

www.aatia.org

# The Letter

of the Austin Area Translators  
and Interpreters Association

January 2008



## January 5 member meeting

### Interpreting the presidential candidate debates

MUCH OF THE DAY-TO-DAY WORK of interpreters is performed in courtrooms, at meetings and in medical examining rooms. But occasionally they work in the public spotlight. At the next AATIA member meeting, Tony Beckwith will speak about his experience working for Univision Television Network interpreting the Democratic Presidential Candidate Debates.

In addition, Michele Aynesworth and Liliana Valenzuela of the LitSIG will present some highlights from the recent ALTA conference. There will be updates on improvements to the AATIA website and previews of upcoming workshops as well as door prizes, refreshments, and networking.

Please note that due to scheduling conflicts *the AATIA meeting will be held the first Saturday in January*, instead of our regular second Saturday meeting date. We hope to see you at 1:00 p.m. on January 5th at the Austin History Center at 9th and Guadalupe. Visitors are always welcome! ★

### 2007 workshops bring in revenue, new members

THE FIVE WORKSHOPS sponsored by AATIA in 2007 were a great success, according to Director of Professional Development Maurine McLean in her report at the year-end meeting of the Board of Directors.

Ranging from "Basic Interpreting Skills" to ATA certification preparation, the workshops raised the skill levels of a total of 77 participants, 21 of whom later joined the association.

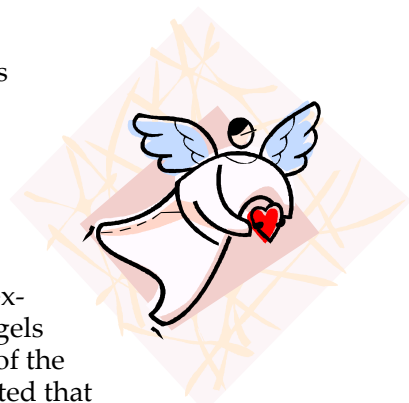
Director of Finance Al Favela stated that these workshops netted \$2342.84 after expenses.

McLean is investigating several topics for 2008 workshops, including basic business practices, translation management software, simultaneous skills for conference interpreting, and Spanish grammar. She welcomes suggestions for other subjects and may be contacted by email at [membership@aatia.org](mailto:membership@aatia.org). ★

### Board thanks AATIA Angels

AATIA ANGELS MAKE MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS to the association above and beyond any dues obligations. According to Director of Finance Al Favela, as of press time the following had contributed toward the 2008 budget:

Ralph McElroy Translations  
Tony Beckwith  
Phillip Thomas  
Albert Bork  
Kathi Stock  
Nereida Samuda Zimic



The Board of Directors expressed thanks to these Angels for their generous support of the association. It should be noted that one need not be a member to become an AATIA Angel. Those who want to contribute may do so via the PayPal button on the website's membership page: [www.aatia.org/commons/members.htm](http://www.aatia.org/commons/members.htm). ★

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\*10% discount to members



and print copies are expected to be available through ATA sometime in February.

Aynesworth spent part of her time staffing the ATA table in the conference lobby [see photo, left, with Al Bork].

Schwartz, Bork, and Valenzuela rounded out their participation by performing poems from memory in Russian, French, and Spanish, respectively, at the traditional evening of "Declamación."

Valenzuela and Aynesworth will be sharing their ALTA experiences at the next AATIA member meeting on January 5. ★

## AATIA members active at ALTA meet

AATIA MEMBERS, including Marian Schwartz, Ingrid Lansford, Liliana Valenzuela, Michele Aynesworth, and Al Bork, participated actively in the recent annual meeting of the American Literary Translators Association (ALTA), held in Richardson, Texas.

Schwartz and three other past ALTA presidents spoke on the theme "Imagining the Future of ALTA." She later moderated a session on "The Ins and Outs of Choosing a Strong Translation Project." Her principal role was serving as escort for Russian author Olga Slavnikova, who received the Gjenima Prize for Literature at the conference, and reading from her translation of Slavnikova's novel *2017*.

