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# The Letter

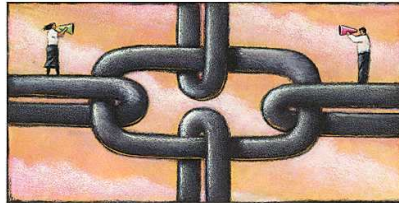
of the Austin Area Translators  
and Interpreters Association

November 2006

## November 11 member meeting

### T/I companies: critical links

MERRY WHEATON AND ALLAN ADAMS will join Mentoring Moment Moderator Tony Beckwith to talk about translation companies—a subject that should be of great interest to all those who aspire to a career as a freelancer, as well as to those who've always wondered how these companies create the link between clients and translators and keep all parties happy. ★



### Laszlo to the rescue

IN AN UPDATE (October 7, 2006) to a previous column, Jane Greig, the Austin American-Statesman's ace researcher, wrote the following:

Recall the reader wondering whether her fiancé was legally divorced (the papers were in German)? Here is another resource for translations: the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association, 707-3900 or aatia.org. Translators and interpreters are available for hire in many languages. Remember: Translators write and interpreters speak. Divorce papers from German to English? Not a problem. "I...have translated many German divorce decrees. Some people merely need the decree translated, while others also need the extended documents pertaining to custody, distribution of assets, etc.," says Laszlo Eosze, translator and interpreter. ★



THE ORIGINAL AND INNOVATIVE voice of Nina Marie Martínez in *¡Caramba!* has found a new audience through the Spanish translation of Liliana Valenzuela. The author and translator will speak in both Spanish at English at the Chicano & Latino Writers Festival in St. Paul, Minnesota, November 9, 2006. ★



### 2007 Board elected

TELLERS COMMITTEE CHAIR

Janet Peirce announced the results of the 2007 election for AATIA Board of Directors, as follows:

#### President

Michael Blumenthal	75
J. Henry Phillips	1

#### Secretary

Carlota Grimes	73
Steven Mines	1

#### Director, Communications

Cristina Pinto-Bailey	70
Michael Conner	1
Beatriz Quintana	1
Nereida Zimic	1

#### Director, Finance

Al Favela	72
J. Henry Phillips	1
Fritz Hensey	1

#### Director, Membership

Gisela Greenlee	72
(Jay) Evgeniy Tkachuk	1
Ben Maya	1

#### Director, Professional Development

Maurine McLean	74
Ben Maya	1

Peirce thanked Gloria Gonzalez for her participation on the Tellers Committee. ★

## Austin Area Translators & Interpreters Association

### Board of Directors

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THE AATIA LETTER is published bimonthly in odd-numbered months in print and online versions by the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association (AATIA), PO Box 13331, Austin, TX 78711. Other newsletters may reprint or excerpt uncopyrighted material from THE LETTER provided they also publish the following statement: "Reprinted from THE LETTER, newsletter of the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association (www.aatia.org)."

### Advertise in THE AATIA LETTER

THE AATIA LETTER offers a great opportunity to advertise your translation- and interpretation-related products and services. The online version of this bimonthly newsletter reaches a global audience through free downloads at [www.aatia.org](http://www.aatia.org). And at rates like these, you can't afford to miss out on this opportunity.

Ad copy and payment must be received by deadline on the 15th of the month preceding issue date.

To obtain more information and to **place your ad** contact Advertising Manager ads@aatia.org.

#### Newsletter Ad Rates\*

Full page	\$125
Half page	85
Quarter page	45
Business card	25

\*10% discount to members

## September meeting recap

### Mentoring Moment: Interpreting

SEPTEMBER'S MENTORING MOMENT put AATIA's spotlight on interpreting, featuring panel members Maurine McLean, Fritz Hensey, and Steve Mines.

