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The Letter

of the Austin Area Translators
and Interpreters Association

May 2008

Beyond THE LETTER: where do we go from here?

IF YOU HAVE BEEN READING The Letter for some time, you will notice that this issue is slimmer than its predecessors. You are right; it is half its usual size. Our trusty newsletter is shrinking, and will soon disappear for good. Or not so good, as some will certainly say.

Ever since the association was founded, in 1985, the AATIA has had a newsletter. In the beginning, it was literally a letter, sent to remind members about the next meeting. What a difference two decades can make!

By 2005, The Letter was a regular publication and had become far, far more than a meeting reminder. It was the main means of communication between AATIA and its members, who looked forward to receiving it every two months by mail. It now ran to several pages of

news and useful information and was widely considered to be among the best T&I newsletters in the country.

As the Internet grew in importance, AATIA launched its own website in 1997. The traditional membership directory—historically a major incentive for joining—made the transition to an electronic format and from that moment all members were visible and accessible to the rest of the world, at www.aatia.org.

We, the members of AATIA, had also changed. Every day we did more and more with our computers; soon we were talking about a “paperless society” and dreamed of having offices without a single filing cabinet! Some moved quickly into this brave new paperless world and began

cancelling their subscriptions to newspapers and magazines because they found that they preferred to read them online. Some, however, did not. As with every significant change in any field, not everyone was excited about the new way of doing things, nor were they ready to jettison lifelong habits at the click of a mouse. These same members

have similar reservations about the news that AATIA will soon cease to publish a paper version of The Letter and move all news and communications to an electronic environment. At this point, I’d like to briefly digress and share a bittersweet anecdote which I believe is both relevant

and capable of giving us a certain useful perspective on the subject.

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Open house christens AATIA headquarters



AATIA TOASTED THE OPENING of its new home in downtown Austin with an open house on Saturday, April 12. The association now has a permanent office with meeting and workshop space at the International Center of Austin, 201 East 2nd St.

After champagne toasts and welcoming words by President Michael Blumenthal and other board members, guests enjoyed refreshments and networking with colleagues.

This is the first time that the group has had a home of its own. Many thanks are due to AATIA founder and new office manager Esther Diaz [pictured left, with Secretary Julie Nordskog] for tireless efforts on behalf of the association that have, once again, resulted in improved member services.

Thanks to all making the event a success, especially Ralph McElroy Translations for their generous sponsorship. ★

May member meeting

Celebrate World in Translation Month

AATIA WILL OBSERVE World in Translation Month at the member meeting on Saturday, May 10, 1:00 p.m., at the **Austin History Center, 9th & Guadalupe.**

Tony Beckwith will share insights on translating tangos, with musical examples. Marian Schwartz will point out some key internet sites for literary translators.

In addition, Frank Dietz will demonstrate how to use RSS feeds from our new AATIA blog, walking us through the process of connecting to this valuable resource.

Refreshments and networking round out the meeting. Language-loving guests are welcome. ★

Austin Area Translators & Interpreters Association

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"Beyond THE LETTER," continued

Many years ago, Australia decided to "go metric" and set about convincing the population that it was a good idea. The government sponsored a massive campaign to educate the people and prepare them for the transition to the new way of measuring their world. Of course, not everyone was convinced. One day a major newspaper published a letter to the Editor which said: "I am an old lady, and this new metric policy is alarming to me and no doubt to others of my advanced age. I understand that progress is inevitable and that things must change, but couldn't the government wait to make the changes until all the old people have died?" Now that I too have reached what feels like an advanced age I fully sympathize with that lady.

Those of us involved in promoting the long-term health of the AATIA have agonized over this step. We are aware that there are members (myself included) who regret the passing of The Letter in its traditional paper form. We would like to assure you all that the decision was not taken lightly, but was taken because we truly believe that it is in the best interests of the association.

The cost of publishing The Letter absorbs about a quarter of the association's revenues. When there was no other satisfactory way of communicating with our members, this was an acceptable expense. Today, when we can achieve the same goals (actually, far more) at virtually no cost, it would be irresponsible to continue doing things in the old way. So, we will publish this issue of The Letter, then one more, and from then on the group's communication, like most of our communication these days, will be via the Internet.

But we should also mention that it's not only about the cost. The successor to The Letter is

a far more dynamic form of communication between the association and the members, and the rest of the world. Our blog—at www.aatia.net—provides members with up-to-the-minute information on a wide array of subjects, in addition to serving as a link to our website, our member directory, and all the other electronic material we have accumulated over the years. The blog will keep members current on association news, meeting and workshop information, and work and educational opportunities, and serve as a launch pad to the vast resources of the Internet.

It will also provide members with the opportunity to talk back! Once you get comfortable with the new blog format, you can read items of interest and post your own replies. This is a totally interactive format, which is one of the qualities which will eventually be seen as a vast improvement over the traditional paper newsletter that arrived in the mail but offered no easy, immediate way to respond.

