

www.aatia.org

# The Letter

of the Austin Area Translators  
and Interpreters Association

July 2006

## July 8 member meeting

### How to become a Texas court interpreter



GET THE SKINNY on requirements for licensed court interpreters in Texas at the July AATIA meeting, which will feature “Court Interpreters in Texas: Licensing and Continu-

ing Education.”

Tony Beckwith will welcome Marian Schwartz and Liliana Valenzuela to the Mentoring Moment. These two AATIA members, both well on their way to legendary status in the field of literary translation, will talk about how they got their start in the business and what skills a literary translator needs to succeed.

As always, the discussion will move from the personal to the universal, and the panelists will offer suggestions and advice to those who are interested in producing well-written translations regardless of the subject matter. This is a perfect opportunity for newcomers and established translators to ask questions and get answers from professionals with many years of experience in the field. ★

### Board initiates membership drive with referral contest, prizes

Dear Members:

I'm sure many of you know translators or interpreters who do not belong to AATIA or former members who let their memberships lapse. We have begun a membership drive based on referrals by current members. This plan would increase our membership and at the same time give current members a chance to win prizes, including a free membership for 2007 (individual active membership, a \$35.00 value).

Three closed referrals will qualify for a choice of an AATIA t-shirt, book weight, or copy of *Thresholds*. In addition, triple referrers will also be entered for a chance to win the free active membership..

The contest will run until the end of July. Be sure and instruct any potential member you are referring to include “referred by...” in the memo field of their check or PayPal instructions.

Gisella Greenlee  
Director of Membership

### Advertising Coordinator sought

THE AATIA LETTER needs a volunteer Advertising Coordinator to fulfill the following functions:

- Contact potential advertisers to solicit ads
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- Provide bimonthly activity reports to Communications Director

Estimated time commitment is two hours per month. If you are willing to help with this, please contact Director of Communications Cristina Pinto-Bailey at [acpinto60@yahoo.com](mailto:acpinto60@yahoo.com). ★

### Nominations due for 2007 Board

LEO BELLO WILL CHAIR the Nominating Committee for the September election of the 2007 AATIA Board of Directors. Elected candidates will take office in January.

AATIA members who would be willing to serve on the committee, nominate a candidate, or run for office themselves should contact Bello at [leosanpia@austin.rr.com](mailto:leosanpia@austin.rr.com) or AATIA Secretary Susana Roca-Smith at 512-380-9597 or [secretary@aatia.org](mailto:secretary@aatia.org)

Candidates must be active AATIA members in good standing. The deadline for nominations is Saturday, August 5. ★



## Austin Area Translators & Interpreters Association

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 Director of Finance Al Favela v 401-9388 [finance@aatia.org](mailto:finance@aatia.org)  
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### Coordinators

ADVERTISING [ads@aatia.org](mailto:ads@aatia.org)  
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 NEW MEMBERS Esther Díaz v & f 312-1599 [president@aatia.org](mailto:president@aatia.org)  
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 WEBSITE R. Michael Conner v & f 474-7012 [webmaster@aatia.org](mailto:webmaster@aatia.org)  
 VOICEMAIL Elisabeth Joffrain v 775-1459 [joffraintrans@yahoo.com](mailto:joffraintrans@yahoo.com)  
 Workshops Laura Vlasman v 891-9207 f 891-9208 [lvlasman@earthlink.net](mailto:lvlasman@earthlink.net)

### THE AATIA LETTER

EDITOR R. Michael Conner v & f 474-7012  
[editor@aatia.org](mailto:editor@aatia.org)  
 PRODUCTION Howard Simms v 452-4700  
[Howard.Simms@gte.net](mailto:Howard.Simms@gte.net) & Merry Wheaton v 451-4772  
 f 467-7616 [mcwheaton@austin.rr.com](mailto:mcwheaton@austin.rr.com)  
 DISTRIBUTION Efrat Schwartz v 282-1951 f 233-1019  
[email@efrat.us](mailto:email@efrat.us)

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\*10% discount to members



## May meeting segments reviewed

# Software localization: not all fun and games

AT OUR MAY MEETING, German translator Frank Dietz illuminated general issues involved in localizing software and particular problems of computer game localization.

