

www.aatia.org

# The Letter

of the Austin Area Translators and Interpreters Association

May 2001

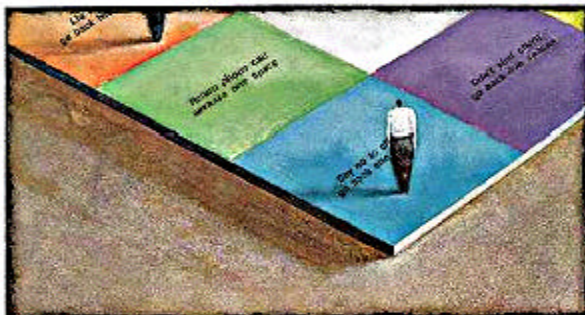
May 12 meeting

Are

## you an entrepreneur?

STARTING UP A SMALL BUSINESS is a difficult task, but AATIA members will be able to get some help at the May 12 meeting.

Dr. Carlos Castro will speak on "The Freelance Entrepreneur" and



provide some guidelines and tips for setting up and running a freelance translator/interpreter business.

Castro has taught courses in this field at Austin Community college, where he is a member of the faculty.

Attendees at the meeting will also find the traditional door prizes, multicultural refreshments, and great networking. ★

## Message from the President

In keeping with the 2001 theme, "Improving Member Services and Satisfaction," member feedback on program topics to meet your needs and interests was solicited at the March meeting. As a result, two of the topics requested have been added to the program schedule for this year.

The Web Team met in April specifically to address website issues raised by members. Changes to the website have already commenced, and an extensive renovation is being planned [see related articles, page 7].

If you wonder what happens to your dues, these are some of the items approved by the Board of Directors this year: directory printing (\$1000), AATIA domain name for 2 years (\$70), and voice-mail service (\$18/month). To facilitate practical exercises offered at the newly-formed Medical and Community Interpreting SIG (MCI-SIG), several sets of medical interpreting materials will be purchased (\$400).

In the last newsletter I mentioned the importance of volunteer efforts. In the contact information on page 2 you will see that board members are handling several important coordinator jobs: Accreditation, Advertising, and Workshops are currently vacant. Even if you can't take on the complete responsibility of one of these positions, consider volunteering to assist with some of the duties. The benefit to the organization is obvious, but the volunteers also benefit. It allows you to add to your skill set, connect with fellow professionals, make a contribution to your professional organization, and experience pride in a collaborative accomplishment. Contact the board member responsible for the coordinator position that interests you and enjoy the rewards of volunteering! ★

## Call for TIHOF nominations

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2001 induction ceremony of the Translator Interpreter Hall of Fame (TIHOF), which honors accomplished historical and contemporary practitioners of the translation and interpreting arts by showcasing their achievements on the official website <http://www.tihof.org>.

Entries should include a biography and/or essay on the nominee (700 words or longer) with optional illustrations. For an example, see the page honoring the first inductee, St. Jerome, on the TIHOF website.

Deadline for nominations is July 31, 2001.

Honorees will be selected by a panel of judges drawn from various translator and interpreter associations.

New honorees will be announced on International Translators Day, September 30, 2001.

Nominees not inducted at the 2001 ceremony may be considered for future years. The winning entries will be announced and published on the TIHOF website, with proper credit given to essay authors and translators. Contact [webmaster@tihof](mailto:webmaster@tihof) or visit <http://www.tihof.org> for more information. ★

## ATA exam set for Austin in July

AATIA WILL HOST AN AUSTIN SITTING for the ATA accreditation exam on July 21, 2001. All interested persons may contact Ezequiel Quijano 512/442-7281 [ezequielquijano@msn.com](mailto:ezequielquijano@msn.com) for details. ★

# Austin Area Translators & Interpreters Association

<http://www.aatia.org>

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## March meeting highlights Translation theory, practice discussed

AATIA'S MARCH MEETING featured a presentation on the theory and practice of translation by Dr. Frank Pino, professor of Spanish language and literature at the University of Texas at San Antonio and author of *El purgatorio académico* (The Academic Purgatory), among numerous other works.

