

\*\*\* SSILA BULLETIN \*\*\*

An Information Service for SSILA Members

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-->> --Correspondence should be directed to the Editor-- <<--

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264.0 SSILA Business  
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- \* Three colleagues, two languages, and an inspiring teacher  
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It is with regret that we announce the recent passing of three SSILA colleagues. Emory Sekaquaptewa, the first recipient of SSILA's Ken Hale Prize, died December 13, 2007, at the age of 79. Eloise Jelinek, retired professor of linguistics at the University of Arizona, died in Tucson on December 21, 2007, after a long illness. And Blair Rudes, Associate Professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, died of a sudden heart attack on March 16, 2008.

It also saddens us to note the passing of Marie Smith, the last speaker of Eyak; of Alfred Chalepah, Jr., the last fluent speaker of Plains Apache; and of Irving "Hap" McCue, for 33 years Lecturer in Ojibwe Language and Culture at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Full obituaries will appear in the next (double) issue of the SSILA Newsletter.

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264.1 Correspondence  
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\* Project on (endangered) numeral systems

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From Eugene S. L. Chan (eugenechan@hkbn.net) 14 March 2008:

Greetings from Hong Kong!

I am working with Bernard Comrie on documentation of the numeral systems of the world's languages, with special attention to endangered systems (i.e., where the traditional numeral systems of small languages are being replaced by those of dominant languages). I have set up a website, hosted by the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, where I will share all the data in due course, to promote research on small languages and to raise awareness of the problem of endangered numeral systems:

<http://lingweb.eva.mpg.de/numeral/>

I am still looking for sources of data on a number of indigenous American languages. (There is a questionnaire at the website.)

Many thanks.

--Eugene S. L. Chan

\* Translations of phrase needed for book cover

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From Barbara W. Sommer (barbsom@aol.com) 9 March 2008:

I am one of three co-authors of the forthcoming book, "Making Many Voices Heard: An Indian Oral History Manual," to be released by Left Coast Press this fall. The manual begins with an overview of oral history, then covers the planning process, legal and ethical issues, equipment guidelines, interview preparation, the interview, processing and curating, and examples of uses. The manual has been many years in the making.

The authors and publishers would like to develop a graphic for the cover that uses the four words of the title ("Making Many Voices Heard") in a variety of indigenous languages. Using as many translations as we are given, graphic artists will write them out to fill a page, screen the graphic, and then print the title against the screened graphic of the "many voices."

Would anyone be able to help us with the translations? We will credit all translations and translators.



a specialist on the Ket language isolate spoken by a shrinking number of elders living along the Yenisei River of central Siberia, combining ten years of library and field work on Ket and relying on the earlier work of Heinrich Werner on the now-extinct relatives of Ket, has clarified the dauntingly complex morphology and phonology of Ket and its Yeniseic congeners. At a symposium held Feb. 26-27 at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks and a panel that took place Feb. 29 at the Alaska Anthropological Association annual meeting in Anchorage, Vajda showed that the abstract forms of lexical and grammatical morphemes and the rules of composition of the Ket verb find systematic and numerous parallels in the Na-Dene protolanguage reconstructed to account for the modern Tlingit and Eyak languages and the Athabaskan language family (whose daughters include Gwich'in, Koyukon, Dena'ina and others of Alaska, Hupa of California, and Navajo of the U.S. Southwest). The comparison was made possible by recent advances in the analysis of Tlingit phonology and Tlingit-Athabaskan-Eyak presented at the same symposium by Prof. Jeffrey Leer of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and by earlier work by Prof. Michael Krauss, also of UAF, on the now-extinct Eyak language and on comparative Athabaskan, as well as work on Athabaskan lexicography and verb stem analysis carried out by the symposium organizer, Prof. James Kari of UAF.

Working independently, Vajda and the Alaska linguists have arrived at abstract stem shapes and ancestral word-forms too numerous and displaying too many idiosyncratic parallels to be explained by anything other than common descent. The comparison also shows conclusively that Haida, sometimes associated with Na-Dene, is not related.

The distance from Yeniseic territory in Siberia to that of the most distant Athabaskan languages in the American Southwest is the greatest overland distance covered by any known language whose spread was not facilitated by wheeled transport or sails. Prof. Ben Potter of UAF, an archaeologist, reviewed the postglacial prehistory of Beringia and speculated that the Na-Dene speakers may descend from some of the earliest colonizers of the Americas, who eventually created the successful and long-lived Northern Archaic tool tradition that dominated interior and northern Alaska almost until historical times.

Vajda's work has been well vetted. In addition to Na-Dene specialists Krauss, Leer, and Kari, who have reacted favorably, the symposium was also attended by historical linguists Prof. Eric P. Hamp of the University of Chicago and Prof. Johanna Nichols of the University of California, Berkeley, both of whom announced their support for the proposed relationship, and by Bernard Comrie, Director of the Linguistics Department, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig and professor at UC Santa Barbara, who endorsed Vajda's methods. Athabaskanist Prof. Victor Golla of Humboldt State University, Eurasianist Prof. Michael Fortescue of the University of Copenhagen, Yeniseicist Dr. Heinrich Werner of Bonn (formerly of Taganrog University, Russia), and Prof. Nicholas Evans (Australian National University) read the draft of Vajda's report and reacted favorably.



scholars working on cutting-edge methods in historical linguistics and, secondarily, to assess Swadesh's work and influence.

