



On Wednesday evening preceding the meeting approximately 30 Linguistic Institute faculty and students attending a showing of a film on "Chief Illiniwek", followed by a vigorous debate. This continued at the business meeting on Friday, resulting in the unanimous adoption of the following resolution:

We, the members of the Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas, urge the administration and trustees of the University of Illinois to replace their "Chief Illiniwek" symbol with one that does not promote inaccurate, anachronistic, and damaging stereotypes of Native American people, or indeed members of any minority group.

Vice-President/President-Elect Sally Thomason, who chaired the meeting, added the following comments in her formal letter to the University of Illinois administration and trustees:

The "Chief Illiniwek" issue has already had a negative impact on this summer's Linguistic Institute, which is co-sponsored by the Linguistic Society of America and the University of Illinois. After learning about this issue, one student left the Institute immediately, and several others said that they would not have come to this university if they had known in advance about the university's "chief" symbol. This is just one indication that this issue is damaging the University of Illinois's reputation as a leading educational institution.

SSILA will not return to the University of Illinois campus as long as this symbol exists, and we will urge our professional organizations, beginning with the Linguistic Society of America and the American Anthropological Association, to join us in this resolve.

Given that the University of Illinois is an official state institution, we will also encourage our professional organizations not to schedule future conferences in the state of Illinois.

SSILA's position on The Chief was the topic of a press conference on Tuesday July 13, was discussed in a radio interview the following day, and received considerable newspaper coverage. In addition to Sally Thomason, the spokespersons for SSILA included Emmon Bach (Past President of the LSA), Katie Fraser (from the Nuuchanulh First Nation), Marianne Mithun, and Pat Shaw.

\* News report on the SSILA resolution  
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[The following story on SSILA's "anti-Chief" resolution, and the reasons for it, appeared on the front page of the Champaign-Urbana NEWS-GAZETTE on Monday, July 12. It was forwarded to us by Sally Thomason and Marianne Mithun, and Marianne comments that the reporter, Julie Wurth, "did a surprisingly good job."]

LINGUISTS THREATEN TO BOYCOTT UI

ACADEMIC GROUP SAYS NO RETURNING UNTIL CHIEF LEAVES

URBANA -- An international linguistic group says it wouldn't be meeting at the University of Illinois this summer had it known about Chief Illiniwek.

And it's calling for linguists to boycott the UI until the Chief retires.

The Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the Americas held a weekend conference at the UI as part of a six-week summer institute sponsored by the Linguistic Society of America.

The Chief issue dominated the conference, and the group unanimously passed a resolution Saturday urging the UI to retire the controversial mascot.

President-elect Sally Thomason also plans to ask the Linguistic Society not to sponsor another institute at the UI or even meet in Illinois until the Chief is gone.

"There will never be a linguistics institute on this campus again while the Chief is still the symbol [\*Sally comments: I didn't actually say this -- I don't dictate to the LSA!]. We think it's a really serious issue," said Thomason, a linguistics professor at the University of Michigan and longtime editor of the Linguistic Society's journal.

Members have scheduled a protest rally and press conference at 10 a.m. Tuesday at the Foreign Languages Building on campus.

It's the first time an academic society has threatened a boycott because of the Chief, some UI professors said.

"We're very concerned that it reflects badly on the university," said Adele Goldberg, an associate professor of linguistics at the UI and director of the summer linguistic institute, which attracts 475 students and faculty from around the world.

"Students have said they wouldn't have come if they knew about this. They didn't understand how people could attend this university. It's really a huge embarrassment that this has become such a focus," said Goldberg, who opposes the Chief.

Thomason said the issue didn't come up when Illinois was proposed as host site for the institute, which is held every other summer.

Members were shocked when they learned of the controversy, and even more aghast Thursday evening after watching "In Whose Honor?," a documentary about the Chief.

"Everyone was stunned. One student left the institute this morning. She said she didn't want to stay on this campus," Thomason said. "Had the Linguistic Society known, the institute probably would not have been here."

The indigenous languages group was unaware of the Chief controversy when it scheduled its weekend conference. Then it received complaints from American Indian groups in Minnesota and Wisconsin, said Marianne Mithun, a linguistics professor at the University of California - Santa

Barbara.

The group considered canceling the meeting, but after conferring with UI professors decided to come and make a public statement about the Chief.

"It certainly won't meet here again until things are changed," Mithun said.

The linguists hope other academic societies will follow suit.

