

## SSILA BULLETIN NUMBER 278: JULY 2012

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The SSILA Bulletin is an Information Service for SSILA Members

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

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### **278.0 SSILA BUSINESS – WINTER MEETING INFORMATION**

The Annual Winter SSILA Meetings agenda will be published in the next Newsletter. Reminder: Boston hotel reservations (available Sept 1) and LSA registration (available October 1). Please find more information at the LSA site: <http://www.lsadc.org/info/meet-annual.cfm>

### **278.1 CORRESPONDENCE**

Dear SSILA Members,

Can anyone inform Bill of any terms for a ‘ponytail’ worn by a male, from any of the Native North American languages they know, or are working on? His contact information is:

Bill Donohue  
[wdonohue@publiccounsel.net](mailto:wdonohue@publiccounsel.net)

Dear SSILA Members,

I am a Swedish author who is currently compiling a book about Measurement units – both ancient & modern – in different regions of the World. I have just started my section on the pre-colonial America conditions and would therefore like to ask for some help if you have something to contribute.

I'm interested in *historical metrology*, not ethno-mathematics, but these specializations are very close to each other, and I often have the opportunity to read papers dealing with different counting systems. The task

of historical metrology is to clarify the relationships among formerly used units of measurement, and express them in modern units, and to study the origin of their names.

The inadequacy of easily accessible material is one of the chief difficulties in writing a book such as this. One must search the literature of many disciplines, such as history, economics, ethnology, anthropology, archaeology, numismatics, linguistics, travel stories and oral tradition, and still be dissatisfied. I really hope your newsletter will help me get in touch with some scholars interested in similar issues.

Some native North American tribes with their own systems of weights and measures; this is the information I have at present:

## **Hopi**

### Units of length

1 tutskwatuwani = a mile;

1 kwiya (used in describing cultivated fields) = the conventional distance between windbreakers, consisting of rows of brush, to control wind

erosion = usually stated as 10 – 12 kuktuwani = ~ 2.5 – 3 m;

1 mámki = the distance between the fingertips of outstretched arms;

1 kwilaki = the length of one step = ~ 800 mm;

1 kuktuwani (= foot) = ~ 250 mm;

1 tukye'lemi = the distance between the tip of the outstretched thumb and the tip of the outstretched middle finger;

1 tumamoyi = the distance between the tip of the thumb and the tip of the outstretched index finger;

1 nalöqmats = adverb used to indicate the width of the four fingers on a hand;

1 löqamats = adverb used to describe the width of the index and middle fingers held together;

1 malatstuwani = the width of one finger.

### Units of area

1 mori'uysaq = adverb used to indicate the size of a bean field = ~ 1 – 2 acres.

### Units of volume

1 owakotqa (used for quarried, stacked rock) = ~ 3.6 m<sup>3</sup>.

Inupiat speaking people

### Units of length

1 isagnium avvaa = the distance from neck to outstretched fingertip;

1 isagniq = the distance from fingertip to fingertip of a person with outstretched arms = about 6 feet;

## **Nez Perce**

### Units of quantity

1 ták'aw = a bundle;

### Units of length

1 sepinewit ninewi = a mile;

1 wetmk = a footstep.

### Units of capacity

1 'iselipt 'iselipi = a handful;

1 mólmol = a cup made of horn;

1 tilénim ni'kay tilè = a cup made of china;

1 hi'kay = a cup;

1 teminewit hínawi = a bushel;

1 'itetp'es 'ite = a box or container;

1 'ispal = a sack;  
1 'itetpes 'ite = a small sack;  
1 'ise'pt 'isepi = a packload.

Units of time

1 wéwtukt wéwtuk = 24 hours;  
1 kuckucemix kúc = a minute.

Please let your members know I would enjoy corresponding about these measures or any others.

Best regards,  
Jan Gyllenbok, MSc  
j.gyllenbok at gmail dot com

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## 278.2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **THE 10TH BIENNIAL HIGH DESERT LINGUISTICS SOCIETY (HDLS) CONFERENCE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO - NOVEMBER 1-3, 2012**

**Call for Papers** - deadline Sunday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
Submitters will be notified of acceptance status by Sunday, August 19th.