Localization is defined as adapting software and documentation for a particular international market. This includes translating menus and messages into the target language and modifying the user interface to accommodate different alphabets and cultures.

*Identifying what needs translating:* The translator will get the computer program code and must identify the strings within it that need to be translated, often a confusing task without some knowledge of the particular code language.

*Length restrictions:* The target-language text must often fit within the same space allowed for the source text and may need to use abbreviations or shorter, alternative terms.

*Context:* Translators will often find words with no context. For example, does the isolated word “open” refer to something that needs to be opened or something that has already been opened?

*Cultural issues:* Sometimes cultural differences are eliminated by leaving

the term as an English cognate. An example is “motherboard,” which used to be translated into German as “die Hauptplatine,” but is now translated as “das Motherboard.”

*Resources:* Dietz recommended the books *A Practical Guide to Localization* by Bert Esselink and *Developing International Software* by “Dr. International,” as well as the websites [www.tgpc consulting.com](http://www.tgpc consulting.com) and [www.lisa.org](http://www.lisa.org) for those who want to learn more about this specialty.

*Localizing computer games:* The computer game industry generates \$20 billion worldwide (\$8 billion in the US). The vastness of this market means high pressure for all parties involved in it. Production costs are rising due in part to the short timeframe that companies face. In the past the companies had in-house translators, but now they only hire freelance translators on very tight deadlines.

Military simulations, a popular computer game genre, are highly technical; their manuals can contain up to 100,000 words. This type of game is very close to the real world, and the translator would need a deep understanding of aviation technology, for example, so that players can immerse themselves in flying an F-16 jet.

The challenge of science fiction and fantasy games lies in the creation of fictitious worlds with a wide variety of new races and technologies. Thus, translators must be creative and have literary translation skills.

To sum up, this is a very specific niche market where the translator will be part of a virtual team and will need to know the lingo as well as the game. This can be a challenging and fun experience. Although it is not a field to specialize in overnight, the markets will continue to expand. Dietz predicts that as soon as the new X-box gaming console comes out, there will be a lot more work for translators.

### Mentoring Moment

In AATIA’s second Mentoring Moment, host Tony Beckwith intro-

duced us to Marta and Michael Blumenthal, then conducted a brief Q&A session.

Marta was born in Colombia and obtained a BS in Languages and a MS in Educational Administration. She taught Spanish as a foreign language and worked as a translator for an international adoption agency. Michael met Marta when he was studying Spanish in Colombia and they came together to the US.

Marta began translating in 1998 and now works as a translator for the Texas Department of Aging and Disabilities Services where she is part of a team of translators. Michael started working as a translator under the mentorship of Albert Bork, an AATIA co-founder. The Blumenthals now have their own translation company, called M&M Translations.

According to Michael, the director at an adoption agency asked Marta to take on some freelance work. The company’s success derived from having native, educated speakers in both Spanish and English.

M&M finds most clients through contacts. Marta stated that being an AATIA member has helped a lot through networking and referrals. Michael added that once you get your first client, you also need to keep it by acting professional in the way you send your invoices, the equipment you have, and with the follow-up calls.

Our clients come from an institutional setup. We have to convince them that we are dependable and professional. A satisfied client can be an advocate; we can ask them to recommend prospective clients.

The panel agreed that being part of the AATIA, whether it be as members, as board members, or volunteers, is an excellent way to make connections and keep in touch with colleagues. ★



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

Every nation has sentimental songs that are sung by its sons and daughters when they are far away and homesick. Argentina is no exception, and one of its most famous tangos begins with an emotional paean to “My beloved Buenos Aires.”

