicine, and engineering/technology are still the job areas that regularly require translations and constitute the “translation market.” Freelance jobs for people with practical skills in the liberal arts and social sciences are rare and irregular. Keeping track of the number of times you see or hear requests for translations in a particular field is a part of effective self-marketing.

An excellent first step for freelancers is to join AATIA and get your name on the Linguist Locator of the AATIA website. In addition to your other credentials, becoming ATA certified will definitely give you more credibility, exposure, and job opportunities.

Finally, Laura Vlasman suggested an excellent resource with practical advice for the beginning freelance translator: *The Translator’s Handbook* by Morry Sofer (Schreiber Publishing Company, ISBN 1-887563-48-2), but cautioned that some of the information cited may be out-of-date.

—Janet Peirce ★





Meet the Candidates for 2005 AATIA Board of Directors

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR MARIAN SCHWARTZ HAS ANNOUNCED CANDIDATES for the 2005 Board of Directors elections. Candidates will make a brief presentation at the meeting on September 11, 2004.

The election will be conducted by mail during the last two weeks in September, and results will be announced at the November membership meeting.

Schwartz expressed thanks to all the candidates for their willingness to run for office and to Nominating Committee members Liliana Valenzuela and Beatriz Quintana for their efforts in recruiting an outstanding list of candidates. ★

For President Esther Díaz

In this past year as President of AATIA, I began working on the goals I proposed in my candidacy statement, and I am offering my leadership again for the coming year to bring them to fruition. These goals are:

- Provide professional development programs for senior language professionals — The successful Regional Conference held this year offered great professional development opportunities.
- Formation of new SIGs — The new Interpreter's SIG is up and running, addressing the needs of interpreters in judicial, healthcare, and conference settings.
- Provide direction for Board members' duties and responsibilities, and fully develop the coordinator functions that support these duties — I plan to recruit members willing to help each of the Directors to accomplish their tasks and potentially be ready to step into their shoes the following year.

- Finish revising the Manual of AATIA Policies and Procedures (MAPP) — The completion of this project will provide up-to-date instructions for Board members and coordinators. ★

For Secretary Susana Roca

I have been a member of the AATIA for less than a year and in this short time I have already benefited enormously from it. Volunteering for and participating in the AATIA-HITA conference alone has assisted me in becoming a better translator.

I am from Spain and I have lived in England and South America where translation was a part of my work. Only since I moved to Austin two years ago have I had the support of fellow translators and a fine organization like the AATIA. I have been working as a freelance translator for the past two years. I am dependable and detail-oriented, and I view the opportunity of serving as Secretary for the AATIA as my way of giving back to this organization. ★

For Director of Communications Leo Bello

I was born and raised in Bogotá, Colombia. I hold an advanced degree in Electrical Engineering from the State University of New York at Buffalo, and have worked in a variety of engineering capacities ranging from purely technical to management. During the last nine years I have lived in Austin working as business development manager for Latin America.

Since an early age I was fascinated by languages and developed a great interest for linguistics although I could never get a formal education on it. I have been fortunate to visit and live in different countries where I tried to learn as best as I could other languages and cultures. My interest and exposure to translations started working as an engineer, which explains why most of my professional translation activity is in the technology/engineering area. One of my hobbies is also the study and translation comparison of

medieval Spanish literature.

I have been a member of AATIA for about two years and found it a valuable resource for both professional and personal growth. I have been also in the board of directors of other organizations, and learned that teamwork is the only way to achieve anything. This experience I plan to use if elected for this position. I reckon that AATIA has top-notch newsletter and website, and I am very excited with the challenge of making them even better. I am convinced as well, that with a little bit of work and dedication we can find additional ways for AATIA to reach out to a broader part of Central Texas community. ★

J. Henry Phillips

AATIA member and volunteer since 1987, degreed and certified in Spanish and Portuguese, simultaneous and federal court interpreter.