Lansford gave a bilingual reading from a novel by German author Siegfried Lenz. Bork

took part in a panel on "A Game with Words: Translating World Literature on the Sport of Soccer...or Football," and Valenzuela was a panelist on "Translation as Oral Performance."

Valenzuela [see photo, right] also took part in a session of readings from *Beacons*, the annual publication of literary translations put out by the American Translators Association. Aynesworth, who edited this year's issue, served as moderator for the session, which included readings by twelve contributors and a performance of "Love Struck," Aynesworth's translation of a song-poem by Vietnamese composer/singer Lê Pham Lê.

Lansford, who served on the *Beacons*' Board of Editors, took pictures at the event. A slide show of her photographs is available at [www.mckayaynesworth.com/Beacons.aspx](http://www.mckayaynesworth.com/Beacons.aspx). *Beacons* is now going up online at [www.atanet.org/publications/beacons\\_10.php](http://www.atanet.org/publications/beacons_10.php),



Photos by Ingrid Lansford



# The Season

by Tony Beckwith © 2007  
www.tonybeckwith.com



IT'S MID-DECEMBER and the madness has begun. With just a few shopping days left till Christmas, some of us go a little crazy and start running around in ever-diminishing circles, like the last few gallons of water swirling around the plug as the bathtub empties. We suddenly have (or convince ourselves that we have) a seemingly insurmountable mountain of tasks ahead of us, that for some reason *absolutely must get done* before the world comes to an end on the 24th of December. Except that, so far, the world has never come to an end. So why do I do this chicken-without-a-head thing every year? I don't know. Do you?

I'd been feeling the same sort of pressure in connection with the annual Christmas card ritual and, overwhelmed by my anxiety and despair, gave vent to an ode called:

## The Season

Dear friend or family member  
here we are in mid December  
and the year is coming swiftly to an end  
If you're partial to eavesdropping  
you will know I've done no shopping  
and I still have all my Christmas cards to send

Lest you cry: procrastination!  
and demand my flagellation  
and complete humiliation  
through some public proclamation  
which would ruin my reputation  
and promote exasperation  
plus all kinds of aggravation  
for no worthy compensation  
let me give this explanation:

It has been a busy season  
so I'll claim that as my reason  
for being tardy with my presents and my cards  
and I'll send them very soon  
perhaps this very afternoon  
in the meantime please accept my best regards

I felt better after venting like that. Then, yesterday, it suddenly dawned on your correspondent that the AATIA's January general membership meeting is being moved forward from the customary second

Saturday to the previous one, January 5th. THE LETTER, therefore, should follow suit and publish a week ahead of schedule. Yikes! That means the deadline is upon me, and I can dawdle no longer. At this stage I can really feel the tug of that swirling bathwater!

It wasn't always like this. There was a time when there was time for everything, or so it seemed. A time when we stepped out of whatever flow we were going with and took time for ourselves, to share with others or to reflect on life and digest the lessons therein. To make sense of it all. When we don't make time for that process, all the stuff we are bombarded with day after day is absorbed untreated, and fills our minds with clutter and confusion. The chaos within then perceives chaos without, and triggers a defense mechanism that manifests as road rage and a litigious society and a cavalier attitude towards the misfortunes of others. So I'm all in favor of coffee breaks and long lunches and naps. Like it used to be back then:

## Once Upon a Time

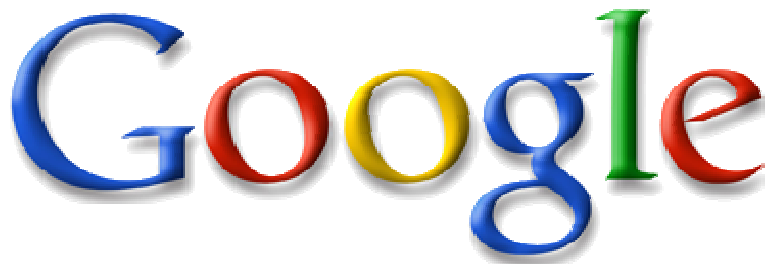
I'm addicted to espressos  
but I drink them much too fast  
I haven't learned the art  
of making cups of coffee last

