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The Letter

of the Austin Area Translators
and Interpreters Association

March 2008



AATIA launches new office, new blog

DEEP in the heart of downtown Austin, President Michael Blumenthal and B. F. Whitworth, Executive Director of the International Partnership of Austin, met on February 4, 2008, at AATIA's new headquarters to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for office space at the International Center of Austin (ICA) for the coming year.

The Board of Directors held its February meeting in the conference room of the ICA, which is located at 201 East 2nd Street. AATIA will have access to meeting rooms and such amenities as a high-speed Internet connection, copiers, and kitchen facilities.

A review of the new AATIA blog website topped the board's agenda [see screenshot, right]. Webmaster Michael Conner gave a live demo of the site's capabilities, including the weblog, photo sharing, RSS feed, and other features. The site is scheduled to be ready for public viewing at aatia.net by the March meeting.

Most of the rest of the meeting focused on the new office: equipment, staffing, and procedures. Secretary Julie Nordskog, Esther Diaz, and Blumenthal each committed to share staffing duties at the office each week.

Board members discussed an initial wish list for donations of equipment and supplies to adequately outfit the office in order to receive members, manage organizational administration, and support AATIA activities at the ICA.

Blumenthal suggested an inaugural family-friendly open house to introduce the membership to the new AATIA headquarters. The date was tentatively set for April 12th from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Watch the website for details. ★

March member meeting

Literary translators offer peek at ALTA conference

AATIA WILL INDULGE in some time travel at the March member meeting. Liliana Valenzuela and Michele Aynesworth will take us back to the recent ALTA conference, sharing their experiences from this international gathering of literary translators. They also will direct our attention ahead to literary translation events being planned for May as part of the Reading the World celebration.

AATIA President Michael Blumenthal and other board members will answer questions about the AATIA office and meeting space at the International Center of Austin.

For the Mentoring Moment, Tony Beckwith will interview Greg Huysmans, who will talk about how membership in the AATIA has influenced his business and his translation practices. This interview should be of special interest to new members who would like insights on how AATIA can assist in growing a fledgling business.

The meeting will be held at the Austin History Center, 9th and Guadalupe, on Saturday, March 8, from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. Refreshments will be provided and all language-lovers are welcome! ★

Be first on your block to visit aatia.net!



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A. Leslie Willson Jr. 1923–2007

COLLEAGUE AND FRIEND A. Leslie Willson Jr., highly respected educator and translator of contemporary German literature, died December 28, 2007, in Austin. Among many accomplishments, he served for eight years as chairman of the German Department at UT-Austin, and for 20 years he edited *Dimension*, a groundbreaking bilingual literary magazine dedicated to the presentation of contemporary German-language authors. He was a co-founder and first president (1978–1979) of the American Literary Translators Association. He also served as president of the American Translators Association (1991–1993). He was recognized for his scholarly work with awards from the Goethe Institute and German government.



★

At the meeting on Saturday (Jan 5), during the announcements, I announced the passing of our colleague and friend, Leslie Willson. I quoted from Mike Conner's blog post and to some extent from the obituary in the paper, which gave a few insights into Leslie's life.

His story reminds us of the myriad ways in which translators find their languages and their destiny: World War II interrupted Leslie's plans for a writing career and he left the University of Texas to join the army, where he discovered he had a gift for German, in which he soon became fluent. He was later assigned to a top secret operation known only by its mailing address "P. O. Box 1142" where he and others used their language skills to great effect in the war effort.

That sounds like a blurb for a great movie, one of those black-&-white ones with steely-jawed men in fedoras and women who always used a really long cigarette holder, dahling! In his photo, Leslie looks as though he starred in his own movie – which sounds like one definition of a happy life.

When I finished reading about him, I asked the old question: Where do old translators go? And it occurred to me that old translators never die because they live on in their works. Not just in literary translations of books and poems, but in the countless documents of all kinds that translators work on day to day. The manuals and labels and patents and contracts. The signs and forms and letters and birth certificates. The brochures and instructions and warnings and all the fine print that nobody ever reads.

All those words were one day invoked by a translator and thenceforth entered the canon of their time and space as the issue of their creators – as the fruit of their lives, the essence of their very own synthesis, an expression of their being. Translators make the world a little more understandable, which is an honorable occupation.

Leslie Willson did, and we salute him for it.