They plan to send the anti-Chief resolution to UI trustees and administrators, though they're not confident it will make any impact.

UI Professor Stephen Kaufman, a leading Chief opponent, applauded the move. "If you can't reach people in their soul, you have to reach them in their pocketbooks."

Campus spokesman Bill Murphy said it's difficult to draw any conclusions from one group's stance. Some people strongly object to the Chief, but others strongly support it, he said.

"At this point it is university policy that Chief Illiniwek remains the honored symbol of our athletic teams," he said.

"As linguists, this group knows that Chief Illiniwek is a symbol of the people who gave their name first of all to the Illinois River, then to the state of Illinois, and now to the state's flagship university. Chief Illiniwek is an emblem of those people," Murphy added.

The linguists scoff at that. The portrayal of Chief Illiniwek in Plains Indian regalia is akin to dressing up like a Scotsman in a kilt and bagpipes to represent Germans and Italians, Thomason said.

Because linguists work with many languages, they have respect for the people who speak them, she said.

"If I was a linguistics faculty member at the University of Illinois -- and the department here is very good -- I'd be trying very, very hard to leave.

"If the tribes I work with in Montana found out I was teaching at a campus with this racist symbol, they probably wouldn't want to talk to me any more," she said.

Emmon Bach, linguistics professor at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, is teaching a course at the institute on a native language from Vancouver Island, Canada. He invited linguist Katie Fraser a member of the Nuuchanulh tribe on Vancouver Island, to help teach it.

"I had no idea about all this stuff. Now I feel terribly embarrassed," he said.

Fraser said she was distressed by the Chief.

"If I had known, I never would have come. I find it very disturbing," she said. To me it's almost like going to a gravesite and stomping on somebody's burial ground.

"It is really sad that Illinois would be going into the millennium with this," she said.

\* A conversation with the Provost  
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[In addition to SSILA officers and Linguistic Institute faculty members, a number of students joined in the anti-Chief activities this past week. One of these was Greg Brown, a graduate student at UC Santa Barbara. He sent us the following transcript of a conversation he was able to have with the Provost of the University of Illinois, Richard Herman.]

Greg: Is it the goal of this university to pursue knowledge, truth, and accuracy of information in all areas?

Provost: Yes it is.

Greg: Do you believe that the Chief Illiniwek symbol is an accurate representation of the Native American peoples of this country?

Provost: Well....in SOME aspects, yes.

Greg (and others): Oh, really?...Like in what aspects for example?

Provost: Well, he wears some actual items and uh...

Others: Nothing he wears represents the people of this area and he has a mish mash of things from all over the place, most of which are not authentic at all from any band or tribe.

Provost: Oh. Well, I am not an expert about these things...you are the experts. I recognize that, which is why I am waiting to hear what you have to say. What can we do to try to resolve this conflict since people feel strongly on both sides?

Greg: Many people here are experts. The chief's dress and actions are NOT an accurate representation of any Native American group.

Provost: Ok, what can we do to more accurately represent Native Americans?

Greg: Well, for starters, no real chief would EVER dress up and dance around on the field at a sports event...this would NEVER happen.

Provost: Ok.

Greg: Talk to Native American people to find out who they are. Talk to Native American people to find out how they would like to be honored and perceived.

Provost: Ok.

Greg: Thank you.

--Gregory Brown  
(glb2@umail.ucsb.edu)

\* Film about the Chief

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From Sally Thomason (thomason@umich.edu):

People who are interested in learning about the offensive nature of the University of Illinois mascot should rent or purchase the documentary film that Jay Rosenstein made about this issue, focusing on what was for a time a one-woman campaign against Chief Illiniwek. I hope there will be ordering information available at the January LSA meeting in Chicago. Meanwhile, here's the address: New Day Films, 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-ho-kus [sic!], NJ 07423 (tel: 888-367-0154; fax: 201/652-1973; e-mail: tmcndy@aol.com; web: www.newday.com). The film can be purchased

(for educational purposes, presumably by your university's media office) for \$195; it can be rented for \$75. Shipping costs are \$11 per tape. The film's title is "In Whose Honor?" It has won several awards, e.g. "Gold Apple -- National Education Media Network".

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91.1 CORRESPONDENCE

"Waxahacie"?

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From Linda Good (lgood@gfbank.com) 14 July 1999):

I've been referred to you for an answer to my question about the Native American origin and/or meaning of the word "Waxahachie". I have read that it means either (1) 'cow (or buffalo) manure' or (2) 'cow/buffalo creek'. I have also read that it may possibly be from the language of the Tonkawa tribe, but that this has not been substantiated.