**The High Desert Linguistics Society (HDLS)** is the graduate student association of the University of New Mexico (UNM) Linguistics Department (College of Arts and Sciences). The purpose of HDLS is to promote the exchange of ideas among students pursuing higher education in linguistics and related disciplines. During the 2011-12 academic year, we will be hosting the 10th High Desert Linguistics Society Conference (HDLS-10) from November 1-3, 2012.

Preceding conferences have been highly successful events and each has grown substantially beyond the last. We foresee that HDLS-10 will continue this positive trend by attracting high-quality scholarship that enhances our understanding of current issues in linguistics. The conference provides a venue for scholars to present their work within the frameworks of cognitive and functional approaches to linguistic analysis, focusing on the study of indigenous languages and signed languages.

The HDLS-10 conference provides an opportunity for scholars in linguistics and related fields to convene and share ideas with other scholars, researchers, faculty, and students. This conference is organized and staffed entirely by UNM graduate students, and HDLS actively solicits the participation of the UNM community. Over the years, the conference has evolved from a small, UNM-centered event to one of international scope and recognition, while remaining particularly accessible to the UNM community.

In response to the growing number of conference attendees each year, we now include a poster session. This session, which is becoming an increasingly popular event at linguistics conferences, will offer another means through which presenters can display their work.

Our conference serves as a platform for raising awareness among academics concerning Spanish linguistics, signed languages in deaf communities, linguistic anthropology, endangered languages in indigenous communities and educational linguistics - both local and global. This exchange of ideas can help build a bridge between communities, linguists, and language activists. We have been successful in achieving this goal in the past, partly due to our association with UNM's Department of Linguistics. Our linguistics department has gained recognition for conducting quality research in Native American linguistics, typology, signed language linguistics, and cognitive-functional approaches to the study of human language.

**We invite you to submit proposals** for talks at the Tenth High Desert Linguistics Society (HDLS) Conference. General presentations will be 20 minutes followed by 5 minutes for discussion. We are also accepting abstract submissions for poster-sessions. We welcome proposals for talks/poster-sessions in the following areas:

- Cognitive linguistics
- Functional linguistics and discourse analysis
- Linguistic typology
- Gesture and signed languages
  
- Indigenous language endangerment, revitalization and description
  - Acquisition
  - Language and culture

Finally, we also invite speakers to propose themed panels, which will consist of three presenters. Each presenter will be responsible for a 10-minute presentation, for a combined total of 30-minutes per panel, followed by 10 minutes for questions addressed to the panel. Speakers who propose a panel topic are responsible for arranging who will participate in the proposed panel. Only one abstract should be submitted per topic. The abstract should include the proposed panel topic, and how each speaker will contribute to the proposed theme.

**Abstract Guidelines:**

Length: Maximum 500 words. A second page may include examples, charts/diagrams, and references. Times/Times New Roman, 12-point font is preferred.

Format: Include the paper title and the text of the abstract. The abstract should not include the author's name or affiliation. This applies to individual, poster and panel presentations. All abstracts will be reviewed anonymously.

Deadline: Sunday, August 5. Submitters will be notified of acceptance status by Sunday, August 19.

**How to Submit:**

Abstracts should be attached to an email as a PDF file and submitted electronically. Include the following information in the body of the email:

- Please state which type of presentation you are submitting an abstract for:
  - a. 20-minute, general presentation
  - b. Poster-session
  - c. 30-minute, proposed panel (please include names of all three panelists)
  
- Author's name
- Author's affiliation
- Paper title

Send abstracts to: [hdls@unm.edu](mailto:hdls@unm.edu)

10th High Desert Linguistics Society (HDLS) Conference  
Cognition, Culture and Discourse in Signed, Spoken and Indigenous Languages  
University of New Mexico  
November 1-3, 2012  
Registration opens: May 15, 2012

- **Keynote Speakers:**

Paul Dudis, Gallaudet University (Signed Languages)  
Jane Hill, University of Arizona (Language Revitalization and Language Ideologies)  
Beth Levin, Stanford University (Cognitive Linguistics)

Please find more about the conference at: <http://linggraduate.unm.edu/conference/2012/index.html>

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**3RD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION AND CONSERVATION (ICLDC) - "Sharing Worlds of Knowledge"**

**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I – FEBRUARY 28 – MARCH 3, 2013**

**Call for Proposals** - Deadline for Submission - August 31, 2012  
University of Hawai'i - February 28 - March 3, 2013

***E Komo Mai! (Welcome!)***

The 3rd International Conference on Language Documentation and Conservation (ICLDC), "Sharing Worlds of Knowledge," will be held February 28-March 3, 2013, at the Hawai'i Imin International Conference Center on the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa campus.