—Tony Beckwith ★

Volunteer for Project Gutenberg

PROJECT GUTENBERG MAKES available to the public many titles in many languages. They can be down-loaded for free since their copyright has expired.

AATIA members Hank Phillips and Thelma Sabim are among the many volunteers for the project, he as a reviewer and she as a Portuguese-language proofreader. More than 12,400 books have been processed by volunteers, more than 1600 are undergoing final checks before being assembled into completed e-books, and another 1000 or so are now being proofread through the site. However, many more titles await proofing. A volunteer can proof just one page, one page a day, or the whole book.

Other ways to participate in this non-profit project include finding eligible books, burning CDs and DVDs for people who don't have Internet access, and making donations. Visit www.gutenberg.org to find a book to read or to contribute your time to the project. ★

Apply for 2008 ALTA travel fellowship

BEGINNING TRANSLATORS from foreign languages into English may apply for travel funds to attend the American Literary Translators Association's Annual Conference, to be held October 8–11 in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota.

To apply (deadline: May 15), send a letter that includes your curriculum vitae, 10 double-spaced pages of translation into English, and the foreign language source text to:

ALTA Travel Fellowship Award
c/o UTDallas
800 W. Campbell Road – JO51
Richardson, TX 75020-3021

Attention: Lindy Jolly

Get more information at
www.literarytranslators.org. ★

The Caledonian Ball

by Tony Beckwith © 2007

www.tonybeckwith.com

MANY YEARS AGO when the British arrived in Argentina and Uruguay, they came first as soldiers, which is how they did things in those days, and then as businessmen, which was a much better idea. Thriving new opportunities then attracted people from all over the United Kingdom, launching a wave of immigration that brought several generations from the old world to the two countries that border the River Plate.

The Scots who came to the region in the very early days trusted their native experience and settled in rural areas as sheep ranchers and shepherds. They brought with them their traditions, their music, and their dances; their kilt and bagpipe became recognizable icons everywhere. In time they blended into the larger British Communities in the area, whose members to this day are descended from those early adventurers.

This explains why the Caledonian Ball was one of the high points of the social calendar during my youth in Montevideo. The Ball was a very grand affair, held at the Parque Hotel, in their spacious ballroom with polished parquet floors, sparkling chandeliers, and waiters in dinner jackets. It was a gathering of the clans, a tribal experience, attended by a cross-section of the community and thoroughly enjoyed by venerable elders, frisky youngsters, and everyone in between. I was a teenager at the time and enjoyed the event to the full extent of my capacity for having fun, which in those days was prodigious. And why not? There was a most agreeable feeling of belonging. Plus, I was all spiffed up in formal attire, at a splendid hotel, surrounded by friends and music. It was always a night to remember.

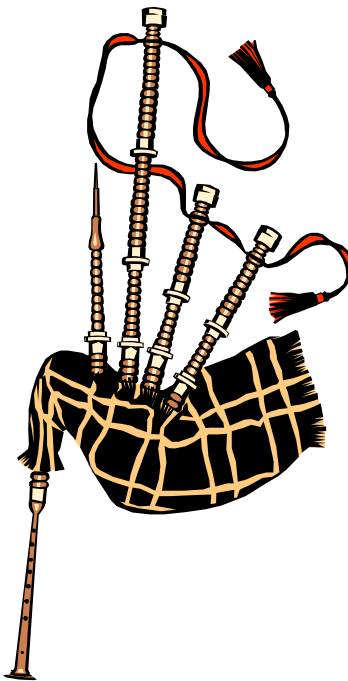
But you couldn't just show up at a Caledonian Ball. You had to be part of an *ightsome*, which hopefully included seven of your wildest friends. And you had to attend practice sessions for weeks in advance so that you and your wild friends could perform flawless renditions of the traditional group dances—the *Eightsome Reel*, the *Schottische*, the *Dashing White Sergeant*, *Strip the Willow*, the *Petronella*, the *Highland Fling*, and so on. Some of them were sedate,

some lively, some downright dangerous, in which excited couples careened up and down at breakneck speeds, occasionally colliding with others, which only added to the excitement. There was a giddiness in the air all night, like a carnival or a very popular wedding. People connected with their inner highlander and, by some unspoken understanding, certain codes of behavior acquired an unusual elasticity.