At the Plaza Independencia  
near my home in Uruguay  
men in cafés whiled away the hours  
and not a cup ran dry

It was a time  
when time itself  
was worth its weight in gold  
when people sat  
and sipped  
and watched the day unfold

It now appears that my column is ready, although how that happened is a bit of a mystery. I can feel the anxiety lifting and my back straightening and my horizons expanding. I feel better than I've felt all day. Maybe the bathwater has swept me down the plug and I'm somewhere else, in a place where there seems to be plenty of time. ★

# Getting Things Done with



by Frank Dietz ©2008

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

I GOOGLE, YOU GOOGLE, we all google—who even remembers AltaVista or HotBot anymore? But are you using everything that Google has to offer, and are you using it effectively? Here are a few good hints to get you googling more gainfully:

- Watch your advanced settings. Many users never look beyond the deceptively simple interface of Google, but it is worth your while to optimize the settings for the types of searches you usually enter. You can filter your searches for languages, file formats, dates and much more. You can also use search operators (type in “chips +computer -potato,” for instance, if you are looking for information on computer chips rather than potato chips. A cheat sheet with many of these operators can be found at: <http://www.google.com/intl/en/help/cheatsheet.html>. One of my favorite methods is to type “define:” followed by a

term in order to look up dictionary definitions of a word.

- Personalize Google. Set up a (free) account with Google, and you can personalize your iGoogle homepage with useful gadgets such as dictionaries, calendars, to-do-lists, world clocks, a thesaurus and much more.
- Search for quality. Sometimes, you just want quantity, as when you are comparing the number of Google hits for two variant spellings of a term. Generally, though, you’d probably rather have 30 useful links than 3,000 hits in which relevant and irrelevant sites are all mixed up. You can improve the quality of your results by carefully wording your search, by using modifiers, and by varying your search terms (if you cannot find an

an avionics dictionary, for example.)

- Look at the offspring. Over time, Google has added numerous programs and subdirectories, which offer specialized services. How about Google Scholar (which searches academic sources) or Google Patents (<http://www.google.com/ptshp?tab=wt>) or Google Books (<http://books.google.com/bkshp?tab=ep>)?
- Move your desk online. You can use Google Docs as an extension of your computer that allows you to create word processing documents, spreadsheets and presentations (no extra software required). You can access these files from anywhere in the world and share them with other users, who can edit them. See <http://docs.google.com/>. ★



## RSS feeds simplify surfing

HARD TO KEEP UP with all your favorite blogs? Overwhelmed by the burden of checking on all of them every day? Maybe you need an RSS feed manager.

RSS, short for “really simple syndication,” is a popular way to update subscribers to news headlines, blog entries, podcasts, and other frequently updated

content. RSS readers are either stand-alone programs, such as the highly rated Google Reader, or are incorporated into other applications, such as the popular open-source Thunderbird email program.

When you see the orange RSS icon on a website, click on it and follow the instructions to add that site’s feed to your must-read list, and you’ll be notified when new content is published. Problem solved! ★



AATIA Board and SIG Coordinators at December 3 board meeting (L-R): Gregory Huysmans, Maurine McLean, Esther Diaz, Marian Schwartz, Al Favela, Carlota Grimes, Tony Beckwith, Patricia Gonzalez, Susana Roca, Michael Conner, Michael Blumenthal, Julie Nordskog, and Gisela Greenlee.

- Board members voted to eliminate fees for joining Special Interest Groups.
- Director of Communications Tony Beckwith discussed the future of THE AATIA LETTER and the website, noting improvements to the latter that are in the works and inviting suggestions for encouraging its use in new ways.
- Director of Finance Al Favela provided a financial report for 2007.
- SpanSIG Coordinator Susana Roca asked for suggestions for SpanSig meetings, especially encouraging presentations by new speakers; she also announced Xosé Castro's upcoming workshop.
- President Michael Blumenthal solicited ideas for AATIA's end-of-the year party.
- Secretary Carlota Grimes thanked Julie Nordskog, AATIA Secretary-elect, and Gregory Huysmans, our new Director of Membership, for stepping in to serve our organization.
- Al Favela emphasized the need for AATIA members to volunteer in the wider community. He will take suggestions for such volunteer opportunities at [finance@aatia.org](mailto:finance@aatia.org).