So, what does a native son think about as he returns after an absence of several years? That tango kept running though my mind on the overnight flight from Dallas and, as the sun rose, my thoughts drifted from Alfredo Le Pera’s lyrics and expressed my personal nostalgia in words of my own:

My beloved Buenos Aires, I am  
 coming home again

I can see you in the distance from  
 the window of the plane.

Your skyline is as beautiful as any,  
 anywhere

and the River Plate still looks like  
*dulce de leche* from the air.

The Río de la Plata, the vast estuary that separates Argentina from Uruguay, is almost always muddy brown, like the mighty Mississippi. And *dulce de leche* is an iconic Argentine product: a caramelized, sweet, muddy brown milk jam that is intimately linked to my memories of childhood. It was spread on bread and toast, rolled into pancakes, lathered over ice cream, and was the filling of the equally iconic *alfajores* – a traditional pastry item. But the best way to eat it was off a spoon straight out of the jar, standing in front of the open refrigerator at any hour of the day or night. I cannot think of Argentina without drifting, sooner or later, into reveries involving *dulce de leche*.

We spent the night in Buenos Aires, and the following morning were

off again, heading west to Mendoza. Our flight left from Aeroparque airport, and Lillian was enchanted to find fresh flowers in the departure lounge restroom. “What a detail,” as the Argentines would say. Another traditional food item I craved was the classic *sándwiches de miga* – ham and cheese layered between incredibly thin slices of white bread from which the crust has been guillotined. The airport cafeteria had run out (they’re still that popular), but fate (and Aerolíneas Argentinas) was on our side and they were served as the in-flight snack, together with an excellent cup of coffee.

First class buses make the thousand-kilometer trip across the flat pampas to Mendoza in twelve hours, but the flight took only two, and we preferred to spend our time at our destination rather than on the journey. We stayed with friends who grow grapes and olives on their property about half an hour from town. It was the harvest season, and ancient trucks piled high with grapes rumbled along narrow country roads on their way to local wineries. The grapes in Mendoza are grown on vines, strung out on wires in long straight lines, and this is where the Argentines produce the finest of their wines: Malbec, for example, which is the current favorite both here and abroad.

In the evening, as the sun slipped behind the Andes and the snow-capped peak of Aconcagua gleamed in the fading light, we sat on the patio behind the house, drinking *mate* and watching the blue shadows roll down from the mountains and engulf row after row of vines in darkness. This far

from the lights of a city, the night sky came alive with stars, and we gazed up at the Southern Cross and marveled at the Milky Way, shimmering like a celestial ocean and disappearing into the unimaginable distance.

“We look at the *cordillera*,” said the foreman of the vineyard, speaking softly so as not to disturb the shadowy silence, “and in our minds we fly towards it, then upwards, following the mountain slopes straight up to the sky. But up there, faced with an infinity of possibilities, we look back at Argentina and lose our sense of purpose. Then we loop backwards and fall to earth again. We Argentinos can never get beyond ourselves; that is our curse.” He passed the *mate* gourd and I sipped the strong brew through the metal tube, just as generations of Argentines have done here for centuries.

Rested and refreshed by the rural tranquility of Mendoza, we returned to the urban intensity of Buenos Aires. The traffic in the city can sometimes seem insane, since drivers see no reason to keep within their lane. We were staying with friends in the secluded suburb of Martínez, where security guards are on duty twenty-four hours a day in booths on almost every corner, a reminder that kidnapping and other forms of antisocial behavior are still part of the local reality. In the late afternoon, as we relaxed on the terrace overlooking the gardens, Lillian looked up and saw seven pink flamingos flying past in formation just above the tree line, moving ahead of a cold front that was billowing up from the south. It was a surreal, deco vision that had all the trappings of an omen

of some kind (if this were a movie, the sky would have filled with music), but it's probably a mistake to attempt to read some meaning into everything one sees in Argentina.