The dances were of the traditional variety: four couples form a square, with all dancers facing inwards. They raise their arms above their heads, thumbs touching their middle finger and the other fingers fully extended. Then they hop from one foot to the other, in time to the music, tapping the floor with the toe of the raised foot on the offbeat. Men and women perform this ritual jig in a prescribed order, then sashay towards each other, meeting in the center of the square for a sequence of approaches and steps that lead to a linking of arms and skipping around in a circle. There is much merriment and no restriction whatsoever on shouting or squealing with laughter. In fact, the more noise the better, or so it seemed back then at the Parque Hotel.

Some people actually wore a kilt of their clan's tartan to the Ball and there were, of course, the usual jokes about what went on under the family colors. If I'd had one I would certainly have worn it, probably over my rugby shorts, like everyone else. It would have to be a Campbell tartan because my family is descended from the Campbell clan through my paternal grandmother. Someone once told me that long ago, back in the misty highlands of Scotland, there were two clans, the Campbells and the MacDonalds. There was bitter animosity between them, like the Hatfields and McCoys in the United States, and one day my forebears invited the MacDonalds to a meeting and then massacred them all. I remember being extremely puzzled as to how all that affected me, and feeling a little uncomfortable around those who were descended from some of the more fortunate MacDonalds who presumably survived. I used to wonder if, in the excitement of the Ball, they might be contemplating a little old-fashioned revenge. After all, you never really know what's going through people's minds. A couple of whiskeys and some of them think they're Rob Roy himself.

My brother wore a kilt on at least one occasion, but I have no idea how it came into his possession.



Christopher, who was fourteen months older than I, was one of the bagpipers that night, and the pipers were the highlight of the Ball. They readied themselves in a private room, adjusting their kilts, straightening their stockings, and downing a ritual tumbler of neat Scotch whisky before exploding into the ballroom and filling the hearts of all present with the extraordinary sound of the Scottish bagpipe. It can be wild music, evocative of moor and glen, its intoxicating rhythm inciting you to give your inhibitions the night off and dance like one possessed. Or it can roll over you slowly like a dirge, its thick welling notes suffocating you with sadness.

Our ancestors were undoubtedly present amongst us on the night of the Ball. The event was a potent

manifestation of Scottish tradition that allowed those so inclined to create a Scottish persona they could wear like a fancy dress at a costume ball. People got into the spirit of the occasion and, as the evening progressed, started referring to young women as “lasses,” and saying “aye!” at the drop of a hat. They’d roll their “rr’s” like Sean Connery does and attempt a variety of linguistic experiments, saying things like, “aye, that’s a verra nice drop o’ whuskey, laddie!” Nobody minded these unscripted deviations from the norm. With bagpipes wailing and sips of Scotch warming one’s throat, who *didn’t* wonder aloud whether there was “a moose loose about the hoose,” or sing a nostalgic verse or two from “Auld Lang Syne”? Hoots mon, this was the Caledonian Ball! ★

Getting all your files from there to here

by Frank Dietz ©2008 www.frankdietz.com

I REMEMBER THE OLDEN DAYS, when we translators had to wrap our cuneiform tablets in mammoth hide and saddle our saber-toothed tigers to deliver ... well, not quite. Yet the business of receiving files from agencies and direct clients and delivering finished translations to them has changed somewhat over time.

Gone are the days when the fax machine (preferably on a separate fax line, so you could be reached 24 hours a day) was the main conduit of information. I actually retired my trusty fax machine, as 95% of the incoming faxes were junk faxes. Now I use a web-based faxing service (www.trustfax.com) to send and receive the few faxes that are still needed. The fee for this is much lower than the cost of keeping a separate fax line and buying toner cartridges for the fax machine, and it actually offers a toll-free number for clients to reach. In many cases, though, agencies might state that they want contracts signed and faxed to them, but they are perfectly happy if I convert the files to PDFs, sign them digitally and then e-mail them as attachments.

Most translators, of course, use e-mail for file transfer these days. If you have a broadband connection, with its greatly increased transmission speeds, this works so much better than in the case of dial-up. Just remember that compressing your files with a program such as Winzip or Filzip can shrink them considerably (depending on the file type) and also makes life easier for the recipient who won’t have to deal with 37 separate attachments.