Can you help resolve this question, or refer me to someone who can?  
Thank you for your assistance.

Slave grammar out of print

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From Mouton (Mouton@degruyter.de) 30 June 1999:

We would like to inform you that unfortunately the book "A Grammar of Slave" by Keren Rice, offered to SSILA members for US \$40, is out of print. We have received two orders for this book recently, and only the first could be filled, with the very last copy.

A possible reprint of this title is still under consideration. As soon as a decision has been made, we will let you know immediately.

--Annette Hemmati  
MOUTON DE GRUYTER  
(mouton@degruyter.de)

Indigenous language writers

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From Gordon J Bronitsky (g.bronitsky@worldnet.att.net) 24 Jun 1999:

I am developing a proposal for a festival to honor contemporary writers

in indigenous languages and would welcome any suggestions or leads about such writers. If funded, the proposal would honor high school student-age writers, as well as older writers. I would be happy to send a concept paper to anyone interested.

--Gordon Bronitsky  
Bronitsky and Associates  
Denver, Colorado  
(g.bronitsky@worldnet.att.net)

"Smoke signal"?  
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From Kym Dobson (kid@calynet.com) 15 July 1999:

I am trying to find a translation for the term "smoke signal" in some Native American language. I would like to use it for a new company that I am starting. If you can help, I thank you in advance...

--Kym Dobson  
(kid@calynet.com; tel: 408/730-8800 x 217)

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91.2 UPCOMING MEETINGS

\* Endangered Languages & Education (Maynooth, Ireland, Sept 17-19)  
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From Nicholas Ostler (nostler@chibcha.demon.co.uk) 29 Jun 1999:

The next Foundation for Endangered Languages Conference will be held on September 17 to 19, at St Patrick's College in Maynooth, 15 miles/24 km from Dublin -- a great center of learning on the Irish language (founded in 1795), and close to many famous sites in its past and present. The conference welcomes all who are concerned about the role of schools in the future of smaller languages. It will provide a forum for researchers and activists working for the maintenance of indigenous languages that face an uncertain future.

It will be a particular feature of the conference to bring the concerns of "ethno-education", where education mediates between cultures that have been separate, into contrast with those of "bi-lingual education", where there has been traditional co-existence, but the smaller language may be losing out.

FEL conferences, besides being opportunities to discuss the issues from a global viewpoint, are working meetings of the Foundation, defining our overall policy for future years. Participants at the conference therefore need to be members of the Foundation. There are full facilities to join on arrival, as there are to register, but all are strongly urged to join as soon as possible, and so take full part in the Foundation's activities in the lead-up to the conference.

Organizers: Nicholas Ostler and Christopher Moseley (Foundation for Endangered Languages, England); Kim McCone (National University of Ireland, Maynooth).

Program:

Friday 17 September

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Visits to local Gaelscoileanna (Irish language schools)

Session 1. Endangered Languages and Education

Conference Opening & Welcome - Cead Mile Failte

Keynote Address: David Bradley, "Language Maintenance for endangered languages of central Yunnan, China"

Session 2. Finding a policy

Alesia Maltz & Dean Fox, "To Set Tongues Wagging Again: Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara (N. Dakota, USA)"

Karen M Johnson-Weiner, "Educating in English to Maintain German - Amish"

R. McKenna Brown, "Mayan Language Revitalization in Guatemala"

Session 3. Looking at the learners

Rachel Hoare, "The Breton language in education in Brittany: the passive and active expression of attitudes"

Winifred Crombie & Tamati Reedy, "Language Proficiency Testing of Children in Maori Language Education"

Saturday 18 September

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Session 4. Working with non-written languages

Blair A. Rudes, "You Can't Say That in Tuscarora: Obstacles to Literacy in an Oral Language"

A. McEnery, M. Lie, & P. Baker, "A Corpus of Spoken UK Sylheti"

Session 5. Ways and means

Diane Johnson, "The whaka piki reo programme: in-service provision for teachers of Maori and through Maori"

Ani Rolleston & Bojan Petek, "Challenges and opportunities for Slovenian language in the globalized educational arena"

Session 6. Role of standard dialects

Agurtzane Elordui, "Disruption of language transmission among Basque dialects"

Vladimir Tourovski, "On the use of computers for preserving endangered languages"

Session 7. Open Forum (shorter, more informal, presentations by attendees of other work in education).