By popular demand, the 3rd ICLDC will be a full day longer than the previous two conferences. The conference program will feature an integrated series of Master Class workshops. An optional Hilo Field Study (on the Big Island of Hawai'i) to visit Hawaiian language revitalization programs in action, will immediately follow the conference (March 4-5).

This year's conference theme, "Sharing Worlds of Knowledge," intends to highlight the interdisciplinary nature of language documentation and the need to share methods for documenting the many aspects of human knowledge that language encodes. We aim to build on the strong momentum created by the 1st and 2nd ICLDCs to discuss research and revitalization approaches yielding rich records that can benefit both the field of language documentation and speech communities. We hope you will join us.

**Plenary Talks**

**Nicholas Evans**, Australian National University

*Title TBA*

**Nainoa Thompson**, Polynesian Voyaging Society

*Title TBA*

**The Master Class series**

In accordance with the conference theme "Sharing Worlds of Knowledge," the 3rd ICLDC will feature three afternoons of Master Classes in topics outside of linguistics that as documenters, we are likely to encounter in our work. The Master Classes are part of the regular conference program, are included in the conference registration fee, and are open to all ICLDC attendees. Seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Master Classes will be taught by the following experts:

- **Linda Barwick** (University of Sydney): *Ethnomusicology*
- **Alex Golub** (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa): *Kinship Systems*
- **David Mark** (University at Buffalo): *Ethnophysiogeography: Documenting Categories of Landscape Features*
- **Will McClatchey** (Botanical Research Institute of Texas): *Folk Taxonomy*
- **Warren Nishimoto** (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa): *Documenting Oral History*

- **Tamara Ticktin** (University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa): *Ethnobotany*

The Master Class series is sponsored by the US National Science Foundation.

### Topics

We especially welcome abstracts that address the conference theme of the interdisciplinary nature of language documentation. Language encodes knowledge from many facets of life: kinship, science, taxonomy, material culture, spirituality, music, and others. We encourage presentations on documenting these topics through the lens of endangered languages.

We are also seeking abstracts on the science of documentation and revitalization. Documentation is usually portrayed as a means of collecting language data, and revitalization is generally seen primarily as a kind of applied work, directly benefiting communities. However, each of those domains is a genuine area of research, and we welcome presentations that treat documentation and revitalization not merely as activities, but also as domains requiring theorization in their own right.

In addition to the topics above, we warmly welcome abstracts on other subjects in language documentation and conservation, which may include but are not limited to:

- Archiving matters
- Community experiences of revitalization
- Data management
- Ethical issues
- Language planning
- Lexicography and reference grammar design
- Methods of assessing ethnolinguistic vitality
- Orthography design
- Teaching/learning small languages
- Technology in documentation – methods and pitfalls
- Topics in areal language documentation
- Training in documentation methods – beyond the university
- Assessing success in documentation and revitalization strategies

### Abstract submission

Abstracts should be submitted in English, but presentations can be in any language. We particularly welcome presentations in languages of the region discussed. Authors may submit no more than one individual and one joint (co-authored) proposal.

Click here for the online proposal submission form: <http://form.jotformpro.com/form/20911074706953>

Abstracts are **due by August 31, 2012**, with notification of acceptance by October 1, 2012.

We ask for **abstracts of no more than 400 words** for online publication so that conference participants will have a good idea of the content of your paper, and a **50-word summary** for inclusion in the conference program. All abstracts will be submitted to blind peer review by international experts on the topic.

We will only be accepting proposal submissions for **papers** or **posters**. Please note that the Advisory Committee may ask that some abstracts submitted as conference talks be presented as posters instead.

NOTE: We regret that we are unable to accept proposals for organized panel sessions this year due to our tight schedule of Master Classes. We would also like to be able to accept as many regular paper presentations as possible. We will do our best to group accepted presentations on similar topics in the same time frame.