Yet even with increased mailbox sizes and compression programs, e-mailing files sometimes is not always an option, as some files, such as PDFs or graphics, might simply be too large to send this way. Many agencies have reacted to this problem by setting up FTP servers (FTP stands for file transfer protocol) and will send you instructions containing FTP address, username and password that allow you to download these files. While you could use Internet Explorer for this purpose, it is much more convenient to employ a dedicated FTP client such as Core FTP (www.coreftp.com) with its more user-friendly interface.

However, a direct client might not have an FTP site available for file transfer. What do you do then? There are a number of free or low-cost web-based file transfer services available. I have used YouSendIt (<https://www.yousendit.com>) that allows transfers of up to 100 MB. Other services of this type are www.bigupload.com and www.sendthisfile.com. The client will then receive an e-mail with a URL that allows for the download of the large file you sent. ★

Stay connected at aatia.net

As a means to keep members more current with translation and interpretation news and more in touch with each other, AATIA has inaugurated a blog format for its new website at aatia.org.

This transition to an increased online presence for AATIA will enable members to get the latest news by visiting the site or by subscribing to its syndicated feeds and accessing the new posts via news reader. No more waiting two months for the news.

"The blog and comments format is an excellent way to involve members in discussing the operation of the association and events concerning the profession," according to Communications Director Tony Beckwith.

Webmaster Michael Conner urged members to register and help make this site a collaborative effort by commenting, voting in occasional straw polls, and submitting photos of AATIA events.

He also noted that to reduce spam, the first comment made by users will need approval, but thereafter their comments will appear without moderation. ★

Wanted: AATIA Photo Wrangler

AATIA needs a camera-toting member with image-editing skills to manage the association's images on Flickr and aatia.net. Apply to webmaster@aatia.org ★

January Notes

Members gathered for the first meeting of the New Year to thank Board members, SIG coordinators, and other members for their valued contributions to the asso-

English-Spanish contrastive grammar workshop for translators set for April

AATIA's Spanish Special Interest Group will host a workshop on English-Spanish contrastive grammar in Austin on Saturday, April 5, 2008. Xosé Castro, Madrid-based English>Spanish technical translator and localization specialist will focus the day-long workshop on compared grammar structures, discursive elements, phrasing and wording, direct and indirect speech, idioms, false cognates, and the "transcreation" (translation + creation) methodology for identifying these foreign elements and adapting them to the target language.

Although the workshop is aimed mainly at translators of English to Spanish, translators of Spanish to English will benefit from the discussion of contrastive grammar and "transcreation" methodology.

Castro's work also includes writing, dubbing, and subtitling for television and film. He has taught translation courses and seminars for T&I programs in Spain and has spoken at numerous international workshops and conferences on a variety of translation topics, including software and website localization, movie script translation, writing in neutral Spanish, and proofreading. Among many other distinctions, he is the creator of the online help for the CD-ROM version of the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* (Spanish Royal Academy Dictionary).

The workshop will be held at the International Center of Austin. Participants who are ATA-certified will be eligible to earn six continuing education points. Watch the AATIA website for registration information. ★

ciation's 2007 accomplishments.

Homage was paid to Leslie Willson, colleague, educator, and translator of German literature.

New Board members spoke of their goals for the coming year, including the new AATIA blog, increased membership, and several new professional development opportunities.

The Literary, Interpreter, and Spanish SIG coordinators encouraged members to participate in special interest groups in the coming year, noting that AATIA members may now join SIGs without additional dues.

Austin Community College courses for the Translation and Interpreting Certificate program to begin in February 2008 were announced.

Featured speaker Tony Beckwith gave a lively account of his experience as a simultaneous

interpreter during the democratic presidential candidates' debate in Spanish broadcast last September by Univision.

—Julie Nordskog, Secretary ★

SpanSIG, ISIG set 2008 calendar

Susana Roca-Smith, Spanish Special Interest Group Coordinator, reports that SpanSIG and the Interpretation SIG have set dates for their respective meetings in 2008. Unless otherwise announced, all meetings will be held at the Austin History Center, 10:15am-12:00pm., on the following dates:

SpanSIG	ISIG
Feb. 9	April 12
May 10	June 14
Sept. 13	August 9
Dec. 6	Oct. 11

Scholarships available for 8th TIP-Lab Spanish workshop

THE HARVIE JORDAN FOUNDATION is offering five \$100 scholarships for qualified AATIA members to participate in the 18th Spanish Translation/Revision Workshop held by the Translators and Interpreters Practice Lab, better known as TIP-Lab. Specially designed and tailored for professionals working in any country of the world who translate from English into Spanish, the workshop will run from July through December 2008.

