

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE AATF

The 83rd annual AATF Convention, July 4-7, 2010 at the Sheraton Society Hill in Philadelphia, had as its theme, "La Diversité francophone: passé, présent, futur." It actually began a day early with a pre-convention Trolley Tour in French of historic Philadelphia and an excursion to the duPont de Nemours Mansion.

The AATF Executive Council spent two days deliberating and doing the Association's business before the convention began. They met on July 2 and 3.

The convention opened officially on Sunday, July 4. AATF President Ann Sunderland welcomed attendees, and then she introduced the keynote speakers, Brock Brady, Peace Corps and President of TESOL, David Brennick, President of Canadian Parents for French, and J. David Edwards, Executive Director of JNCL/NCLIS, all of whom participated in a round table discussion entitled "New Partners for New Challenges." After the opening session, nearly 200 *congressistes* and guests attended the Welcome Luncheon where Michel Robitaille, *président-directeur-général, Centre de la francophonie des Amériques*, gave a brief talk. Sessions and workshops began in earnest following the luncheon and continued throughout the next two and a half days. A special round table entitled, "Parcourir la francophonie des Amériques: des outils pédagogiques destinés aux professeurs de français," organized by the *Centre de la francophonie des Amériques* and featuring Michel Robitaille, Myriam El Yamani, *présidente de la Maison internationale du conte de Montréal*, and Janine Tougas, *auteure du Manitoba*. To close the first day, participants were able to get an initial look at the Exhibit Hall (find out more about our exhibitors on the AATF Exhibitor Web page at [www.frenchteachers.org]) during a wine and cheese reception cosponsored by the AATF and, as they have for many years, by the Cultural Service of the French Embassy in Washington.

In the evening, attendees took advantage of the Fourth of July holiday to experience the fireworks and other celebrations along the river or from the upper floors of the hotel.

Day 2 was a full day of sessions and workshops, many highlighting the theme of the convention. During the lunch break, many members participated in the sixth annual *Dictée* organized by Marie-Simone Pavlovich, herself a finalist in *la Grande Dictée* run by Bernard Pivot. Winners were announced at the beginning of the AATF Delegate Assembly (see page 34).

More than 100 attendees awaited with anticipation the arrival of His Excellency Pierre Vimont, French Ambassador to the U.S., who traveled to Philadelphia especially to speak to AATF members.

Guest speakers included Manfred Overmann, *Université des Sciences de l'Éducation de Ludwigsburg (Allemagne)* and Felino Martínez, *Alliance française de Cuba*. In addition, our three keynote speakers also gave individual presentations. Other special sessions and meetings included numerous exhibitor and commission sessions as well as meetings of the National French Contest Administrators and *Société honoraire de français* sponsors (see the complete program on the AATF Web site).

Day 3 of the convention was equally busy. In addition to many sessions, there was a morning coffee break in the exhibit hall where lucky attendees won valuable prizes at the exhibitor raffle. The raffle was expertly organized by AATF staff member Amy Hanson with help from the Local Committee. Be sure to check out the Exhibitor Web page on the AATF Web site at [www.frenchteachers.org].

In the afternoon, the AATF Assembly of Delegates met for the annual business meeting to ratify the decisions of the Executive Council. The final portion of the meeting was devoted to breakout sessions on recruitment and retention.

More than 80 members participated in the Awards Banquet (see individual winner profiles in this issue). Following dinner, we welcomed



L'Ambassadeur et les Présidentes de l'AATF: (L. to R.) Catherine Pétillon, French Embassy, Past-President Gladys Lipton and Margot Steinhart, Ambassador Vimont, Past-President Marie-Christine Koop, and President Ann Sunderland.



(L. to R.) Region VI Representative Gregg Slewert, AATF member Virginia Donovan, Region V Representative Randa Duvick



In the Exhibit Hall

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three new honorary members (see page 35): Malika Mokkedem, Christopher Pinet, and J. David Edwards; honored Outstanding National French Contest Administrators (page 9); and recognized our outgoing Executive Council members, Past-President Marie-Christine Koop, former Region I Representative Madeline Turan who finished her term on December 31, 2009, Region III Representative Alice Cataldi, Region V Representative Randa Duvick, and Region VII Representative Jacqueline Thomas who will all finish their terms on December 31. Among the numerous award recipients were Polly Adkins, Joyce Strojny, and Janine Spencer who received the 2010 AATF Dorothy S. Ludwig Excellence in Teaching Awards (see page 15). This award is sponsored by former AATF Region I Representative and Honorary Member Robert Ludwig who provides a cash award for the recipients which they receive in addition to a year's complimentary membership in the AATF and a one-year subscription to *Le Français dans le Monde*. This year, we awarded for the fourth time, the AATF CERAN Lingua Outstanding Chapter Officer Award which was won by Mary Vogl, Past-President of the Colorado-Wyoming Chapter (see page 16). She will enjoy a one-week stay in one of the CERAN Lingua programs. Intercultural Student Experiences again sponsored the ISE Language Matters Award which was given to Megan Iranpour (see page 43). The award includes a cash prize, and ISE representative Anca Coleman was on hand to make the presentation. We also were delighted to recognize Sister Mary Helen Kashuba, Vice-President and Local Committee Chair, as well as Local Committee members, Barbara Barnett, Mary Bollinger, Alice Cataldi, Kathy Clark, Elaine Danford, Rita Davis, Dianne Goddard, Monique Laird, Susan Ledieu, Bonnie Macallister, Rochelle Ostroff-Weinberg, Loreta Perthes, Joanne Silver, Emily Wagner, and Susan Zeager, whose help was invaluable in making the convention a success.

When the awards and photos were over, the attendees were treated to a concert of French music by singer Claudia Beechman.

Those who did not have early departures were able to take advantage of the final half-day of sessions and workshops. Following the convention, many attendees stayed to participate in the post-convention excursions to the Barnes Museum and to Longwood Gardens on July 7 and to New York City on July 8.

The weather was magnificent, and attendees explored Philadelphia, visiting museums, sampling restaurants, and admiring historical sites. In short, the 362 participants were able to enjoy 113 sessions and 3 workshops, 35 exhibit booths, numerous guest speakers, and several unique excursions. The AATF would like to thank the staff members who helped make the convention such a success, Administrative Assistant Darla Phoenix and Amy Hanson, who helped us throughout the process of planning and running the convention. AATF staff members were aided in their work by all the members of the Executive Council, the personnel of the Sheraton Society Hill Hotel, and our now-familiar AV technician Michael Hankins or Technology Express. Finally, the Local Committee worked tirelessly to ensure a memorable convention. The AATF would like to thank the speakers, exhibitors, and sponsors without whom the convention could not have happened.