After introducing the panel, moderator Tony Beckwith recalled episodes in his own early experiences as an interpreter when he was placed in situations where he froze in absolute panic. However, as time went on, things gradually improved. Tony said that interpreting sometimes felt like snow skiing when you were one with the mountain, gracefully descending downhill; at other times, he felt like he was skiing down the mountain on his face. He said that you never know what you will face when you step into an interpretation booth at a conference or enter a courtroom to interpret during a judicial proceeding.

#### Becoming an interpreter

*Maurine McLean* graduated from St. Mary's University in San Antonio with a degree in Spanish. She went to Spain to study at the University of Salamanca, but arrived to discover that the faculty was on strike. Without classes to attend, she secured a position teaching English to missionaries going to Australia and the U.S. Maurine thus found herself an hour outside Valencia in a place called *Siete Aguas*, living in barracks built during the Spanish Civil War. She later had an opportunity to escort a group of English-speaking visitors. Maurine called these experiences "interpreter boot camp."

*Fritz Hensey's* father was the grandson of a German immigrant, and his mother was the granddaughter of a Spanish immigrant. As a young person, Fritz rejected both languages. However, while serving in the US Air Force in Puerto Rico, he was amazed how quickly and easily his Spanish returned to him.

After military service, Fritz lived and studied in Mexico for ten years. While there, he taught English for Berlitz and began to translate magazine articles. He then received a grant to study the science of translation in the States. To learn more about the federal court interpreter exam, he took it himself. He found the sight translation part of the exam to be easy and the simultaneous interpretation portion to be fun, while the consecutive interpretation part was a challenge. Nevertheless, he passed. Fritz found his subsequent occasional interpreting assignments enjoyable.

*Steve Mines* grew up in Argentina, the son of English-speaking parents. His first experience with translation was in an advanced high school Spanish literature class, where his teacher, a professional English translator, assigned passages from a Sydney Sheldon book for translation. An English teacher at the same school was a conference interpreter.

Steve attended college in the United States, became a journalist in Asia, and took graduate studies in France. There he escorted a group of Koreans who were studying the possibility of purchasing high-speed trains. Steve didn't speak Korean, but the Koreans spoke English, and Steve discovered how much he enjoyed being the language bridge. In later years, Steve worked for the State Department, studied law, and passed the court interpreter exam.

#### Interpretation courses and training

*Maurine McLean* said that much of her interpretation training has been on the job. She learned a great deal from colleagues, especially when given the opportunity to interpret as part of a team, and also by creating her own glossaries. She has also taken advantage of many training opportunities offered by NAJIT and AATIA, and has herself taught at Austin Community College. Maurine also studied sign language at the Texas School for the Deaf and the University of Texas.

*Fritz Hensey* said that on-the-job training was the best teacher. However, he also pursued formal training at numerous workshops and at the Universities of Arizona and South Carolina. He stressed the importance of keeping up with ideas and theories and taking advantage of professional development opportunities such as seminars on interpretation and ethics.

*Steve Mines* stated that although he had no formal training as an interpreter, he has greatly benefited from working with many talented mentors at conferences and seminars with the State Department.

#### Finding clients

*Maurine McLean* said that much of her interpretation and translation work resulted from taking advantage of active participation in AATIA and its networking opportunities. She said that her listing in the AATIA online directory opened the door to many assignments.

*Fritz Hensey* suggested that prospective interpreters investigate volunteer opportunities gleaned from church and other organization newsletters. Volunteering helps beginning interpreters to develop competence and make contacts that may lead to referrals.

*Steve Mines* stressed that it often takes time for people to get to know you, but that word of mouth is the best advertising, and that AATIA meetings can be the single, most important source of referrals. Steve stated that many assignments have also resulted from ATA and NAJIT participation. He said that simultaneous interpreters rarely work alone. They more often work as teams. This develops friendships and collegial relationships that often lead to referrals.