Texts translated by the participants will be reviewed by Leandro Wolfson, a nationally known translator from Argentina who specializes in human and social sciences, and returned to the participants with revisions and annotated comments.

The workshop will cover general interest topics with no particular focus on specialized terminology or subject matter. Only applicants with extensive translation experience and full (native or highly proficient) command of Spanish (written form) and English (comprehension) will be accepted. For evaluation of their proficiency, applicants must submit a short narrative in Spanish (approximately 250 words) in which they describe their professional training and activities and the reason why they want to participate.

The American Translators Association has approved the workshop for continuing education credits. Workshop fee is US\$250 per participant (US\$30 non-refundable administrative fee included in this amount). Registration deadline is Monday, June 16, 2008. We encourage AATIA members to register by March 1, since registrations will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis until the quota is filled. Download the brochure for more information and the application form at www.tip-lab.org. ★

Call for papers

THE AMERICAN TRANSLATORS ASSOCIATION has called for presentation proposals for its 49th Annual Conference, to be held at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, November 5–8, 2008.

Proposals are invited on topics in all areas of translation and interpreting, including: Independent Contractors; Interpreting; Language Services Providers; Language-specific Sessions; Language Technology; Financial, Legal, Literary, Media, and Medical Translation and Interpreting; Science and Technology; Terminology; and Training and Pedagogy.

Submission deadline (see www.atanet.org) is March 14, 2008. ★

Last chance to register for ATA certification info session

AATIA will host an information session on the American Translators Association (ATA) translator certification program on March 1, 2008, 1:30–3:30 p.m. The session will cover general information about ATA certification and specific tips on preparing for and taking the certification exam. No practice tests will be given during the information session, but sample test passages in a variety of languages will be available for participants to take and use for practice on their own.

This session is aimed both at candidates who are plan to sit for the ATA certification exam in Austin on April 12, 2008, and for potential candidates who want to learn more about the exam before taking the plunge.

The session will be held at the International Center of Austin, 201 E. 2nd St. Download more information and a registration form at www.aatia.org. The registration fee for AATIA members is \$25. Non-members pay \$30. The fee includes a packet of materials containing general information on the ATA certification program and exam, together with language-specific tips for candidates and samples of previous exam passages. ★

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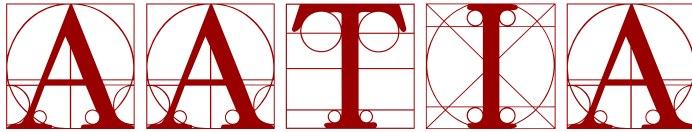
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EVENTS IN AUSTIN

Mar 1 1:30–3:30 p.m. ATA certification info session

Mar 8 1–4 p.m. AATIA member meeting*

Apr 5 English–Spanish grammar workshop

Apr 12 10:15–12 noon. SpanSIG meeting*

1–4 p.m. AATIA board meeting*

May 10 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

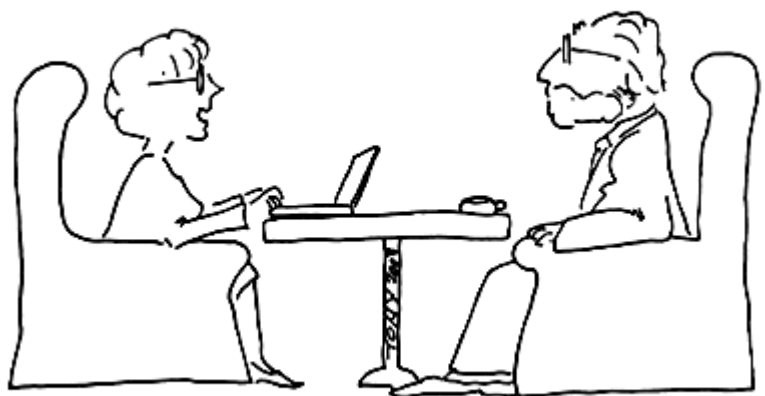
May 16–18, 2008 **Pittsburgh**. 29th Annual Conference of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators www.najit.org



ay what we may of the inadequacy of translation, yet the work is and will always be one of the weightiest and worthiest under-takings in the general concerns of the world.

—J. W. Goethe,

1749-1832, German Writer



I blog, therefore I am, Daddy!.