Pino emphasized that the translator is every bit as much a writer as the original writer of a text and that translation involves more than simply putting words written in one language into another language. The translator must get at the essence of a text and transmit that essence to an audience steeped in a different cultural and linguistic tradition. To do that, the translator must be thoroughly familiar with the broader context in which the source text was written and must know his/her audience. The translator also needs to be well versed in the subject matter of the text, which often requires extensive reading in both the source and target languages.

To deal with the time constraints faced by commercial translators, Pino suggested organizing reference materials by subject so that specific information and terminology can be easily located. He also recommended that translators use visual aids such as the Oxford pictorial dictionaries as a means of rapidly familiarizing themselves with new terms and concepts.

The March meeting featured several changes in format, including shorter presentations, less time spent on introduction of participants, and a longer time allotted for networking at the end of the meeting. Based on the results of a survey conducted by Director of Professional Development Ezequiel Quijano, the changes were well received by members. Ezequiel is planning topics for future meetings based on members' suggestions, which included business aspects of

translation and interpretation (business start-up, office organization, invoicing, tax tips, etc.), ergonomics and stress management, and ethical and legislative issues of concern to translation and interpretation professionals. ★

## April board meeting highlights Board applies for government grant

AT ITS MEETING ON APRIL 14, 2001, the AATIA Board of Directors approved Patricia Thickstun's proposal to apply for a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for a bilingual/bicultural service demonstration program.

One of grant's aims is to demonstrate the merits of programs that address cultural and linguistic barriers to effective health care delivery for persons with limited English proficiency.

AATIA is eligible to apply for the grant as a private, non-profit, community-based organization. The association's role would be to organize and conduct training for medical and community interpreters in order to improve the accessibility and utilization of health care services among the target population—one of the demonstration program's stated objectives.

The board felt that AATIA would be well positioned to provide such training. Moreover, participation in the program would increase the visibility of the association and its membership and would afford employment opportunities for members.

In collaboration with Esther Diaz, Thickstun will also prepare basic grant application information that can be used by the association to apply for future grants.

The board also approved a proposal by Esther Diaz for the purchase of training materials for medical interpreters. The materials will be used primarily by members of the recently formed Medical and Community Interpreters SIG, but they will also be available to other AATIA members who wish to practice their interpreting skills on their own. The materials are intended for Spanish-English interpreters; however, Diaz has obtained permission to translate them into English so that they can be used by interpreters of other languages.

In other business, the board heard a report from Communications Director Debbie Turner on the planned upgrades to the AATIA Website and discussed the possibility of holding a translation workshop prior to the ATA accreditation sitting scheduled for July 21 in Austin. ★

## MCISIG news

THE SECOND MEETING of AATIA's Medical and Community Interpreters Special Interest Group was held on April 14. The format of this meeting was very participatory. There was an update on legislature issues, practice on memory exercises, and code of ethics discussion. The next meeting is on June 9, 10 a.m. at the Austin History Center.

—submitted by Ezequiel Quijano

## Member stat watch

AT THE APRIL BOARD MEETING, AATIA Database Coordinator Joan Tuttle Vargas reported the following membership statistics:

162 total members

151 active

8 associate

3 business

Seventeen active members also have business listings. ★

## Letter to AATIA

*IN AN ONLINE DISCUSSION of media images of interpreters AATIA President Pat Thickstun received the following response:*

Greetings and "howdy y'all" (thereby revealing my Texas origins, from Tyler and Austin)!

Regards to the membership of the AATIA. I know about that worthy association; many members seemed to be on faculties of the various universities and colleges in the Austin area, plus free-lancers and translation firms, IIRC.

An experienced healthcare interpreter tends to assume by necessity an additional role as a "cultural facilitator/two-way cultural explainer" when interpreting and mediating for patients and accompanying family members (Arabs, Kurds, Iranians, and Somalis, in my case).

The anxiety levels of the presenting patient or group are usually "way up on the ceiling," so I usually must invest the first few minutes of the interpreting session during the first contact in de-escalating/de-stressing the situation and then restoring some attention, confidence, and compliance as the patient receives treatment.