Swadesh made outstanding contributions in a number of linguistic fields, publishing over 200 books, articles and reviews. One of the pioneers of phonemic theory and of the methodical study of seriously endangered languages, he worked on dozens of languages of North and Central America and West Africa, contributed to the study of English phonology and to efficient ways of teaching languages to military personnel and civilians, and helped promote the cause of indigenous Mexican and other Native American languages to politicians and laymen alike. He is most widely known for his interests in historical relations between language families across the world, and on quantitative historical linguistic techniques (glottochronology and especially lexicostatistics) using as data source diagnostic vocabularies which have become known as "Swadesh lists".

Despite much bad press, lexicostatistics and glottochronology have lived on, seen various developments, and have been applied to languages around the globe. Moreover, diagnostic wordlists from perhaps close to a third of the world's languages have accumulated in the literature or on the internet, providing a unique resource for the investigation of the lexical behavior of languages in areal and genealogical perspectives.

Invited speakers will include: Mark Pagel (U Reading), Tandy Warnow (U Texas at Austin), and Eric W. Holman (UCLA).

We invite papers applying or discussing quantitatively oriented methods in historical linguistics, papers on the systematic investigation of languages and prehistory, and papers relating to Swadesh's work. We expect to publish a book with a selection of the contributions.

Please send your anonymous 250-500 word abstract to <wichmann@eva.mpg.de>. The deadline for abstract submission is Sept. 30, 2008. The date of notification of acceptance is Oct. 15, 2008.

Dates and venue for the conference: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Jan 16-18, 2009.

For further information contact either Anthony Grant (Grant@edgehill.ac.uk) or Søren Wichmann (wichmann@eva.mpg.de).

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## 264.5 Funding Sources

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\* Liljebblad Endowment grants in Great Basin ethnography and linguistics  
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From Catherine S Fowler (csfowler@unr.edu) 3 March 2008:

The Sven and Astrid Liljebblad Endowment Fund announces the availability of grants for 2008-09 to support scholarly research (including fieldwork, oral history, cultural heritage programs, curriculum development and publication help) in Native American ethnography, linguistics, folklore and related subjects with emphasis on the Great Basin region of North America. Special consideration will be given to projects that further the work of Sven Liljebblad in Native American languages and oral

tradition.

University faculty, graduate students, or other persons with appropriate qualifications are eligible to apply for grants to projects which will take place between July 1, 2008 and July 1, 2009. Native American scholars and groups are urged to apply.

Four copies of the application must be submitted by May 1, 2008, and should include the following:

1. A statement of no more than five pages describing the scope and purpose of the project.
2. A schedule outlining the order of tasks to be accomplished, and the anticipated dates of completion and submission of a final report summarizing the project results.
3. An itemized budget for expenditures of the funds requested.
4. A brief resume of the applicant's educational and work experience with particular reference to attributes relevant to project requirements.

Since funds are limited, requests for research equipment must be minimal. Although small allocations for consultant fees or honoraria will be considered, based upon justification, salaries will not be funded. Projects are usually funded at \$5,000 or less, but requests for larger amounts may be considered.

Applications must be made in writing to:

The Sven and Astrid Liljeblad Endowment Committee  
c/o Heather Hardy, Dean  
College of Liberal Arts/086  
University of Nevada, Reno  
Reno, NV 89557-0086

For phone inquiries, please call Catherine Fowler at (775) 853-3471.

Complete applications must be received by May 1, 2008.

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264.6 E-Mail Address Updates  
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The following additions or changes have been made to the SSILA e-mail list since the last Bulletin. ("At" has been substituted for "@" to discourage the harvesting of addresses by spammers.)

Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. .... a.y.aikhenvald at live.com  
Burgess, Maria ..... mapnea at u.washington.edu  
Crippen, James A. .... jcrippen at gmail.com  
Pulleyblank, Douglas ..... douglas.pulleyblank at ubc.ca

When your e-mail address changes, please notify us (golla@ssila.org).

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The SSILA Bulletin is distributed electronically to all members of SSILA. Non-members may subscribe free of charge by sending their e-mail address to the editor ([golla@ssila.org](mailto:golla@ssila.org)).

SSILA also publishes a quarterly hard-copy Newsletter that contains book reviews, notices of journal articles and recent dissertations, and other news and commentary. The Newsletter and other publications of the Society are distributed only to members or to institutional subscribers.

SSILA welcomes applications for membership from anyone interested in the scholarly study of the languages of the native peoples of North, Central, and South America. Dues for 2008 are \$20 (US or Canadian) and may be paid in advance at the 2008 rate. Checks or money orders should be made payable to "SSILA" and sent to: SSILA, P.O. Box 1295, Denton, TX 76202. For further information, visit the SSILA website (<http://www.ssila.org>).

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