

Society for Gay and Lesbian Anthropologists

ELIZABETH STASSINOS, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

SuperDeb

This contributing editor would just like to take a minute out to thank Deb Amory (SUNY Purchase) former contributing editor and recently discovered llama for her witty ways, ferocious yet subtle intellect, her soothing (Dollar Bill Bradley-like) demeanor in running this column in the face of endless corporate mergers and pointless wars. Not to mention those complimentary lessons in Jedi mind-control when trying to put the column together while teaching and doing other bizarre parlor games in northern climes. Lucky are they who stumble upon your classes, master! Prosper!

LavLang. VIII

Solga is happy to announce Lavender Languages VIII (that's Lavender Languages vs Godzilla!), Sep 22-24, 2000, American U, Washington DC 20016. Bill says, "The conference provides opportunities (well, you know) to explore lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer language and linguistics, broadly defined. We are eager to receive 150 word proposals for individual presentations or for panels.

Birch Moonwomon and Jay Lemke will be coordinating the Fri day-long text-analysis workshop. They will be circulating their own announcement and further details.

We're hoping to have submissions for a special panel on the language of Will & Grace. (and Jack, and Karen . . .) And there's wide range of sessions already in the works. Conference website, www.american.edu/LavenderLanguages.

We also have a splendid poster announcing conference events which we can send electronically (if you 'receive' in Adobe Acrobat) or by s-mail if you send us a good s-mail address.

Recruiting

Sandy says: Consider yourself invited to do some recruiting for SOLGA. At last count we only need a mere 42 new members to throw us over the legitimate top of the AAA requirements for a section. So go out there and symbolically reproduce for goodness sakes!

Please send any articles or plans for fieldwork in lgbt studies to our column: estassinos@annamaria.edu.

Society for Linguistic Anthropology

RICHARD J SENGHAS AND CYNDI DUNN,
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

I (RJS) open my first column echoing last month's thanks to our out-going column editor, Jim Wilce. We greatly appreciate your service and enthusiasm, Jim!

Conferences and Calls for Papers

Mar is traditionally a month when anthropologists scramble to submit sessions and paper proposals for the next AAA annual meeting. There is still time to submit proposals for volunteered sessions and presentations, including papers, posters, film screenings and special sessions. Deadline: Apr 1, 2000. See the Jan 2000 AN for forms, or www.aaanet.org.

For those who like Paris in the springtime, register for the 3rd annual Evolution of Language Conference, Apr 3-6, 2000. For details, see www.infres.enst.fr/conf/evolang.

Date Change For IGALA 1: The date of the First International Gender and Language Association Conference has been changed. The new date is May 5-7, 2000, at Stanford U. Current details can be found at www-linguistics.stanford.edu/Conferences/igala.

Unity & Difference journal invites 6-8 page papers, poems and visual art on "intersubjectivity" as a liberating response to the effects of global capitalism. Postmark by Apr 15 to U&D, PO Box 241809, Los Angeles, CA 90024.

Anthropolitical Linguistics Revisited

Last spring, Cyndi Dunn reported on a 1998 session of the annual meetings that focussed on the possible role of linguistic anthropologists in public language policy debates. The issue drew enough interest from the SLA membership that a proposal to pursue the matter was passed at the SLA 1998 business meeting. A committee was duly formed, and Ana Celia Zentella reported on the issue at the 1999 business meeting. Since then, I (RJS) have been approached by several section members who have expressed strong interest in continuing discussions on this topic. Clearly, the issues involved are complex, and must address both the ideological issues themselves and our own organizational limitations as a section operating within the AAA. We invite members to submit comments and opinions for inclusion in this column. Anyone willing to organize or participate in a session on this topic at the November meeting should contact me, preferably by email at my Sonoma State address (see Useful Addresses, below).

Invitation to Join LINGANTH

Those interested in linguistic anthropology are invited to join the LINGANTH list, an electronic forum for discussing issues relevant to our field. The LINGANTH list is an informal one and is open to anyone, regardless of affiliation.

LINGANTH was founded by Leila Monaghan, SLA member and former editor of this very column, as a way for linguistic anthropologists to connect with others of our ilk. From a group able to fit around one large table for dinner, the list has grown and now boasts over 300 members from 24 countries. Many lively and successful AAA sessions involving linguistic issues began as impromptu conversations on this list. Topics range from Whorf, to language policy issues, to advice on what is the best A/V gear for linguistic fieldwork and what to do (or not do) with it.

Anyone interested should send an email message to the LINGANTH list administrator at owner-linganth@ats.rochester.edu. (See the end of this column each month.)

Eeny Meeny Miny Mo

By Jesse Lee (Southwest Missouri State U)

For a folklore assignment in an anthropology field methods class, I chose to investigate the following children's rhyme: "Eeny meeny miny mo,/Catch a tiger by the toe,/If he hollers make him pay,/Fifty dollars everyday." A survey of a dozen fellow college students showed that the most common version among college age folks is the same that I had learned, with tiger in the second line. I then began asking family members and university faculty, and also sent out a query on the Linganth List. I soon found that another version existed: "Eeny meeny miny mo,/Catch a nigger by his toe,/If he hollers make him pay,/Fifty dollars everyday." Many of the respondents stated they had been told to use other words, such as tiger, spider, piggy, nickel, fellow and monkey, because it was not socially acceptable to say nigger. Finally, I asked a professor who was a child during World War II and she had yet another version: "Eeny meeny miny mo,/catch a Jap by the toe,/if he hollers make him say,/I surrender USA." My search led me to Funk and Wagnall's *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* (the source for all the versions, citations and information that follow), which revealed that, though most of the rhyme has gone through many versions related to social issues, the first line is ancient, having originated in Druid times, about the first century BC. One version appears as "Eena, meena, mona, mite,/Basca, lora, hora, bite,/Hugga, bucca, bau,/Eggs, butter, cheese, bread,/Stick, stock, stone dead O-U-T!" In 61 BC, the Roman conqueror Suetonius ordered that the holy Druid groves of the sacred Isle of Mona be cut down to bring an end the bloody rites of Druidism. To get to the island of Mona one had to cross the Menai Strait.

The rhyme eventually traveled to America. Versions dating to the late 18th century in New England have roots in Cornwall, England. This 1780 version was found in Massachusetts: "Eeny meeny mony my,/Huskalony bony stry,/Farewell brown hat,/Kippety we wah wat." A version found in Philadelphia in 1783 reads: "Eeny meeny mony Mike,/Butter lather bony strike,/hair bit frost neck,/Halico walico we wo wah wum wack!" At that time, the word bony was commonly used to scare children into obedience by mothers and nurses. In French Canada, children are still using an Eeny meeny that their parents brought from France long ago: "Meeny meeny miny mo,/Cache ton poing derriere ton dos." It is believed that since cache sounds like catch and dos like toe, English-speaking children in the New England region borrowed the phrase, which explains the second line of later versions, "catch a (nigger) by the toe."