Selected authors will be invited to submit their conference papers to the journal *Language Documentation & Conservation* for publication.

### **Scholarships**

To help defray travel expenses to come and present at the conference, scholarships of up to US\$1,500 will be awarded to the six best abstracts by (i) students and/or (ii) members of an endangered language community who are actively working to document their heritage language and who are not employed by a college or university. If you are eligible and wish to be considered for a scholarship, please select the appropriate "Yes" button on the proposal submission form.

### **Presentation formats**

Papers will be allowed 20 minutes for presentation with 10 minutes of question time.

Posters will be on display throughout the conference. Poster presentations will run during the lunch breaks.

Please visit the website at: <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/icldc/2013/index.html>

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## **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MESOAMERICAN LINGUISTICS CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY AT FULLERTON – FEBRUARY 22-23, 2013**

**Call for Papers** - Deadline for panel proposals: 30 September 2012

Deadline for abstracts: 15 October 2012

Submitters will be notified of acceptance status by November 1, 2012

We invite abstracts for papers and panels from all areas related to the languages of Mesoamerica, including both the indigenous languages and Mesoamerican Spanish, to be submitted to the International Conference on Mesoamerican Linguistics, to be held at California State University, Fullerton on February 22-23, 2013.

### Submission guidelines:

1. Papers may be delivered in English or Spanish. Authors may submit up to two abstracts, one individual and one jointly authored. Presentation time for papers will be 20 minutes plus 10 minutes for discussion.
2. The abstract must be no more than one page in length, single-spaced in 12 point font.
3. To preserve anonymity during the review process, authors should not include their names or otherwise reveal their identities anywhere in the abstract.
4. Please specify the title of the paper, area of research, name, academic affiliation and email in the accompanying email.
5. Please send submissions as a Word or PDF file on <http://linguistlist.org/confcustom/1stmalingconf>
6. Questions about the conference may be addressed to [1stmesoamlingconf at gmail.com](mailto:1stmesoamlingconf@gmail.com)

Deadline for panel proposals: 30 September 2012

Deadline for abstracts: 15 October 2012

Notification: 1 November 2012

Conference organizers: Natalie Operstein ([noperstein at fullerton.edu](mailto:noperstein@fullerton.edu)) and Aaron Huey Sonnenschein ([asonnen at exchange.calstatela.edu](mailto:asonnen@exchange.calstatela.edu)).

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**CONFERENCIA INTERNACIONAL DE LINGÜÍSTICA MESOAMERICANOS  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY DE FULLERTON - 22 a 23 FEBRERO 2013**

Se invitan propuestas de ponencias individuales y paneles preorganizados en todas las áreas relacionadas con las lenguas mesoamericanas, incluyendo las lenguas indígenas y el español mesoamericano, para El Congreso Internacional de Lingüística Mesoamericana, que se realizará los días 22 y 23 de febrero de 2013 en la Universidad Estatal de California en Fullerton.

Guía para el envío de resúmenes:

1. Las ponencias podrán presentarse en inglés o español. Se aceptará un máximo de un resumen por autor individual o dos en coautoría. El tiempo para la presentación de las ponencias será de 20 minutos, con un espacio de 10 minutos para discusión.
2. El resumen deberá tener una extensión máxima de una página, a interlineado sencillo con letra de 12 puntos.
3. Para mantener el anonimato del arbitraje, el nombre del autor o cualquier otra información que podría señalar la identidad del autor no debe aparecer en el resumen.
4. Por favor, incluya la siguiente información en el cuerpo de su mensaje electrónico: el título del trabajo, el área de investigación, el nombre completo del autor o autores, la institución de adscripción y el correo electrónico.
5. Favor de enviar su resumen en formato Microsoft Word o PDF a:  
<http://linguistlist.org/confcustom/1stmalingconf>
6. Se puede dirigir preguntas acerca del congreso a [1stmesoamlingconf@aroba gmail.com](mailto:1stmesoamlingconf@aroba.gmail.com)

Fechas importantes:

Cierre de convocatoria para las mesas de ponencias: 30 de septiembre de 2012

Cierre de convocatoria para resúmenes: 15 de octubre de 2012

Notificación del resultado de arbitraje: 1 de noviembre de 2012

Organizadores: Natalie Operstein ([noperstein@fullerton.edu](mailto:noperstein@fullerton.edu)) y Aaron Huey Sonnenschein ([asonnen@exchange.calstatela.edu](mailto:asonnen@exchange.calstatela.edu)).