## Meeting notes

*Happy New Year, everyone! It's been an incredible year for me. I have loved the experience of contributing to this wonderful organization and I encourage you to step in and be part of AATIA.*

—Carlota Grimes, Secretary

### November member meeting

The last member meeting of 2007 brought something for everyone by focusing on three topics: organizing invoices, checks, and deposits using Quickbooks accounting software; the American Translators Association annual conference as seen through the eyes of Tony Beckwith; and certification for medical interpreters, discussed by Esther Diaz.

### December board meeting

The AATIA Board of Directors met in December at the Clay Pit restaurant in order to thank special interest group (SIG) coordinators for their valuable contributions in time and energy and to help brainstorm important issues that affect our organization, especially where SIGS are concerned.

Highlights of the board meeting included the following:

- Following a comprehensive discussion of AATIA's policies on special interest groups, Interpreter SIG Coordinator Esther Diaz will send the agreed-upon changes to the SIG Chapter of the MAPP to Laura Vlasman, MAPP Coordinator.



## Mensa Invitational Winners

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT, the *Washington Post's* Mensa Invitational once again asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and then supply a new definition.

The winners are:

1. **Cashtration** (n.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period of time.
2. **Ignoranus**: A person who's both stupid and an asshole.
3. **Intaxication**: Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.
4. **Reintarnation**: Coming back to life as a hillbilly.
5. **Bozone** (n.): The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.
6. **Foreploy**: Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of getting laid.
7. **Giraffiti**: Vandalism spray-painted very, very high.
8. **Sarchasm**: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.
9. **Inoculatte**: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.
10. **Hipatitis**: Terminal coolness.
11. **Osteopornosis**: A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.)
12. **Karmageddon**: It's when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, and then the Earth explodes, and it's a serious bummer.
13. **Decafalon** (n.): The grueling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you
14. **Glibido**: All talk and no action.
15. **Dopeler effect**: The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.
16. **Arachnoleptic fit** (n.): The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider web.
17. **Beelzebug** (n.): Satan in the form of a mosquito, that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out.
18. **Caterpallor** (n.): The color you turn after finding half a worm in the fruit you're eating.

Please adjust your spellcheckers accordingly. ★

## Guatemexicoestadounidenses

SEEN RECENTLY in the Double-Tongued Dictionary (<http://www.doubletongued.org>):

Growing numbers of Guatemalan and Mexican immigrants are marrying and having U.S.-born children, creating mixed Latino families with ties to three countries at once. The mixture has become so common in Phoenix, some community members have even coined a name "Guatemexicoestadounidenses," or Guatemexiamericans, to describe the families. ★

**Don't forget  
To renew your membership!**



Go to: [www.aatia.org/commons/member.htm](http://www.aatia.org/commons/member.htm) and scroll down to the application section. ★

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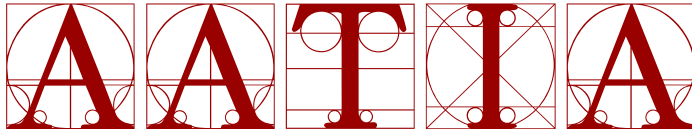
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#### EVENTS IN AUSTIN

Jan 5 1–4 p.m. AATIA member meeting\*  
Feb 9 10:15–12 noon. SpanSIG meeting\*  
1–4 p.m. AATIA board meeting\*  
Mar 8 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

May 16–18, 2008 **Pittsburgh.** 29th Annual Conference of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators [www.najit.org](http://www.najit.org)

**I**t is as  
impossible  
to translate poetry  
as it is to translate  
music.

—Voltaire, 1694-1778

*French Historian  
and Writer*



They say if we bring the kit, they've got the kaboodle.