Our hostess, mindful of the particular nostalgia that is felt in the stomach rather than the heart, placed a platter of *empanadas* on the table, and I was as a child again in my grandmother's kitchen, trying to choose between the meat, the chicken, or the vegetable fillings. Rather than offend anyone, I had one of each. "Leave a little room for *Martín Fierro*!" said my friend, and I was overcome with memories of yet another treat from long ago. *Martín Fierro* was the quintessential Argentine gaucho who achieved immortality in the eponymous epic poem by José Hernández. It was also the name given to a humble, traditional dessert consisting of a slice of quince jelly and a slice of cheese. On special occasions it also included a slice of sweet potato jelly. This was such an occasion, and it occurred to me that I might want to start keeping track of my nostalgia in calories.

The following day we took a stroll around the neighborhood, walking off some of those calories and window shopping in the boutiques near the suburban railway line. Suddenly, on a crowded sidewalk, I heard a cello playing. A young man sat on the other side of the road, his cello between his knees, his eyes blissfully closed as his bow slid back and forth across the strings. I crossed over and stood beside him, drinking in the music. He opened his eyes and smiled at me. "Do you like Bach?"

"I do," I said. "I have this piece on a CD at home."

"Yo-Yo Ma?" he asked.

"Rostropovich."

"Ah, yes!" he nodded, and closed his eyes again. The music filled the street and I looked up, half expecting to see Lillian's flamingos flying over-

head again. Instead I saw her waving excitedly at me from the doorway of a used bookstore, with something in her hand. She had found a bilingual edition of the *Martín Fierro* poem, bound in cowhide, in perfect condition, at a very reasonable price.

Buenos Aires is a splendid metropolis with a population of some thirteen million people who call themselves *porteños*, meaning that they are residents of a port city. It was founded by Spaniards in 1536, but the indigent people of the region forced the invaders to abandon that original settlement. A few years passed, and the city was founded again, this time permanently, in 1580. In time it became the capital of the Spanish Viceroyalty of



the Río de la Plata, which encompassed an area that is now shared by five countries: Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, and part of Bolivia. Perhaps this helps to explain why Argentina has always considered itself to be high up in the pecking order among Latin American nations.

We spent the final weekend of the trip at an *estancia*, a ranch, in Entre Ríos, northeast of Buenos Aires. In Spanish, one would say that we spent the weekend in the *campo*. In Argentine English – the variety spoken by Anglo-Argentines – it is called "the camp". It gets damp in the camp in the rainy season, when mosquitoes attack you for no good reason. A major source of nostalgia for carnivorous Argentines is, of course, the beef. The camp is the

perfect place to satisfy one's hunger for a steak or a *parrillada* – a variety of cuts of beef, sausages, and other delicacies cooked over smoldering coals on grills of all shapes and sizes, from the store-bought kind made of cast iron to the makeshift ones that might be a piece of chicken wire or a king-sized bedspring. It's true that not everyone likes red meat, but since about forty percent of the Argentine population originally emigrated from Italy, the pasta is varied and delicious, and most *parrilladas* include chicken.

On our drive back to the city we were fortunate enough to encounter that fundamental icon of Argentine folklore: the gaucho. Actually, we saw seven gauchos, accompanied by five dogs, riding herd on about a hundred head of cattle. They were moving the herd from one side of the road to the other, and we and the other three or four cars in the vicinity pulled over and stopped to give them plenty of room to do so. As the cattle were crossing the road, one of the steers suddenly changed his mind. He broke away from the herd and bolted, running parallel to the road and to our left. Four of the gauchos and three of the dogs wheeled around and raced after him, galloping at full speed with the effortless skill of those who have spent a lifetime in the saddle. They surrounded the steer and turned him and then, with the enthusiastic help of the dogs, headed him back to join the herd. As they rode past the car we saw that some of the men straddled sheep skins rather than saddles, some had no stirrups, and all were as one with their horse.