During this initial contact, overcoming a patient's reluctance to divulge culturally-protected personal and family medical histories is another interesting matter. There, an interpreter can play a critical role for the benefit of all parties, especially for the ER/admissions desk and the first providers.

I now live in the city of San Pedro. If I have an opportunity to return to Austin, I would be pleased to talk to and get my brain picked by the members of AATIA.

Stephen H. Franke  
shfranke@ela1.com

(Transplanted, but forever a Texan) ★

# AN InterPReTer's NiGhtmare

by Tony Beckwith © 2001

THE LIGHTS DIMMED IN THE HOTEL ballroom as the keynote speaker strolled across the stage. He stood behind the podium and looked out at the audience. I adjusted my headset and leaned closer to the microphone in the booth at the back of the hall. I ran my tongue across my lips and swallowed. The rustling and the shuffling and the talking subsided, and the man on the stage eased into his speech.

“Good morning,” he said brightly. “My theme today is ‘Clarity and Synergy in an Age of Divergent Paradigms and the Implementation of the Conceptual Approach.’” My heart sank. How was I supposed to interpret that? I understood the individual words, but what was he trying to say? My job was to convey his meaning into another language, but so far he was making no sense at all. For me, the process is quite simple: if I can hear you and I can understand you, I can interpret what you say. Speakers who talk like this make me crazy, they drive me insane. Where, I wondered miserably, were we going today?

“Now, let me say right away,” he continued, “that I don’t intend to articulate a TDC perimeter of cognitive assumptions or leverage a real-time review that is mission-critical and structured around a survey-based data bank. No! What I . . .”

Somebody was knocking on the side of the booth. Like an iguana under a

rock I shot a lightning glance to my left. There was the lady from the agency, shaking a sheaf of papers, grinning triumphantly and mouthing “*I got his speech for you!*” My eyes swung back to the front, smoldering beneath furiously furrowed brows. What in the world was the acronym that *odious little cretin* on stage just uttered? I waved my arm wildly to make the lady from the agency go away. *Why* do they talk in acronyms? Have your scuba call my RSVP!

The speaker paused, and looked around the darkened hall. He smiled, protected by his spotlights. “Let me get back to the NGY synergy and how that inevitably transitions to the cross-cutting issues we are considering. But, hey, I know we’re all on the same page on that one.” A wave of laughter rippled comfortably through the audience.

There was a roaring in my head, like a high wind in a hot valley, and my eyes were seared in their sockets. The muscles in my neck had turned to stone and my shoulders were hunched up around my ears. I seemed to be trying to move large pieces of furniture around in my brain, pushing pianos through keyholes under water.

Blissfully oblivious, the speaker moved away from the microphone and

stood with his elbow on the podium. When he looked to his right his voice was muffled and barely audible. When he faced forward or to his left I couldn’t hear him at all. “. . . what we in fact envision . . . unwavering across-the-board support of our ongoing objective of clarity at any cost . . . and a market-driven focus . . . essential competitive edge . . .” There were shouts of ‘Bravo!’ from the front rows.

The booth had filled with ants, and I could no longer see my hands. My skull was lowered slowly into a cauldron of molten lava. I could see out of my ears and my tongue lay down with a crocodile. There was no time, no distance anymore. No colors, no laughter, no light. Only the roaring.

“In closing,” said the speaker, who seemed to be moving further away, “let me say one thing. We cannot make mountains out of innuendo! There can

be no win-win synthesis if we don’t move proactively together to . . .”

It was dark in the booth. Huge black clouds rolled in over a vast, angry sea that hissed and boiled across the beach where I was buried up to my chin in the sand. A seagull stood on a rock, looking at me, its feathers ruffling in the wind. My nostrils were packed with gravel.

“. . . sixty percent of our MIF will be transferred to the PDT. Nineteen percent of the R-sevens will regroup . . . and with that, it is my very great pleasure to hand you over to Donnie Donaldson who will go over the rest of the TDCs.” A tall monkey in a white coat took me gently by the arm as the speaker waved and said, “Thank you and have a great day!” ★

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“For me, the process is quite simple: if I can hear you and I can understand you, I can interpret what you say.”