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Dear Editor,

Would you please add the following notes to the upcoming issue of the Bulletin, if possible?

Thanks, *abraços*,

Eduardo

Eduardo Rivail Ribeiro, lingüista  
<http://wado.us>



## On the Linguistic Affiliation of Fawcett's "Mashubi"

*Cadernos de Etnolingüística* (ISSN 1946-7095), an electronic journal on South American languages, has just published an article by Hein van der Voort (a leading expert on Rondonian languages) investigating the linguistic affiliation of the "Mashubi," an Amazonian tribe visited by British adventurer Percy Fawcett in 1914 (please see abstract and link below).

Confirming ethnographer Franz Caspar's (1955) suggestion, the article demonstrates that the "Mashubi" were the ancestors of the present-day Arikapú (Jabutí family, Macro-Jê stock), whose language is now down to one speaker. As with previous issues of the "Cadernos," the article is enriched with links to a number of freely-available original sources ("EtnoLinks"), including Caspar's 1955 article and Fawcett's paper on the Mashubi.

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## Whatever Happened to Mashubi? Taking a New Look at Fawcett's Vocabulary

By Hein van der Voort

In this article, the earliest documentation of a Jabuti language is analyzed and identified. In 1914, the British explorer Colonel Percy Fawcett visited the headwaters of the Colorado, Branco and Mekens Rivers, where he met a group of Indians he called Mashubi. He took down a list of approximately 100 words, which was published in 1953 by Paul Rivet. At the present, the received classification of Mashubi is as a third language of the Jabuti (Macro-Jê) linguistic family, along with Arikapu and Djeoromitxi. However, the indigenous peoples of the Guaporé region have never heard of a group called Mashubi. Furthermore, linguists tend to be unaware of the hypothesis published in 1955 by Franz Caspar that Mashubi in fact is Arikapu. Until recently, our ideas about the Jabuti languages could not be verified for lack of data. In the present article Fawcett's Mashubi word list is held up to the light of abundant new data on the Jabuti languages. It turns out that Caspar was right.

<http://www.etnolinguitica.org/issue:vol4n1>

## 278.3 MEDIA WATCH

### Alaska Legislature Signs Historic Indigenous Languages Bill

Press Release from the Office of the Governor of Alaska, Sean Parnell  
<http://www.gov.state.ak.us/parnell/press-room/full-press-release.html?pr=6149>

May 2012, Anchorage, Alaska - Governor Sean Parnell yesterday attended the Rural Providers Conference in Dillingham where he signed several pieces of legislation. Senate Bill 130, sponsored by Senator Donny Olson and Representative Alan Dick, establishes an Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council. The council will assess the state of Alaska Native languages, re-evaluate the programs, and make recommendations to establish new programs or reorganize existing programs.

“Without language preservation, a culture dies,” Governor Parnell said. “As Alaskans, we honor and celebrate our traditional cultures. The state will join with Alaskans to make sure these languages live on.”

House Bill 261, sponsored by Representatives Bryce Edgmon, Steve Thompson, and Charisse Millett, raises the maximum loan amount under the Commercial Fishing Revolving Loan Fund for entry permits from \$100,000 to \$200,000. The legislation will increase Alaskan participation in Alaskan fisheries by enabling a larger number of state residents to purchase limited entry commercial fishing permits.

House Bill 196, sponsored by Representative Edgmon, creates a one-stop shop for rural fuel. The bill combines bulk fuel loan programs currently administered by two entities, the Alaska Energy Authority and the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development. The programs will now be administered by one department. The legislation streamlines the entire process of obtaining bulk fuel loans for rural communities.

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## **Oldest Known Maya Calendar Found in Xultun Site of Northeastern Guatemala**

Excerpted from the *Los Angeles Times*, by Thomas H. Maugh II  
May 2012

In the remote northeastern corner of Guatemala, archaeologists have found what appears to be the 9th century workplace of a city scribe, an unusual dwelling adorned with magnificent pictures of the king and other royals and the oldest known Maya calendar.