Our trip was over. We returned to the 'beloved city' and were preparing to leave the country. As I packed my bag I began singing a tango lyric I remembered from long ago: "Adiós Pampa mía," the classic sentimental farewell to the pampas. In Argentina there is a tango for every occasion. ★

## Streamlining Windows

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www.frankdietz.com

NOW THAT THE RELEASE of Microsoft's new Vista operating system has been pushed out into 2007, you will have to live with your current Windows version (presumably XP) a little bit longer, which is probably a good thing, considering the hardware requirements of Vista\*). However, your operating system might show signs of age by now, and could be getting a bit creaky. A radical solution would be a formatting of the hard drive and a clean reinstall of Windows, but there is quite a bit you can do short of that.

### Back up

You do have a backup routine, don't you? If not, run to the nearest computer store, buy an external hard drive with a backup program (these are getting quite inexpensive), hook it up and have it do regular backups automatically. Also do backups before any major changes to the OS.

### Clean out the gunk

Go to Start > Programs > Accessories > System Tools > Disk Cleanup. This utility will search for and then delete old temporary files, files in your recycling bin, etc. If you haven't done this in a while, you might be amazed how much disk space these files were taking up.

### Speed up your startup

Does your computer take a long time to get started in the morning? In this case, go to Start > Run and type in msconfig. Click on the Startup tab and see which programs are loaded at startup. Unfortunately, many of them have cryptic names such as "ADUserMon". The solution is to go to <http://www.sysinfo.org/startuplist.php> and type in the name of the program. This website provides you with information about thousands of programs and their functions. I, for instance, discovered that ADUserMon



allowed programs to be run directly from an Iomega Zip disk. As I haven't used Zip disks in years, I could safely deactivate it in the startup list.

### Prune your programs

Go to Start > Settings > Control Panel > Add or Remove Programs. Take a look at the list of the applications and their sizes. Are there any programs you never use, demo versions, old games? You might even find suspicious programs that you never installed. A series of judicious uninstalls can be particularly useful if your hard disk is almost full.

### Run anti-virus and spyware detection programs

And of course remember to keep those programs up-to-date with the latest definition files.

These clean-up activities should help Windows perform better. Just remember three crucial guidelines:

- Back up your files beforehand
- Know what you are deleting (if in doubt, don't delete it)
- Do not simply delete program folders, but use the "Add or Remove Programs" control panel. ★

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\*See <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/windowsvista/evaluate/hardware/vistarpc.msp>.

## A virtual conversation about .pdf files

*Your humble editor was one of the recipients of a recent email written by Tony Beckwith, who wanted to share what he had recently learned about working with .pdf files. It sparked a mini-discussion, which we are pleased to share below with the rest of the membership.*

Go to the Edit function in the tool bar (or right-click on the page you want to copy, or highlight the text you want to copy with the I-beam icon), then choose Select All. Then go back to Edit and select Copy. Open a Word doc and paste it in by selecting Paste from the Edit option.

You can then use the word count function.

Tony

True as far as it goes, but not all pdf files are alike. One cannot count words in all pdf files -- except the old way, a good eye and a pen.

There are "text-based" pdf files, where the original was scanned as text (OCR) into the pdf file and this allows selection and copying of words and sections; and there are "image-based" pdf files that are like lumps of rock -- you can drag the whole image around but you cannot edit it, "select" in it, etc. It is equivalent to a jpeg or other image file, like those e-mail cartoons we relish to lighten up our day. (I received one just a few minutes ago from a friend -- an image produced by a scanner and attached as a file to an e-mail; it is a quick way also to send a copy of a handwritten letter or a family photo.)

Even the commercial word-counters such as PracticeCount, which is excellent for counting inside headers, footers, tables, boxes, or templates not covered by the Word counting tool, cannot do anything about image-based pdf files.

I thought this might give a fuller picture of the pdf world. I got all of

this info from a translation agency guru, so you see agencies have a role to play after all!

Leon (McMorrow)

I would like to emphasize that you are forced to “select all.” You cannot select a paragraph, for example. And you cannot edit the original .pdf unless you have the expensive Adobe Acrobat software (costs hundreds of dollars). And the restriction on edits may be severe. Version 5.0, which I have, only lets you edit one line at a time, very tediously at that. And if it is an odd font, you may not be able to edit it at all. The new version, 7.0, I believe, may be more flexible.