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## Along Literary Lines

### “Anti-social” is not the best or even the only option

A LITERARY TRANSLATOR can do herself or himself no greater favor than to leave the comfortable solitude of a book-lined study and meet colleagues. A good conference or workshop offers both formal and informal opportunities not only to find out what's happening in publishing but also to recall why literary translation seemed like such a good idea at all, lo those many years ago. Trading war stories, sharing strategies, and discovering new possibilities invariably has an invigorating effect.

Consider one or more of these offerings for 2001.

#### “Creators and Craft”

If you're looking for a good conference, consider the American Literary Translators Association Annual Conference, October 24-27, 2001, in Raleigh, North Carolina. Award-winning poet, novelist, translator of Vietnamese poetry, and past president of ALTA John Balaban will be hosting the meeting through the Department of English and its Creative Writing Program at North Carolina State University.

Balaban, with his co-host Lucinda MacKethan, the North Carolina State Director of Creative Writing, has chosen the theme of translation from the perspective of creative writing, in anticipation of drawing on area authors such as Lee Smith, Annie Dillard, Kaye Gibbons, and Reynolds Price, as well as the many fine writers published by Algonquin Press in Chapel Hill. The meetings will take place in the downtown Sheraton, off the old shaded town squares, spared

by Sherman during the Civil War. It will be Indian Summer in October and quite lovely. The area has a number of pubs and restaurants within walking distance of the conference (for that all-important, end-of-day socializing).

For more information about the program, go to ALTA's website [www.literarytranslators.org](http://www.literarytranslators.org).

#### Interested in more exotic travel?

The British Centre for Literary Translation at the University of East Anglia, in Norwich, England, is offering a week-long workshop, July 22-28, 2001, with Writer-in-Residence Patricia Duncker. Literary translators will be able to discuss their work with fellow professionals and learn more about the practice of literary translation. Workshops in Italian, Spanish, Catalan, and other languages are still to be confirmed. For more information, go to [www.literarytranslation.org](http://www.literarytranslation.org).

#### AATIA Literary SIG

Closer to home, AATIA's LitSIG meets regularly in the fall and spring to share problems with texts and publishers. At the latest meeting, Italian translator Traci Andrighetti roused the group to solve a problem with a tongue-twister in a one-act play, and Liliana Valenzuela and Tony Beckwith chronicled their collaboration on a proposal to co-translate a volume of children's poetry.

They ran through the steps they took to create the proposal and negotiate with the publisher, after which the group examined their work on the title poem, “Mamá Bellena.”

LitSIG's next meeting will be on Saturday, October 27. Watch *The Letter* for more on that event, or contact Marian Schwartz [mbs@texas.net](mailto:mbs@texas.net). ★



THE BARCELONA REVIEW is the Web's first electronic review of international, contemporary cutting-edge fiction in English/Spanish/Catalan/French multilingual format, located at [www.barcelonareview.com](http://www.barcelonareview.com).

The Barcelona Review is presently accepting submissions for previously unpublished short fiction, essays, and articles, but not poetry submissions.

Short Fiction: Send one or two short stories to the editor via email as an attached file or as a straight e-mail. Hard copies are accepted but cannot be returned (see address below). Word length: 4,000 words max. No simultaneous submissions.

Articles/Essays: Email an outline of your article/essay to the editor with some brief biographical information. Material should be related in some way to the world of books and writing; creative non-fiction (e.g., personal essays) that fits with the review is welcome; literary criticism and academic pieces are not. Word length preferably under 3,000 words. Send submissions and queries to:

Jill Adams, Editor

Email: [editor@barcelonareview.com](mailto:editor@barcelonareview.com)

Fax: (00 34) 93 319 15 96

Address: C/ Correu Vell 12 - 2°

08002 Barcelona, Spain ★

From the *Austin American-Statesman's* Literary Calendar: 7:30 p.m. Thursdays. Multilingual open- mike poetry. Foreign-language poems not required. Bring English translations. Koffee 'n' Ice Kream, 6700 Middle Fiskville Road. Free. 380-0565.