The archaeologists immediately preserved the site and came back the next year to excavate it. The 40-square-foot room had been filled with rubble before other structures were built on top of it. That was an unusual practice for the Maya, who typically collapsed roofs and walls before rebuilding, and had done so to other rooms around the site. But it led to the preservation.

The portrait of the king was found in a rounded niche on the north wall of the structure. Bone curtain rods would have allowed a drape to be drawn across it to hide it. On the wall next to it is the portrait of a figure in brilliant orange, with jade bracelets, holding a stylus. The figure, who may have been a scribe, was labeled "younger brother obsidian" or perhaps "junior obsidian." He may have been the king's son or brother, the team said.

Not all of the writing has been deciphered yet, but some clearly describe the 260-day ceremonial calendar, the 365-day solar calendar, the 584-day cycle of Venus and the 780-day cycle of Mars. Another calendar nearby comprises 17 *baktuns*, or 400-year periods, encompassing an additional 4,000 years beyond the 21st century.

Maya were looking at "patterns in the sky and intermeshing them mathematically." Among other things, the calculations showed which god was the patron of each day and month, marked celestial events tied to religious ceremonies and allowed astronomers to calculate the dates of eclipses, which were important in rituals.

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## **Opposing use of Oaxaquita *No me llamas Oaxaquita* on YouTube and Facebook**

Young people of Indigenous heritage in California organized to make people aware that use of the term *Oaxaquita* is a pejorative label, being used to shame them. To see the some videos on their activism successes, please go to:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHWMOK1jY8w>

To read about the Oxnard, California School District Superintendent and Board's decision to ban use of the terms, *Oaxaquita* and *Oxaquitos* in its anti-bullying policy see:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdKK2511KBA>

To read about the young people who organized against name-calling, please see:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIfcNhphYmY&feature=related>

Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP)  
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/MixtecoIndigena-Community-Organizing-Project-MICOP/117814508734>

## Native Americans work to revitalize California's indigenous languages

Excerpted from *SFGate*, by Casey Capachi  
July 2012

California was once home to over 300 Native American dialects and as many as 90 languages, making it the most linguistically diverse state in the US. Today, only about half of those languages are still with us, according to the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival, or AICLS.

“Many of the California tribes were really negatively impacted with the Gold Rush and tribes were devastated and a lot of the languages have been lost,” said Janeen Antoine, who teaches a language class at the Intertribal Friendship House in Oakland. She teaches Lakota, which is spoken in South Dakota where she is from. “There’s a very strong effort within the California peoples to revive their languages.”

L. Frank Manriquez was a part of the California language revitalization movement, which began about 20 years ago, after many people noticed languages were disappearing with the eldest generation of fluent speakers. “We’ve been studied enough, now we have to learn,” said Manriquez who belongs to several Southern California tribes. “Sure there are scientists who are going to go deeper and deeper and find that vowel for us, but there’s enough out there for us natives to actually make language from.”

For over two decades, Manriquez has been visiting the archives at the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, which holds the largest collection of California Native American artifacts in the world, matching artifacts with language. She says it is common for many to become overwhelmed by the loss that these archives signify, but for her, she feels inspired to find each artifact’s meaning in her ancestors’ culture. She says she will look to neighboring tribes’ language if it something is no longer available in her own.

“It’s the most concrete tie to language that there is — these things, all of these pieces. Artifacts, they hold the language just as if they were a person holding the language,” said Manriquez. “It’s up to me then to work hard and get that language out of them.”

Read more about the story, and see a video:

<http://oaklandnorth.net/2012/07/23/native-americans-work-to-revitalize-californias-indigenous-languages/>

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## 64 Indian dialects endangered in Mexico

Excerpted from *Casa Grande Dispatch*, by Mark Stevenson  
Published on July 2012

MEXICO CITY — Sixty-four of Mexico’s 364 Indian dialects are at “high risk” of dying out, with less than 100 speakers of each remaining, the head of the country’s National Institute of Indian Languages said Tuesday.

Institute head Javier Lopez Sanchez said that in many cases, speakers of dying dialects are dispersed and no longer live in a single community. Lopez Sanchez said many parents aren’t passing their languages on to their children, and in communities in Mexico’s north, Indian children may have a passive understanding of their parent’s language but are unwilling or unable to speak it.