— Janet Peirce



## Sounds of Uruguay

by Tony Beckwith © 2006  
[www.tonybeckwith.com](http://www.tonybeckwith.com)

ON SUNDAY AFTERNOONS in summer all was quiet in Montevideo and the streets were deserted. Lunch was over and most people were ready for a nap. Most adults that is, because the children were wide awake and listening—straining to hear a particular sound—listening. There it was! Off in the distance but getting louder by the minute: “¡Cooooo-na-prole!” It was the cry of the ice cream vendor, who walked the streets pushing his yellow cart, bringing joy to the children of Pocitos, the neighborhood where I lived.

The vendor’s brand of ice cream was *Conaprole*, but he’d stretch out the first syllable for maximum effect. In the second, more complicated part of his cry, he serenaded the street with a litany of his wares: “¡vasito, barrita, bombón helado!” Every Sunday I had to make an agonizing choice: ice cream in a cup? Dipped in chocolate? On a stick? Oh, delectable dilemma!

During the week, another sound drifted through the streets of Pocitos: the knife grinder’s whistle. It was actually a little panpipe—just like the one Pan played—but made of tin. The *afilador* rode a bicycle, and slid his whistle back and forth along his lips as he blew into the little holes, playing up and down the scales from low notes to high notes and back to low again. He carried his grinding stone mounted on a rack over the back wheel. When people heard his whistle and came out of their houses and waved, he’d stop and pull his bike up onto a stand, then sit on the seat facing backwards, pushing the pedals with his feet. The backward pedaling made the grinding stone spin, and he’d lean over it to sharpen dull blades of all kinds, adding a dash of mineral oil now and then, and exchanging news and gossip with housewives and maids as he worked.

Montevideo is a coastal city blessed with a string of beaches that stretch for miles, hugging the northern shore of the Río de la Plata until it meets the deep, salty blue waters of the Atlantic. Pocitos beach, barely a stone’s throw from my home, was a summer playground for us all, young and old. Throngs of people lounged on the sand on weekends, in bathing attire of varying degrees of modesty and taste, working hard at acquiring the savage tan we all craved. Some brought brightly colored beach umbrellas and volley balls and radios with the volume stuck on loud; some just a towel to lie on. Some had no time for food; others brought a picnic. The rest of us waited for the hot dog man. We could hear him coming from a long way off, singing out his signature call: “¡Frrrran-frrrute!” They were still called frankfurters at that time, though the beach vendors tended to butcher the word almost beyond recognition. They wore a white shirt and slacks, with a pair of *alpargatas* (locally-made rope-soled espadrilles) to protect their feet from the hot sand, and carried a large metal box on a strap over their shoulder. When

hailed by a customer, they’d put the box on a folding stand and go to work. The box had a compartment where the dogs floated in hot water, which was in turn kept hot by built-in burners. There were separate compartments for the buns, already sliced, in paper wrappers, and plastic bottles full of mustard. The vendors used metal tongs to pull a dog from the water and settle it into a bun. “¿Mostaza?” they’d ask, and if you said yes the dog would come with a squirt of bright yellow mustard. Then the man would shoulder his box—which was both hot and heavy—and be on his way again. No hot dog tasted better than the ones sold on the beach. And nobody had a better tan than those vendors.

The beaches weren’t quite as crowded when a soccer game was being played, especially if it was between *Peñarol* and *Nacional*—the two top local teams. Then the fans would fill the *Estadio Centenario* and their roars could be heard for miles around. When they weren’t yelling and screaming—at their teams or at each other—you could hear the sing-song sound of the coffee vendors: “¡Sorocabana café!” These strong, agile men carried a large metal tank full of coffee strapped to their backs, and had all the accoutrements hooked onto their belts. They’d pull a cup out of a sort of scabbard and fill it from a hose attached to the tank, then sprinkle a little sugar into it. Aaah! Hot coffee, sweet and strong—just the ticket for getting through a long afternoon of *fútbol*.