# Just the Fax, Ma'am!

by Frank Dietz © 2000

If you are just setting up a home office or replacing older equipment, you might want to consider whether you need a stand-alone fax machine or not. First, you have to evaluate how often you need to send or receive faxes, and for what purpose. Some translators still receive most of their assignments by fax, but others (including myself) rely mostly on e-mail and use faxes only for receiving and sending work orders, invoices and non-disclosure agreements (which have to be signed). Depending on your particular communications needs, you might choose one of the options listed below.

- A fax program (such as WinFaxPro). These programs are inexpensive (from free to around \$100), use your existing modem, and thus require no additional desk space. By the way, if you used the Fax applet included in Windows 95 and cannot find it anymore in Windows 98, go to [http://www.pcworld.com/current\\_issue/article/0,1212,13352,00.html](http://www.pcworld.com/current_issue/article/0,1212,13352,00.html) for instructions on installing it. Drawbacks of these programs are that the computer must be on whenever you want to receive faxes, and that you would have to print out a contract you have received, then sign it, then scan it (requiring a scanner), before being able to fax it to the client.
- A web-based fax service (such as <http://www.jfax.com/> or <http://efax.com/>). These services allow you to send faxes and assign you a number under which you can receive faxes that are then sent to your e-mail inbox. The advantages are the price (free) and the fact that you need no additional hardware or software and can receive faxes 24 hours a day, even if your computer is

turned off. The drawback is the signature issue already described above.

- A multifunction device that combines faxing, printing, scanning, and copying functions. These all-round workhorses are particularly useful if space is at a premium. Prices have come down in the last few years, and you can now get a multifunction device for around \$200-400. The only drawback is that sometimes the

components are of unequal quality and that some users are intimidated by the number of buttons on these machines.

- A fax machine. Prices have fallen rapidly over the last two years, and you can now buy a plain-paper fax machine for around \$100 (though watch out for the cost of printing cartridges). Some machines also offer copying functions, a telephone handset and a connection for an answering machine (in case you want to use it both as a fax machine and a telephone and let the machine sort out incoming calls). A fax machine with a separate phone line, however, is still a very versatile round-the-clock solution, though it blocks precious desk space. ★



## Web Team sets sights on site upgrades

WEBMASTER ERIC BROOKS has announced that the online member database (Linguist Locator) was approved for uploading in early April and can now be searched alphabetically for specific members by name ([www.aatia.org/alpha/alpha.htm](http://www.aatia.org/alpha/alpha.htm)).

In addition to searches by language pair alone and language pair with a specialization, in the future viewers will also be able to search by specialization alone.

Brooks said that the additional search capability is the first of a number of changes that will make regular updates simpler and eventually enable members to monitor and modify their own data.

At its March meeting the Web Team decided to move the entire database operation to the website to facilitate these changes. This will require conversion from FileMaker Pro to Microsoft Access or SQL Server and moving the entire site to a new Internet service provider.

"Speaking of the new platform, one of my great hopes is that changes and additions will be easily implemented with basic knowledge of commonly supported web database systems," said Brooks.

Other changes in the works involve delegating some content-related tasks to several members of the Web Team and may also include changes in the website's design and organization. These goals will be defined at a future meeting of the team or at "virtual" meetings conducted by email.

AATIA members who have questions or suggestions for website improvements or would like to join the Web Team may contact the Webmaster [webmaster@aatia.org](mailto:webmaster@aatia.org). ★

## Message from Director of Communications

AATIA OWES SPECIAL THANKS to Andy Coulson from Vignette Corporation, an e-business solutions provider, for his contribution to the website database project. Even though he is not a member, he has graciously offered to help us navigate these issues and reach our goals.

All of the changes planned by the Web Team should make the AATIA site much more user-friendly for present and potential customers and also for ourselves.

Our goal is to have all of this in place and functional by the end of this year. Now, we would like to hear from you. What other changes would you like to see? What other problems have you experienced that the changes I mentioned above will not resolve? What feedback have you received from customers that used the website to locate you?

If you would like to join the Web Team or have any suggestions, contact Webmaster Eric Brooks at [webmaster@aatia.org](mailto:webmaster@aatia.org). The Webmaster, Web Team, and AATIA board are always open to friendly and professional feedback about the website. Please don't hesitate to contact us with your comments, questions, and ideas.