“There are entire communities where the children don’t speak their Indian language,” he said. As an example, he noted that among the Yoremes in Sonora state, the remaining speakers are all older than 40. Many of the endangered dialects are in Baja California, and some are in southern Mexico.

Yucatec Maya is the largest contiguous language group, meaning it is present throughout the hundreds of square miles of the Yucatan peninsula. Nahuatl, the language of the Aztec empire, is the most widely spoken Indian language in Mexico, with about 1.5 million speakers, but it is highly fragmented geographically and its different dialects are

sometimes not mutually understandable.

Barriga said one problem undermining Indian languages is that media and Internet favor Spanish, Mexico's dominant national language. Some small experiments in that have been tried in Mexico. Voter education ads have run on television in Indian languages, and some attempts have been made to broadcast the games of baseball or soccer teams from heavily Indian states in their native languages.

Barriga noted that some Indian rock groups have sprung up. "They play well. They're good bands." In a bid to give Indian languages more visibility, Google has teamed up with some Mexican government agencies like Barriga's National Institute of Anthropology and History to offer the Endangered Languages Project, which launched in June.

To read the complete article, please go to:

[http://www.trivalleycentral.com/articles/2012/07/18/casa\\_grande\\_dispatch/world\\_news/doc5006eb6595e88942046933.txt](http://www.trivalleycentral.com/articles/2012/07/18/casa_grande_dispatch/world_news/doc5006eb6595e88942046933.txt)

## **278.4 RECENT PUBLICATIONS**

### **A New Dissertation on Borum**

Borum (also known as Botocudo or Krenák), a severely-endangered Macro-Jê language from Brazil, is the subject of a dissertation recently defended at the State University of Campinas (Unicamp) by Katia Nepomuceno Pessoa. Titled, *Análise fonética e fonológica da língua Krenak e abordagem preliminar de contos Botocudo*, the dissertation provides a detailed analysis of the language's sound inventory (which includes the unusual--and comparatively puzzling--voiceless nasal consonants).

Although there are several vocabularies of Botocudo dialects, collected since the early 1800s, there is a regrettable gap in textual documentation. Pessoa's dissertation (written under the guidance of Lucy Seki, who has worked with the last speakers since the 1970s) contributes to fill this gap, analyzing traditional tales collected by Russian ethnographer Henri Manizer in 1915. The dissertation can be downloaded at the following address:

<http://www.etnolingustica.org/tese:pessoa-2012>

## **278.5 GRANTS - FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **The Christensen Fund for Cultural Biodiversity**

The Christensen Fund provides financial and logistical support for indigenous led and community-based organizations. Southwest U.S. and Northern Mexico programs support cultural biodiversity projects on the Colorado Plateau, the Sonoran Desert, and the Tarahumara Sierra. The Christensen Fund mission includes stewardship of cultural and biological diversity. Cultural stewardship includes, but is not exclusively endangered languages projects.

The Christensen Fund awards grants on a rolling cycle, but because of a high volume of applications we plan our grants well in advance. We encourage prospective applicants to submit their inquiries or pre-proposals by the deadline dates found on the website. Grant-seeking organizations need to be US 501(c)(3) or a similar not-for-profit organization, government unit, university or museum either in the USA or in another country.

Grant size is typically in the \$50,000 to \$100,000 range over one year or two years, with larger grants for longer periods being available generally by invitation only and to previous grantees. Deadlines are in advance of the mid-November Board meeting when annual grant plans for the following year are reviewed. Applicants are generally informed by mid-January if further exploration of a grant proposal will occur.

<http://www.christensenfund.org/funding/>

<http://www.christensenfund.org/programs/greater-southwest/>

## **278.6 PHD SCHOLARSHIPS AT THE CAIRNS INSTITUTE, JCU, AUSTRALIA**

Applications are invited, from suitably qualified students, to enter the PhD program of the Language and Culture Research Centre within the Cairns Institute of James Cook University Australia. Supervision will be provided by Professors Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald, R. M. W. Dixon, and Dr Elena Mihás.