This stadium, crowned by its dramatic winged tower, was built in 1930 to commemorate the centennial of Uruguay’s Constitution. The very first World Cup tournament was played there that year and when Uruguay won, the whole country reverberated with ecstatic cheers of victory—one of the sweetest sounds of all. ★

# You built your website...

## Now what?

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IN A PRIOR ARTICLE, I outlined how you can build a website in a weekend. Let's say you did that, and now you wait for the virtual masses to come streaming in...and wait...and wait....

Just because you have a website does not mean that people will find or visit it. Here are a few tips to help your website get noticed.

**Promote your web address** in as many places as you can think of—on your business cards, as a signature in your outgoing e-mail (in MS Outlook, go to Tools/Options/Mail Format), on your invoices, in your profile in discussion groups, etc. Let people know about it, without spamming, of course.

**Install a hit counter program** to see how many people visit your website. Check with your internet service provider first—you might already have access to these data through your ISP. If not, you can find free programs such as Site Meter ([www.sitemeter.com](http://www.sitemeter.com)) that you can easily install on your website—all it takes is copying and pasting some HTML code.

**Optimize your keywords and page titles.** Think how you yourself conduct a web search: you go to a search engine page and enter *keywords*. Consider which keywords a potential client might use to look for your site. Make sure that these are actually on your site—for instance, write: “I am an English–French translator specializing in medical translation.” Don't forget the titles of your web pages: “Welcome to my site” is obviously a much less effective page title than “English to Spanish technical translation and software localization.”

**Use meta tags.** Meta tags are pieces of HTML code that are invisible to the visitors of your site, but help tell search engines what your site is all about. Here is an example of meta tags:

```
<meta name="description" content="German translation and software localization, (computer hardware and software, consumer electronics, computer and video game translation)">
```

The following online tool lets you enter your text for the meta tags and then generates the code that you can paste into your site: [www.scrubtheweb.com/abs/builder.html](http://www.scrubtheweb.com/abs/builder.html)

Remember not to abuse keywords or meta tags—repeating the same term dozens of times or including fake keywords such “free iPod” can actually get your site penalized by search engines.

**Get listed in search engines.** First of all, take a moment to search for your site in the big three—Google, Yahoo and MSN. If you are not there, you can submit the site at the following addresses:

- Google:  
[www.google.com/addurl/?continue=/addurl](http://www.google.com/addurl/?continue=/addurl)
- Yahoo:  
<http://submit.search.yahoo.com/free/request>
- MSN Search:  
<http://search.msn.com/docs/submit.aspx>

Also, do not forget industry-specific and local directories—such as the ATA or AATIA directory of translators and interpreters.

**Exchange links with other translators or interpreters.** You could create a complementary strategy here—if you are an Italian medical translator, you could, for instance, link to medical translators in other languages

**Avoid the 100,000-search-engine trap.** There are numerous services out there that will submit your site to a number of search engines, for a fee. These services range from the serious to the ludicrous. I have even seen one that promises to list your site in “154,000 search engines and directories.” While there may be that many search engines and directories, there are certainly not that many *important* ones.

**Be patient.** The WWW is huge, so do not expect success overnight. ★

# Web Resources for Translators

*compiled by Laura Vlasman for an AATIA presentation*

## General translation-related websites

### The Translator's Home Companion

[www.lai.com/companion.html](http://www.lai.com/companion.html)

"...the single most useful source of information for the professional translator and those in need of translation services." Operated by Language Automation, Inc., a "developer of multilingual Web site content management systems and a provider of specialized translation services." Includes "Translation News," which features information on translation-related events, links to translation industry newsletters and other websites, mailing lists and newsgroups, as well as links to glossaries and other resources.

### The Translation Workplace

[www.proz.com/?sp=info/index](http://www.proz.com/?sp=info/index)

"...a workplace used by translators, interpreters, translation agencies and their clients to meet and do work." Some features are available only to members for a fee, but most are free. Look for KudoZ, a searchable collection of glossaries and terminology posted by members, translator forums, online job postings and information on translation-related events.