Visit to Rath Cairn Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking community): This Irish-speaking enclave is an hour's drive from the conference site in Maynooth. After a short walk in the country, we shall have the opportunity to see a video (in Irish with English subtitles) recounting the political struggle to found this Gaeltacht in 1935-7, to have dinner in the Rath Cairn Community Centre, and to spend the rest of the evening enjoying sean-nos (old-style) music and dancing in the attached teach tabhairne (pub). Locals will be on hand to share experiences in this community where education in the traditional language now makes up a significant part of the local economy.

Sunday 19 September





\* Workshops -- 90 minute time blocks to talk about some indigenous language related project with activities to involve the audience in learning about or how to do the project

\* Roundtables -- 45 or 90 minute blocks for facilitators or panels to lead discussion with the audience on a relevant topic

\* Poster Sessions -- 90 minute time blocks in which presenters can display visuals and/or materials about their project and conference participants can circulate and ask questions individually.

For further information contact: Barbara Burnaby, Modern Language Centre, OISE/UT, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6, CANADA (fax: 416/926-0469; e-mail: silc@oise.utoronto.ca).

A conference website will be up in October.

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91.3 WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Koryak site  
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From Alexander King (aking@virginia.edu) 29 Jun 1999:

I would like to call the attention of SSILA members to to my page on Koryak Language and Culture. It includes a general description of Koryak and pages of other linguists and anthropologists working in the area and a detailed bibliography of descriptive works of Chukotko-Kamchatkan languages. They are not American languages, but are geographically close (just across the Bering Sea) and typologically similar in many respects (ergativity, personal hierarchy, etc.) to many American languages. Also, the Jessup Expedition started a tradition of linguistic and ethnographic comparison with American cultures.

URLs: <http://www.people.virginia.edu/~adk8c> (home page)  
<http://www.people.virginia.edu/~adk8c/language.html> (language)

I am a graduate student at the University of Virginia. I am writing my dissertation on the politics of native culture in northern Kamchatka. My current interests include oral narrative and verb morphology, and I try to keep in contact with linguists working in Kamchatka.

--Alex King

Linguistic Exploration  
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From Steven Bird (sb@unagi.cis.upenn.edu) 14 July 1999:

You are invited to visit my "Linguistic Exploration" page:

<http://www ldc.upenn.edu/sb/exploration.html>

This page describes online corpora and tools for empirical linguistic research. It has been compiled in connection with my study of formal models for representing multimodal linguistic field data, and on

platform-independent open-source tools for manipulating such data.  
The page includes pointers to about 20 existing efforts in this area.  
Projects involving Native American languages include:

- Center for the Documentation of Endangered Languages (Douglas Parks, Wally Hooper)
- Maliseet-Passamaquoddy Dictionary (Robert Leavitt)
- Analytic Dictionary of Ameyaltepec Nahuatl (Jonathan Amith)
- Numic Comparative Lexicon (John McLaughlin)
- Piraha (Dan Everett)
- Project for the Documentation of the Languages of Mesoamerica (Terrence Kaufman, John Justeson)

I also have links to the Comparative Bantu Online Dictionary (Larry Hyman, John B Lowe); Gamilaraay Dictionary and Knowledge Base (Peter Austin); Jiwarli - A Language of Western Australia (Peter Austin); Maasai Lexicographic and Text Data Base Project (Doris Payne); Mambila Dialects (Bruce Connell); Mambila Dialects (Bruce Connell); Warlpiri Dictionary; Ingush Grammar, Dictionary, and Texts (Johanna Nichols); and the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Please let me know if I've missed anything.

--Steven Bird  
Linguistic Data Consortium, University of Pennsylvania  
(Steven.Bird@ldc.upenn.edu)

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91.4 E-MAIL ADDRESS UPDATES

Arnold, Jennifer .....jarnold@linc.cis.upenn.edu  
Brown, Greg .....glb2@umail.ucsb.edu  
Buszard-Welcher, Laura .....lbwelch@well.com  
Lang, Julian .....jwl10@humboldt.edu  
Sanchez, Otilia.....tseskosi@hotmail.com  
Tarpent, Marie-Lucie .....mltarpent@hotmail.com (July 1 to Aug. 15)  
Valenzuela, Pilar.....valenzuela@eva.mpg.de  
von Wichert, Paul.....von\_wichert@mbnet.mb.ca  
Wash, Suzanne .....wash@umail.ucsb.edu

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