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Deborah Turner

Director of Communications

### A little Web history

*Recollections by AATIA's first Webmaster, Frank Dietz*

WELL, AFAIR\* THE WEB TEAM started meeting in the fall of 1996, mostly at Tony Beckwith's house. Frequent attendees at those early meetings included Tony, Mike Conner, Hans Huth, Al Bork, Steven Mines, and of course Roberto Quiroga, who created the original Web design.

Our main goal was to get the member list online in order to provide an Internet presence for AATIA members, but also to provide information useful to AATIA members.

The site went online during the 1997 Regional Conference.

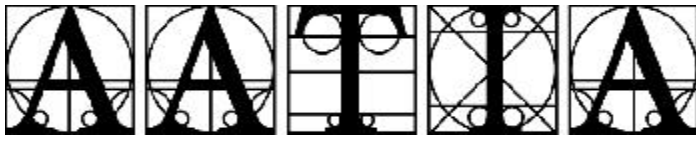
\*"As Far As I Recall," in email-speak. —Ed.



## Translation Journal reaches milestone

SOMETIME EARLY THIS YEAR the Translation Journal website logged its 100,000th visitor, according to Editor Gabe Bokor.

The TJ has been online since 1997, publishing quarterly virtual issues at [www accurapid.com/journal](http://www accurapid.com/journal). The current issue (April) has a record 14 feature articles on a broad range of language- and subject-specific topics written by authors living in nine different countries. ★



**Austin Area Translators & Interpreters Association**

**PO Box 13331 H Austin, TX 78711-3331 H 512-707-3900**

<http://www.aatia.org>



*AATIA welcomes visitors to the Austin History Center (AHC) at 9th & Guadalupe on the 2nd Saturday of odd-numbered months for general meetings and even-numbered months for board meetings.*

### **EVENTS IN AUSTIN**

May 12 10 a.m. SpanSIG meeting, See Ññ for location.

Info Harvie Jordan 444-8537

1-4 p.m. AATIA regular meeting. AHC

June 9 10-12 noon. MCISIG meeting. AHC

12 noon. MCISIG networking lunch

1-4 p.m. AATIA board meeting, AHC

July 14 AATIA regular meeting and SIG meetings

## **Italian translator/ author writes on translation**

UMBERTO ECO, RENOWNED AUTHOR of "The Name of the Rose" and "Foucault's Pendulum" has translated others' works and also had his works translated. He shares this unique perspective in a new book titled "Experiences in Translation."

Eco asks: "Should a translation lead the reader to understand the linguistic and cultural universe of the source text or transform the original by adapting it to the reader's cultural and linguistic universe?" For example, in an Italian novel a character orders coffee, gulps it down, and leaves the bar. In an American novel, should the man sit with a cup of coffee for a half-hour, contemplating?

The Boston Globe calls the work "witty and engrossing." See the review at [www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/050/living/Eco\\_s\\_work\\_on\\_translation\\_is\\_an\\_accessible\\_trek+.shtml](http://www.boston.com/dailyglobe2/050/living/Eco_s_work_on_translation_is_an_accessible_trek+.shtml). ★

## **Berlitz tests new interpreter exam**

PILOT TESTING HAS BEGUN for the Berlitz New Consecutive Exam. This pre-recorded 45-minute test assesses interpretation skills in general, medical, legal, financial and emergency settings. The exam is currently available in Spanish, German, French, Russian, and Mandarin.

For more information or to register to take the new exam, e-mail [kkenia.boitsova@berlitzglobalnet.com](mailto:kkenia.boitsova@berlitzglobalnet.com) or call 1800-423-6756 ext. 140. ★

## **Little snail?**

THE SUMMER/FALL 2000 ISSUE of the ATA Literary Division's newsletter, *Source* reported the following item:

Mario Rigolio of Varese, Italy, in a letter to the editor in *Newsweek International* (6/19/00) informs us that in Italian the @ symbol is called "chiocciolina," or "little snail."

In Spanish it is an "arroba" which is an old measure of weight and volume.

Perhaps the readers of *The Letter* will tell us what that symbol is called in their languages? Send an email to the editor at [conner@texas.net](mailto:conner@texas.net). ★