### The Language Site

[www.foreignword.com/default.htm](http://www.foreignword.com/default.htm)

Software tools for translators (some downloadable for free), links to online dictionaries, a forum for discussion of language- and translation-related questions, a directory of translators, and Eurêka, a search engine for language and translation resources.

### Eurodicautom

<http://europa.eu.int/eurodicautom/Controller>

The multilingual database of the European Commission. Terminology in 12 languages and more than 90 subject areas.

### Jost Zetzsche's Tool Kit

[www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit/](http://www.internationalwriters.com/toolkit/)

A [free] biweekly newsletter for people in the translation industry who want to get more out of their computers" – including tips for using the Internet.

### Frank Dietz's Links

[www.frankdietz.com/](http://www.frankdietz.com/)

Links to over 2,500 glossaries on myriad topics, including several general translation-related sites.

### Local T&I groups

Most local T&I groups, including AATIA, offer links to various translation and terminology resources on their websites. Examples:

AATIA's resource page

[www.aatia.org/commons/resource.htm](http://www.aatia.org/commons/resource.htm)

NOTIS (Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society) resource page

[www.notisnet.org/links/terminol.html](http://www.notisnet.org/links/terminol.html)

## Newsgroups/discussion groups/listservs for translators

### CompuServe's "Language Forum,"

<http://community.compuserve.com/n/pfx/forum.aspx?webtag=ws-languages>

Formerly FLEFO (Foreign Language Education Forum), which was a members-only site. This site is now accessible to everyone.

### sci.lang.translation

<http://groups-beta.google.com/group/sci.lang.translation>

A web group devoted to "problems and concerns of translators/interpreters." Not moderated, many languages.

### LANGline

[www.electriveditors.net/langline/](http://www.electriveditors.net/langline/)

Mailing list for language professionals, including translators, editors, proofreaders and "people working with languages in any way, shape or form."

### Other discussion groups

<http://accurapid.com/journal/00disc.htm>

A list of discussion groups and links thereto for translators of various languages and specialties.

### ATA Division discussion groups

[www.atanet.org/divisions/index.php](http://www.atanet.org/divisions/index.php)

Most ATA divisions offer online discussion groups and other resources. Select the webpage of the division that deals with your language or area of interest.

## Browsing and searching tips

The following techniques apply specifically to Google, but most will also work on other search engines (AltaVista, Ask.com, etc.).

- To find web pages containing a specific word or phrase, put quotes around it. Examples: "translation", "references for translators"
- To find pages containing specific words or phrases in their title, type "intitle:" followed by the word(s). Example: intitle: "chinese translation"
- To find pages that have a specific word or phrase in their URL (website address), type "inurl:" followed by the word (s). Example: inurl: translation
- To find mentions of webpages/sites in the body text of other websites (rather than in the URL or the title), for

instance to find out where your own web page is quoted, type:

`intext:www.thenameofyoursite.com`

- To find a term in a certain kind of document (such as a PDF file) and not in any other, type, for example: `filetype:pdf "translation memory"`. The result will be all Google-indexed PDFs that contain the phrase "translation memory". If you would like to specifically exclude PDFs, insert a minus sign before "filetype": `-filetype:pdf "translation memory"`.
- To find definitions of terms on the Internet, type "define:" followed by the term: e.g., `define: translation` or `define: "gross national product"`. You will get a list of definitions found on the Web, with links to the websites containing each definition. This is an excellent way to find online glossaries.
- Another technique for finding online glossaries: type a term or subject area followed by the words "online glossary." Add languages if you are looking for bi- or multilingual glossaries: e.g., `economics online glossary French English`
- To find terms you are unsure of in your target language, type the term in the source language, followed by a related term or terms in the target language (your best guess at what the term might be in your target language): e.g., `"producto nacional bruto" "national product"`. This is also a good technique for finding online glossaries, but a surprising number of non-glossary websites contain text in two or more languages, particularly those of international organizations and scientific and technical journals. ★

Woe to the makers of literal translations, who by rendering every word weaken the meaning! It is indeed by so doing that we can say the letter kills and the spirit gives life.