Our PhD candidates generally undertake extensive fieldwork on a previously undescribed (or scarcely described) language and write a comprehensive grammar of it for their dissertation. They are expected to work on a language which is still actively spoken, and to establish a field situation within a community in which it is the first language. Their first fieldtrip lasts for about nine months. After completing a first draft of the grammar, back in Cairns, they undertake a second fieldtrip of two to three months. Fieldwork methodology centres on the collection, transcription and analysis of texts, together with participant observation, and — at a later stage — judicious grammatical elicitation in the language under description (not through the lingua franca of the country). Our main priority areas are the languages of tropical Amazonia, and the Papuan and Austronesian languages of New Guinea. However, we do not exclude applicants who have an established interest in languages from other areas (which need not necessarily lie within the tropics).

PhDs in Australian universities generally involve no coursework, just a substantial dissertation. Candidates must thus have had thorough coursework training before embarking on this PhD program. This should have included courses on morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology/phonetics, taught from a non-formalist perspective. We place emphasis on work that has a sound empirical basis but also shows a firm theoretical orientation (in terms of general typological theory, or what has recently come to be called basic linguistic theory).

The Cairns Institute is a world class centre for advanced study relating to the tropics. Distinguished Professor Alexandra (Sasha) Aikhenvald is Research Leader for People and Societies of the Tropics. Together with Professor R. M. W. Dixon, she heads the Language and Culture Research Centre within the Cairns Institute, which includes Research Fellows and a growing number of doctoral students. In addition, senior scholars from across the world opt to spend their sabbatical in the Cairns Institute.

The LCRC includes anthropologists, archaeologists and educationalists, with scholars working on environmental issues at James Cook University. The information on LCRC is available at <https://eresearch.jcu.edu.au/spaces/TLA>

The Language and Culture Research Centre is responsible for maintaining a repository of information on languages and cultures of our expertise, under the heading of Languages and cultures of the Tropics and Surrounding areas. <https://eresearch.jcu.edu.au/spaces/TLA/languages-and-cultures-of-the-tropics-and-surrounding-areas>

The basic scholarship will be at the standard James Cook University rate, Australian \$23,728 pa. Students coming from overseas are liable for a tuition fee; but this may be waived in the case of a student of high merit. A small relocation allowance may be provided on taking up the scholarship. In addition, an appropriate allowance will be made to cover fieldwork expenses.

The scholarship is for three years (with the possibility of a six month extension). Application deadlines: International students - 31 August 2012; the deadline for students with Australian and New Zealand passports is 31 October 2012.

The academic year in Australia commences about 1st March. Successful applicants would take up their PhD scholarships between January and June 2013. The application procedures for students and the application forms can be found at: <http://www.jcu.edu.au/grs/scholarships/index.htm>

Prospective applicants are invited, in the first place, to get in touch with Professor Aikhenvald at Alexandra.Aikhenvald@jcu.edu.au, providing details of their background, qualifications and interests (including curriculum vitae). Applicants are advised to send samples of their written work in linguistics (at least some of this should be in English).

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[http://www.jcu.edu.au/sass/staff/JCUPRD\\_043649.html](http://www.jcu.edu.au/sass/staff/JCUPRD_043649.html)  
<http://www.aikhenvaldlinguistics.com/>

## **278.7 NEW MEMBERS AND UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **New Members**

Phil Branigan	branigan at mun.ca
Ellen Contini-Morava	elc9j at virginia.edu
Avelino Corral Esteban	avelino.corral at uam.es
Michael Everdell	michael.everdell at oberlin.edu
Erich Fox Tree	foxtree at stanfordalumni.org
John Gluckman	johngluckman at yahoo.com
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Ernest Migliazza	eraseke at yahoo.com
Koji Ohnishi	ohnishi at bio.sc.niigata-u.ac.jp
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### **Updated Member Contact Information**

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Kathleen Shea	kathleendshea at gmail.com
Paul René Tamburro	ptamburro at comcast.net

*Note from the Editor*

On Behalf of SSILA members, we are pleased to welcome our new members. We look forward to hearing from you. Feel free to send correspondence and announcements to us.

*En nombre de los miembros del SSILA, es un placer para dar la bienvenida a los miembros nuevos. Esperamos los comunicados de usted. Siéntase libre para enviar cartas y comunicados a nosotros.*

*KS Rolph*