

Streamlining membership

by J. Henry Phillips
Director of Membership

HERE IN THE SILICON HILLS, Austin Free-Net puts people in touch with skilled computer programmers willing to work for little or nothing. Dale Thompson put us in touch with programmer Iain Gray, and AATIA members can see the results by clicking the word join on our web site.

Database Coordinator László Eösz provided the basic specifications, and the result is a tidy, compact form where in less than two dozen fields your basic data may be entered and member dues calculated automatically. Members may enter their newsletter options, security preferences, categories, options, and special-interest groups without ever typing a word. A drop-down menu and option buttons minimize the work involved. The interface makes it easy to add payments for merchandise or special events or to make an angel donation. If you experience any difficulty, an email link is provided to send questions to the Membership Director.

An optional field for comments and questions is also provided to make it easier to add explanatory notes or volunteer in any capacity.

If you are paying your dues by check, a box is provided for recording the check number. The other option is to use PayPal, which accepts major credit cards.

Due to its compact size, the completed form may be checked for accuracy without the need for scrolling up-and-down. Once satisfied with your choices, you may click the Send Application Information button to take you to the next screen. If you chose to pay by check, that screen will total the amount for you and display the address to which your check made out to AATIA should be sent. If you selected the PayPal option, that screen will take you to the PayPal icon which links to the secure PayPal web site.

With no joining required, you may enter your total amount and relevant information directly in the PayPal interface—updated by Webmaster Mike Conner to offer you the option of adding an explanatory note.

Only database administrators have access to the information, which is directly used to create your AATIA member account and send you a password and username. Typewritten characters eliminate many legibility issues and incorrectly-copied email addresses. Because the database managers can retrieve the information independently with no mailing or transfer of paper forms, member records are created with fewer delays, errors, and omissions.

When your record has been created you should receive a password and username. Once you have those, you may click on the Members Only link at the top or bottom of our web site. There, you may enter your password and username to gain access to your record. If you experience any difficulty or have forgotten your password, a link is provided to send mail to the Membership Director and Database Coordinator

When you have successfully logged on to the system it is a good idea to change your password to something you can remember. You may also change your contact information any time of the night or day and add new information to your profile whenever the need arises.

If you experience any problems or feel uncomfortable dealing with database interfaces, the Database Coordinator and Membership Director are usually very prompt in lending assistance. The interface and database are amazingly easy to work with, considering their complexity. Much of this is due to the programming skill of Andrew Coulson, who was instrumental in getting the entire user-correctable database online and working. Adding data is therefore relatively quick and simple. Your contact information should be kept up-to-date in order for customers to be able to find and hire you and to

receive ballots and other AATIA mailings. This is important for a fully functioning organization, so please do not hesitate to ask for help if you need it.

We will continue to offer the print-and-send paper forms, and preparations are underway to simplify these as well. AATIA's web site, linguist locator, and database system is a benchmark for excellence which is attracting inquiries from translator association webmasters and board members across the United States. I expect that before long translator association web sites will emerge from near-invisible obscurity to incandescent visibility as more and more people use Internet search engines to actively seek out professional services. ★

Board highlights: October 9 meeting

AATIA PRESIDENT ESTHER DIAZ announced the results of the recent election and extended congratulations to the newly elected members of the Board of Directors.

In other matters:

- AATIA Director of Finance Howard Simms reported that the Association has a total of \$13,480 in all accounts. All expenses associated with the recent AATIA/HITA regional conference have been paid.
- The Board approved a policy authorizing the Director of Professional Development to offer meeting speakers who are not members of AATIA a free one-time quarter-page advertisement in *The AATIA Letter* in lieu of monetary compensation for their time.
- The Board decided on several revisions to the membership application/renewal form designed to facilitate the upcoming membership renewal campaign.
- Coffee-drinkers, take heart: The Board approved the purchase of a