—Voltaire, (1694-1778)

## Lagniappe

IN NEW ORLEANS you often hear the term "lagniappe," meaning "something extra," referring to an item or service thrown in for good measure. Here's your chance to enhance the ATA conference in New Orleans (November 1–4) with a little bit of your extra time and effort.

If you are planning to attend the conference and want to make a real difference, you can be an information volunteer. Due to the lack of local translator/interpreter groups in Louisiana and the massive disruptions brought on by Hurricane Katrina, AATIA is spearheading plans to offer assistance. The primary need is for volunteers to work at the information table and help conference-goers find destinations both inside the hotel and within the city. Schedules are very flexible, and staffing opportunities are available for breaktime, lunchtime, or one-hour sessions throughout the conference.

Your lagniappe will go a long way in making this ATA conference a great success. Contact Mike Magee at (512) 477-2977 or [mlmagee@austin.rr.com](mailto:mlmagee@austin.rr.com) for more information. Or look him up at the conference!★

## LitSIG members in the news

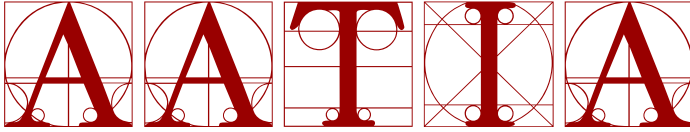
CafeDiverso, a Barcelona publishing group, has just published *Everyone Has a Good Story: Football*—a collection of short stories in translation about soccer/*fútbol* from around the world. Four of Tony Beckwith's translations were included—they were stories (originally in Spanish) from Ecuador, Paraguay, Mexico, and Spain.

Ingrid Lansford's translation of Meir Aron Goldschmidt's story "The Singing Bird," has appeared in *Sojourn 19* (2006).

The novel *¡Caramba!* by Nina Marie Martínez is now available in a Spanish translation by Liliana Valenzuela. (Vintage Español, 2006).

The next LitSIG meeting, the last of 2006, will be on Saturday, November 18. For details about the meeting or about LitSIG, contact Marian Schwartz. ★





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[www.aatia.org](http://www.aatia.org)

### EVENTS IN AUSTIN

- Nov 11 10:15 a.m. Spanish SIG meeting\*  
1–4 p.m. AATIA member meeting\*  
Nov 18 1–3 p.m. LitSIG meeting [see p. 7]  
Dec 9 10–12 noon. ISIG meeting\*  
1–4 p.m. AATIA board meeting\*  
Jan 13 10:15 a.m. Spanish SIG meeting\*  
1–4 p.m. AATIA member meeting\*

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

### BEYOND AUSTIN

- Nov 2–5 **New Orleans**. 47th Annual Conference of the American Translators Association [www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org)

A couple of poems from Tony Beckwith's website: [www.tonybeckwith.com/poems/podex.htm](http://www.tonybeckwith.com/poems/podex.htm)

## Too Much Stuff

I have too many coffee cups  
and way too many pens  
I'm loaded down with knicks and knacks  
and myriad odds and ends

I don't know why I keep these things  
it's not as though I need them  
at least they're not like kids and pets  
I'm not obliged to feed them

But somehow I've convinced myself  
I'll never have enough  
so rather than risk going without  
I now have too much stuff

I therefore live in guilt and shame  
whenever I recall  
that there are those less fortunate  
who have no stuff at all ★

## The Perks of the Office

A friend of mine steals  
from the place where he works  
he says it's not wrong  
it's just one of the perks

A packet of staples  
a pencil or two  
and why should they mind  
if he just takes a few?

I've done it myself  
here and there, now and then  
and I didn't get caught  
so I did it again

But how would I feel  
about getting things free  
if everyone else  
started stealing from me? ★