If elected Communications Director I'll continue working for you the way I have in the past: streamlining and simplifying our operations and applying my computer skills to modernizing and improving communications. If elected I will strive to obtain board approval for implantation of a bulletin board forum system offering selective member updates without exposure to viruses or spam, or complicated sign up procedures.

You again have a choice. If you reaffirm your trust in me—a full-time independent freelance translator and interpreter—I will do my best for the individual rights of all members. You may expect fair and honest representation in our democracy, straightforward statements and an

association which strives to make itself as useful as possible to you—persons engaged in the language professions. ★

For Director of Finance

Howard Simms

I believe the future for AATIA is bright, with opportunities for new and very interesting activities. Previous examples have been the publication of Thresholds and the successful recent workshop and regional conference.

There are also dangers to be avoided. Extra vigilance must be exercised at every step.

"May you serve as Finance Director in interesting times." Would that be a benediction or a curse?

I have felt ambivalent about seeking votes for another term as Director of Finance, but I feel I have more to contribute. If elected, I will do my best to help everybody on the Board keep our finances strong while tackling new challenges. ★

For Director of Membership

Anita Stauber Berthold

I was born and raised in Germany and have resided in the US since 1988. I am an ATA-certified (English to German) freelance translator and have been a member of the AATIA since 1997. I have served the association as Director of Communications for the last year and am running for Director of Membership for the upcoming term. After having served on the Board of Directors for a year and having gained a deeper and better understanding of the association, I believe that my strengths can be better utilized as Director of

Membership. Like last year, this association will once again be comprised of a group of talented individuals dedicated to serving you, the members. We want to continue working towards making this association a strong network of support by enhancing the benefits for the membership at large and by increasing the visibility of our association and its members.

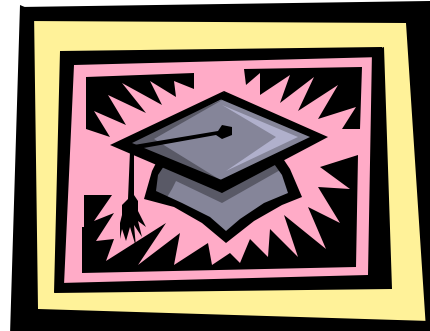
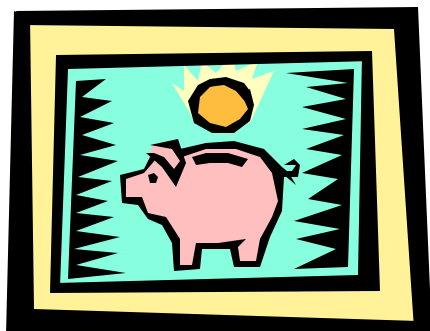
For Director of Professional Development

Laura Vlasman

I am seeking re-election as Director of Professional Development mainly because I haven't had time during my first term of office to accomplish all that I had hoped. In particular, I want to continue the effort to develop programming that will be helpful to the "senior" members of our profession, and I would also like to explore the possibility of establishing an AATIA mentoring program.

If elected, I will continue striving to offer programs that will appeal to a broad range of members—translators, interpreters, newcomers and old-timers alike. I will also organize workshops on specific t/i topics throughout the year in order to provide more in-depth professional development opportunities and enable ATA-certified members to earn continuing education points locally at relatively low cost.

Finally, I pledge to make special New Year's refreshments at the January meeting an annual tradition—at least while I'm Director of Professional Development! ★



HOME SWEET HOME SICK

by Tony Beckwith ©2004
www.tonybeckwith.com

AT SEVEN YEARS OF AGE I considered myself a worldly fellow. I had lived in two countries and spoke a couple of languages, more or less. I felt at ease in my parents' cosmopolitan milieu, and had overheard adults lauding my social skills. My good friend, Daní was the Italian Ambassador's son. We called him Danny at school, but to his parents he was *Danee!* He spoke three languages and had been everywhere.

