

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 85<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

The 85<sup>th</sup> annual AATF Convention was held July 5-8, 2012 at the Intercontinental Hotel on Michigan Avenue in Chicago and had as its theme, "Le Français au bord des Grands Lacs."

The AATF Executive

note speaker, musician and historian Denis



AATF Executive Council

The Council spent two days deliberating and doing the Association's business before the convention began. They met on July 3-4. In addition, the second Future Leaders Fellowship Program was held on those same days under the able direction of Randa Duvick. On July 4, the Executive Council and Leadership Fellows were treated to a small reception in an upper floor lounge of the hotel with a view of the fireworks on Navy Pier, compliments of the hotel.

The convention opened officially on Wednesday, July 5, in the historic Grand Ballroom illuminated by its huge Baccarat chandelier. AATF President Ann Sunderland welcomed attendees, and

the AATF Executive Council, whose rousing presentation, given in the authentic French of the Midwest, included some foot-tapping songs. After the opening *séance plénière*, more than 100 enthusiastic *congressistes* and guests attended the Welcome Luncheon. Sessions and workshops began in earnest following the luncheon and continued through

the next two and a half days. To close the opening day, participants were able to have a first 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 co-sponsored by the AATF and the Cultural Service of the French Embassy. Following the exhibit opening and despite the heat, many participants headed to the *Alliance française de Chicago*

for another reception, sponsored jointly by the *Alliance* and the *Consulat général de France à Chicago*. Day 2 was a full day of sessions, often

highlighting the theme of the convention. During the lunch break, many members participated in the eighth annual *Dictée* organized by AATF Honorary Member 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 33). That evening, over 85 teachers and their guests participated in the restaurant tour, dining in three of Chicago's finest French restaurants.

Guest speakers at the convention included Felino Martínez, *Alliance française de Cuba* and AATF Honorary Member, and Jim Baker, former Historic Site Administrator for the Felix Vallé House State Historic Site in Ste. Genevieve (MO). Other special sessions and meetings included numerous exhibitor and commission sessions as well as meetings of the National French Contest Administrators and So-



Raffle winners at the Awards Banquet

ciété *honoraire de français* sponsors (see the complete program on the AATF Web site).

Day 3 of the convention was equally busy. On both days, immediately after the sessions were over, 35 *congressistes* braved the high temperatures and humidity to enjoy a walking tour of downtown Chicago's French architectural heritage, led by Gigi Olmstead. In addition, there were two coffee breaks in the exhibit hall, sponsored by Tralco-Lingo Fun, where lucky attendees won valuable prizes at the exhibitor raffle. The raffle was expertly organized by AATF staff member Jessica Nelson.

Each evening, under the leadership of various members of the Chicago/Northern Illinois AATF Chapter, small groups of participants were able to experience *Chicago Chez Moi*, going to local clubs or sites according to their individual interest. These opportunities were coordinated by Marnie Goodfriend.



Keynote speaker Dennis Stroughmatt

then she introduced the key-

# CONVENTION IN CHICAGO

In the afternoon, the AATF Assembly of Delegates met to ratify the decisions of the Executive Council and to discuss ideas for identifying and recruiting new members. Over 70 people participated in the Awards



Members of the Local Committee

Banquet (see individual winner profiles in this issue). Following dinner, we welcomed two new honorary members (see page 6), keynote speaker Dennis Stroughmatt and Jack McCord, Director of the *Alliance française de Chicago*, honored Outstanding National French Contest Administrators, and recognized our outgoing Executive Council member, Region II Representative Abbe Guillet, who will finish her term on December 31, 2012.

Among the numerous award recipients were Jennifer Hallenbeck and Jane Evans who received the 2012 AATF Dorothy S. Ludwig Excellence in Teaching Awards (see page 22). This year, we awarded for the sixth time, the AATF CERAN Lingua Outstanding Chapter Officer Award which was received by Justin Frieman, President of the Wisconsin Chapter (see page 16).

He 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 Kadidia Doumbia (see page 16). Outstanding National French Administrators

Contest Administrators Kristen Necaise and Sherri Forbes Pea were also recognized. Following the awards, we enjoyed a raffle of the Eiffel Towers adorning each table and a concert of traditional and original music by our own Tennessee Bob Peckham.

Those who did not have early departures were able to take advantage of the final half-day of sessions and workshops. Following the convention, over 30 attendees

stayed to participate in the post-convention excursions to Cantigny or to the Chicago Art Institute.

We would like to thank the Local Committee, under the able leadership of Chicago/Northern Illinois Chapter President Robin Jacob, who organized and led the excursions and activities and who staffed the hospitality desk. Two of last year's Leadership Fellows

undertook leadership projects related to the convention, Ricky Baron and Marnie Goodfriend. They were joined by Jane Castle, Rosalee Gentile, and Eileen Walvoord as well as numerous other chapter members who helped at registration and hospitality. A huge thank you to the Committee as well as to our other helpers, Colin Narug, Stephen Kiley, and David Brinkman.

In short, the 420 participants were able to enjoy 131 sessions and six workshops,



Intercontinental Hotel

32 exhibit booths, two raffles, 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 Jessica Nelson who helped us throughout the process of planning and running the convention as well as former staff member Amy Hanson who attended the convention and lent a helping hand. AATF staff members were aided in their work by all the members of the Executive Council, the personnel of the Intercontinental Hotel, and the representative of our AV supplier, Technology Express, technician Calvin Smith. We have worked with Technology Express for all our U.S. conventions since 2004. The set up of the exhibit hall was handled by Valley Expo, a company with which we also worked for our 2006 convention in Milwaukee. The AATF would like to thank the speakers, exhibitors, and sponsors without whom the convention could not have happened.



Baccarat chandelier in the Grand Ballroom