BTW, do you know about Font-Creator? It’s a free, downloadable program that lets you “print” any document as a .pdf. It offers most of the functionality of Acrobat. I just downloaded and installed it this morning on my new Dell system, rather than hassle with converting my years-old Acrobat program from 3.5” disks (I rashly ordered the new system without a 3.5” drive).

The URL is <http://www.pdfforge.org/products/pdfcreator>.

Mike (Conner)

our gurus should -- I had to upgrade to the full professional Acrobat version (\$500+) because clients wanted word-by-word “comments” in pdf; this is the editing limit in Acrobat! You have to go up one step higher in Adobe to PhotoShop if you want true word-by-word “editing” such as deletion!

To get away from .pdf completely, I use a UK program called Gemini; it converts the “text-based” .pdf files to Word (.rtf) but again leaves “image-based” files intact.

Leon

I don’t want to be a counter-promoter of Adobe but maybe one of



## Literary notes

LITSIG MEETS SIX OR SEVEN TIMES a year, usually on Saturdays from 2 to 4 pm. Upcoming meetings are scheduled for

- September 16, 2006
- October 14, 2006
- November 18, 2006
- January 20, 2007
- February 17, 2007
- April 21, 2007
- May 19, 2007

## Member news

Zoya Marincheva’s translations of three short pieces by Nikolay Rainov,

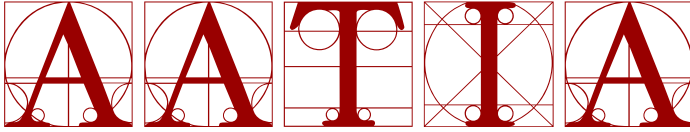
“White Tents,” “The Wind,” and “Woman of Marble,” from his 1918 modernist book *Tales of the Sun*, were published in the summer issue of *Washington Square Review*, a publication of the Creative Writing Program of New York University. This was their inaugural international edition. Nikolay Rainov, a Bulgarian artist, writer, and academician, lived in the first half of the twentieth century.

Ingrid Lansford has published her translation “The Last Hope,” an excerpt from *Die Letzte Hoffnung* by Nadine Hostettler, in *DIMENSION2*, Vol.8, No. 1, Winter 2005.

Liliana Valenzuela will participate

in two panels at the first-ever Dallas International Book Fair, July 14-16. For more information, please visit [www.dallasinternationalbookfair.com](http://www.dallasinternationalbookfair.com).

On Sunday, July 23, at 3 pm, as a part of BookPeople’s Local Author Symposium, Marian Schwartz will be reading from her translation from the Russian of *White on Black*, by Ruben Gallego, published by Harcourt in January 2006. ★



**Austin Area Translators & Interpreters Association**  
PO Box 13331 ★ Austin, TX 78711-3331 ★ 512-707-3900  
[www.aatia.org](http://www.aatia.org)

AATIA HOLDS MEETINGS at the Austin History Center, 9th & Guadalupe, unless otherwise indicated. Visitors are welcome.

#### EVENTS IN AUSTIN

- Jul 8 10:15 a.m. Spanish SIG meeting  
1-4 p.m. AATIA member meeting  
Aug 12 10-12 noon. ISIG meeting  
1-4 p.m. AATIA board meeting  
Sep 9 10:15 a.m. Spanish SIG meeting  
1-4 p.m. AATIA member meeting

#### BEYOND AUSTIN

- Oct 18-21 **Seattle**. 29th Annual Conference of the American Literary Translators Association  
Nov 2-5 **New Orleans**. 47th Annual Conference of the American Translators Association [www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org)

## 47th Annual ATA Conference



New Orleans,  
November 2-5, 2006

Info: [atanet.org](http://atanet.org)



Does flippin' the bird spread avian flu?