Daní invited me to spend the weekend at his summer residence in Punta del Este, an idyllic vacation spot on the Atlantic coast of Uruguay. It had once been a fishing village and had somehow managed to keep its charm and pristine beaches. I'd never spent a night away from my family, and was excited to be embarking on such a grownup adventure.

The Ambassador was a splendid man who dressed as though his yacht were riding at anchor not far away. His wife was the most exotic woman I had ever seen. She had it all: platinum hair and mascara, stiletto heels and a throaty voice that swooped and soared with her emotions. Huge gold rings jangled from her ears. I became mesmerized whenever I looked at her.

Daní and I were chauffeured around Punta in the Embassy's Rolls by Orlando, who wore a dark suit and a military-looking cap with a shiny black visor. We cavorted on the back seat and did wild things at the windows. Daní, who always looked pale and plump, could have anything he wanted. When he said, "I want an ice-cream," Orlando drove us to the Heladería del Mar and brought triple-scoop cones out to us in the car. There

wasn't much about life at Daní's house that was anything like mine. I understood that they were foreign, but there was more to it than that. It scared me to think that a child's wish could be a grown man's command. That would *never* happen at home.

We came back from a run in the Rolls, and scampered around to the pool to have one last dip before it got dark. The sun had just gone down

only one who wished I could leave. When anyone wanted anything badly enough in that household, it usually involved Orlando taking a drive somewhere, and it wasn't long before he and I were on the road back to town. Punta was about an hour from Montevideo. During the day it was a glorious drive with views of the sea through thickets of tall pines. But that night it was a long and tortuous

journey. I counted the seconds and pictured myself arriving home, running into my parents' loving embrace.

My legs stuck straight out in front of me as I sat on the front seat of the car. Beside me, in the dark, Orlando seemed huge. He always wore a pleasant smile, and was as accommodating as a person could possibly be. But in the faint glow from the dashboard his face under his chauffeur's cap looked sinister. I tucked my hands under my thighs and stared out of the

window at the darkness racing by. The Rolls was a magnificent ride, and all I could hear was the hum of the tires speeding along the highway. They sang, "*When* will we get home tonight? *When* will we get home?" over and over again.

Finally, the Rolls slid up to the curb in front of my house and purred to a stop. I scrambled out, raced to the front door and rang the bell, even though I could see quite plainly that there was nobody at home. I was breathing hard, biting my lip, close to panic. They *must* be here! Why weren't they here? "They weren't expecting you until tomorrow," said Orlando. "Is there a neighbor we can talk to?"



behind the high garden wall and the light suddenly changed. It wasn't as brilliant any more, or as warm. The shadows suddenly made me shiver. The water looked cold, and I no longer wanted to swim.

As daylight faded I realized I was a long way from home, and all at once I knew I couldn't stay here, not in this foreign place, so far from all that was familiar to me. Nightfall brought on a most unsophisticated attack of hysteria and Daní's mamá was soon on the phone, looking for my parents. The phone rang and rang but there was no reply. My stomach was in knots and my throat was hot and dry. I wanted *to go home*, and by that time I wasn't the

There was! Paco and Cuca owned the store down the street. It was a large room with a high ceiling, painted dark green, with boxes of fruit and vegetables arranged around the floor. The smell was what I loved most: an undercurrent of grain and burlap, overlaid with coffee and olive oil and cantaloupe. My mother did most of her grocery shopping there and they kept her account written down in a battered old notebook. Paco and Cuca were friendly and easy to deal with. My mother occasionally referred to other shopkeepers in less than flattering terms, but she never had anything but

praise for the *verduleros*. I used to think that Paco and Cuca were unusual names; none of my parents' friends had names like that. But I liked them both; they were so familiar.

I hurried ahead of Orlando. The store was still open; they lived in the back and seldom closed early. A couple of powerful, naked light bulbs dangled from long strands of wire that dropped all the way from the ceiling. The cool smell of evening mingled with the burlap and floated gently in the air. Paco looked up. "¿Antoñito?" he said, and I ran to him smiling. He told Orlando that he'd take care of me,

and the Rolls glided off into the night.