I'd like to invite all members, no matter how you feel about boldly going where we've never been before, to visit the blog—www.aatia.net—the new face of AATIA. Join us there, and then please tell us what you think. ★

—Tony Beckwith
Director of Communications

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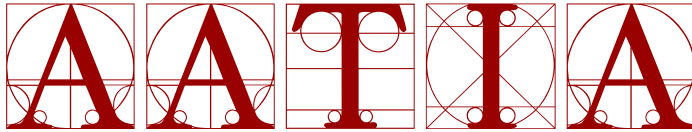
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What you missed: recently blogged at aatia.net

AATIA'S NEW BLOG has become the go-to place for the latest news of the association and its members, plus pointers to resources and fun facts about the world of translation, interpretation, and language in general.

During the last two months (since the publication of the March issue of The Letter) the following topics made news at aatia.net, among other items:

- **April 23:** A \$15 billion website gets users to translate the site for free
- **April 20:** Recent literary translation achievements of members Michele McKay Aynesworth, Tony Beckwith, Ingrid Lansford, and Liliana Valenzuela
- **April 14:** "Beware of spear-fishing" warned users about the latest pfishing exploit
- **April 13:** Review of open house at AATIA's new office headquarters
- **April 10:** Marta Blumenthal gave thumbs up to the Xosé Castro contrastive grammar workshop
- **April 6:** Link to Forvo, a website where the users contribute to the goal of "All the words in the world, pronounced"
- **April 3:** TAHIT Symposium announced
- **March 31:** R.I.P. Robert Fagles, renowned translator of the Greek classics
- **March 31:** Pointer to PC guru John Dvorak's take on machine translation
- **March 29:** Link to free, downloadable IAEA Safety Glossary in six languages
- **March 26:** "The Ultimate Vista Experience," a hands-on review by Frank Dietz
- **March 19:** "A Localization Story" by Tony Beckwith
- **March 18:** Just for fun, "Chinese Color Etymologies"
- **March 14:** AATIA's communication strategies after The AATIA Letter
- **March 13:** Practical tip: how to open Word 2007 files without the Microsoft software
- **March 12:** A new cartoon by Tony Beckwith illustrates the article "Best Breed of Project Managers" in GALaxy, the newsletter of the Globalization and Localization Association
- **March 11:** Volunteer opportunities at ATA HQ
- **March 5:** "A helpful word," pointer to wordsmith.com
- **March 5:** Announcement of ATA Translation Company Division's conference: Translation with Altitude
- **March 3:** Link to website on the National Geographic's Endangered Languages project
- **March 2:** How Tony learned that "Practice Makes Perfect" ★



Austin Area Translators & Interpreters Association

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EVENTS IN AUSTIN

May 3 2-4 LitSIG meeting. ATA HQ (201 East 2nd)

May 10 1-4 p.m. AATIA member meeting*

June 6 7-9 p.m. Reading the World. BookPeople.

June 14 10:15-12 noon. InterpreterSIG meeting*

1-4 p.m. AATIA board meeting*

July 12 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

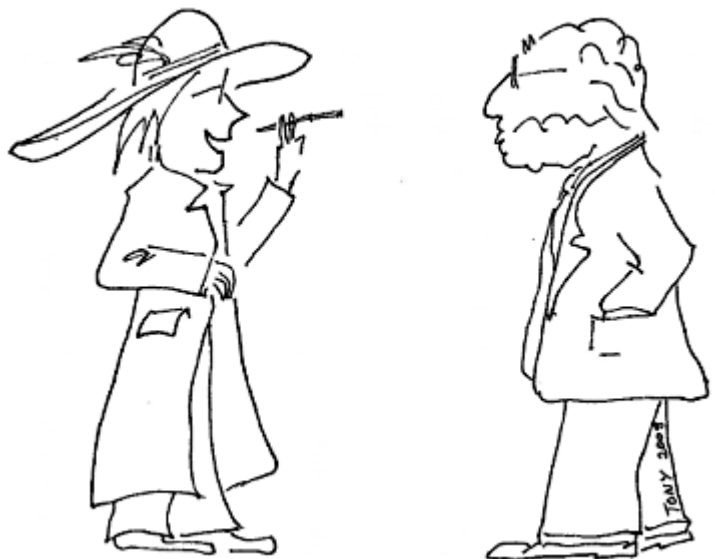
May 16-18, 2008 **Pittsburgh**. 29th Annual Conference of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators. najit.org

July 17-20 ATA Translation Company Division Annual Conference, Englewood, Colorado.
ata-divisions.org

Nov 5-8 Annual ATA Conference. Orlando, FL. atanet.org

*I am always sorry
when any language
is lost, because
languages are the
pedigrees of
nations.*

*-Samuel Johnson,
lexicographer (1709-1784)*



Well, elitism just isn't for everyone, dahling!