Cuca settled me into a deck chair while Paco went to leave a note for my parents. I moved the chair to where I could keep my eye on the door to the street. She offered me anything in the store—anything I wanted—and I asked for a carrot and a Pepsi. It was the most delicious carrot I had ever eaten. I lay back in the deck chair saying to myself: "They'll be here any minute now!"

I was asleep when they came to fetch me, and woke up in my father's arms as he carried me home. Home! It's true: there's no place like it. ★

Hit that Key!

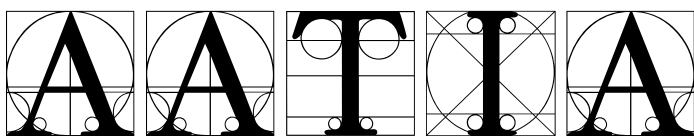
by Frank Dietz © 2004
www.frankdietz.com

I STARTED USING COMPUTERS when they were steam-driven ... well, not quite, but I did use computers before the mouse became a common input method. Back then, you had to memorize numerous keyboard shortcuts to get things done efficiently.

The graphical user interface has eclipsed keyboard commands, but many of them still exist and can save you time, particularly if you have to access functions that are hidden deep in submenus. Here is a list of keyboard commands in Windows (and various applications) that I find particularly useful:

You should also remember that Microsoft Word allows you to assign key combinations. Go to Tools/Customize and click on the Keyboard button. Now you can choose a function you often use and give it a keyboard shortcut (just make sure you don't create a conflict with another useful shortcut). If you ever forget these shortcuts, simply go to the File/Print menu and select Key assignment from the Print what drop-down list to print out a list of the keyboard commands you created. ★

Common Keyboard Shortcuts	
Command	Function
Windows	
[Windows key] [D]	Minimize all open windows and shows the desktop. Press key combination again to return to previous view.
[ALT] [TAB key]	Switch between open windows
[Windows key] [F]	Display the Find dialog box
[ALT] [F4]	Close active window (works also with website pop-ups)
Microsoft Word 2002	
[F5]	Launches Find and Replace window
[CTRL] [Z]	Undo last action
[CTRL] [Y]	Redo last action
[CTRL] [A]	Mark all text
[F7]	Run spellchecker
[Shift] [F3]	Change spelling to uppercase/lowercase
[Shift] [F7]	Launch Thesaurus
Internet Explorer	
[F5]	Reload page
[F4]	Drop-down list of recent sites
Netscape	
[CTRL] [E]	Edit page in Netscape Composer
[CTRL] [+]	Text appears larger
[CTRL] [-]	Text appears smaller
[ALT] [Home]	Go to home page



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www.aatia.org



AATIA holds meetings at the Austin History Center, 9th & Guadalupe, unless otherwise indicated. Visitors are welcome.

EVENTS IN AUSTIN

- Sep 11 10 a.m. SpanSIG meeting
1–4 p.m. AATIA member meeting
Oct 9 10–12 noon. ISIG meeting
1–4 p.m. AATIA board meeting
Nov 13 SpanSIG meeting and AATIA member meeting

BEYOND AUSTIN

- Oct 13–16 **Toronto, Canada.** 45th Annual Conference of the American Translators Association.

LitSIG focus: contracts

THE LITERARY SIG will meet on Saturday, September 25th from 1 to 3 p.m. at Coordinator Traci Andrighetti's home. The subject of the meeting will be "Contracts." ★

Apply/renew online

IAIN GRAY, A PROGRAMMER from Austin Free-Net, has created an online membership application form in PHP for the website in an effort to make joining AATIA more attractive to the public and to improve our handling of data. The next issue of The Letter will explain the form in detail. ★

Join AATIA News

Active members not currently subscribed to the listserv should contact Anita Stauber Berthold to join. ★



For your first act as my fiancée, may I ask you to help me stand up?