

# CHICATA NEWS

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## “The Tongue-Tied American: Confronting the Foreign Language Crisis” A review of Paul Simon’s book

by Adrienne B. Allen

Shakespeare quote “...What’s past is prologue” from the *Tempest* came to mind immediately after reading “The Tongue-Tied American”. An earlier issue of *CHICATA News*, Spring/March 2004, mentioned this book in the article ‘In Memoriam Paul Simon’ by ITCFL. I added it to my summer reading list and now I would like to share with you some of his thoughts. Perhaps they will resonate with you as they did with me.

After reading this work, I realized Senator Simon was truly a man of vision with a commitment to thorough understanding of a problem through rigorous research. He structured the book to build compelling reasons to believe in, to fund, and to implement foreign language programs in U.S. elementary, junior high and high school programs, as well as provide opportunities at graduate and post-graduate levels. Out of the 12 chapters and in the interests of time and space, topics to be touched on here include: 1. The Security Problem, 2. The Quality Problem, 3. The Culture Problem, and, 4. Jobs.

### The Security Problem:

Facts and figures abound accompanied by his insights and observations. He cited the “Decline in Dollar Support for University Foreign-Area Studies 1965-72 to 1975-6: Asia -36.4%; Near East -44.5%; Africa -49.0%; and Latin

America -60.7%. “...We seem to believe that if an emergency arises, we can turn on a spigot some where and the knowledge and expertise we need will spout forth. There is not such a spigot or computer or sudden fount of knowledge. We must begin to “stockpile” language and area resource personnel as we have stockpiled strategic metals” (page 50).

Earlier in the chapter he stated, “The ultimate aim of security is to keep this nation safe from foreign attack... To move in that direction... it is imperative

**.....He structured the book to build compelling reasons to believe in, to fund, and to implement language programs.....**

that U.S. policy be geared toward (1) understanding potential foes; (2) reinforcing ties of friendship with allies and with potential adversaries; and (3) communicating directly with the millions of the world’s most desperate peoples.”

### The Quality Problem

This section tends to refer to the system(s) of foreign language education in the U.S. He argued that “Standardized testing for teachers and students is

one step toward improvement in quality... Teacher competence is essential, but in itself it is not enough.”

He based these and other comments on numerous facts, including, “The problem of foreign languages in post-secondary education is a problem of numbers in that fewer than 10 percent of all college students are required to have a record of having studied a language or having a competence in one in order to get into college, and fewer than one-fifth of all college students... ever receive any foreign language instruction... it is also a problem of allocation: Spanish, French and German (in that order) are the most commonly studied languages... We ought to have some citizens who know every existent language or dialect.” (page 119)

### The Culture Problem.

This chapter reminded me of all the wonderful and exciting interactions which take place at *CHICATA* events, as well as, more sobering current geopolitical news. “Pride in a language is easily confused with nationalism or regionalism. Wars have been fought over attempts to impose another language on a people... We learn both little things and big things through the nuances of language... Foreign language knowledge also brings an appreciation of music, reading, cooking, gardening, dance,

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# CHICATA NEWS

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## *Message From the President*



I hope that all of you had a very nice summer. As we enter the fall season, CHICATA activity starts up again. On September 19, we had a very informative meeting at the Women's Business Development Center, where we learned about certification for business enterprises owned and operated by women. It was a fascinating and very impressive presentation. We are now in the process of planning a program for "in-house" translators and interpreters. Staff translators and interpreters have a variety of issues that are different from "freelancers." We are also planning the CHICATA Interpreters Institute 2004, tentatively scheduled for November 13 and 14. This workshop will focus on the modes and facets of interpretation, and the skills needed for different types of interpretation. Our presenter will be Dr. Manfred J. Heine, who will return to CHICATA by popular demand. Details will be provided later. December is also just around the corner. We are looking forward to a festive holiday party. Watch the mail and the website for the announcement. As in previous years, CHICATA will greet the New Year with its annual "Shop Talk" meeting.

The opportunity to network with your colleagues is one of the greatest benefits our organization has to offer. CHICATA provides a forum for translators and interpreters to meet on a regular basis, and to learn from each other. In addition to our monthly meetings, I also encourage the formation of language groups. The Spanish Language Group, organized by Andrea Friedmann, is a very vibrant sub-group of CHICATA which meets on a regular basis. The Italian Language Group is one of the longest-standing groups. They are in constant communication with each other, exchanging terminology information and other tips. I would like to see other language groups follow these examples. Please let me know if you would like to form a language group.

Members are also welcome to publish articles in The CHICATA News. Our newsletter provides yet another avenue of communication about our profession. If there is a burning issue regarding translation or interpretation that you would like to write about, please contact our newsletter editor, Rocio Jaramillo. If you attend a conference about our profession, you can share your experiences with your colleagues in an article in the newsletter. If you read a book on translation or interpretation, you would be most welcome to submit a book review for publication in The CHICATA News.

I encourage all members to participate in our various activities. Remember that CHICATA is your professional organization, and you are a very important part of it!

Sincerely,

*John F. Bukacek*

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**A brief  
program's survey**

**Dear Fellow Members,**

In the short time I've been serving as VP for Programs at CHICATA – and over the course of my membership years – I've noticed more and more how attendance to our programs has been tapering off. And lately I've been wondering about a way to make everybody – or at least more of you out there – come back to the programs and attend.

Maybe you already have comments or suggestions regarding specific programs, dates, or topics you would like to be considered. Or perhaps you've been wanting to share a thought or two with me. Keep in mind that CHICATA can only grow stronger, more independently, and in that same direction which our collective efforts ultimately keep working towards.

So please, take your time to fill out this brief survey. Think of it as an invitation to actively participate in the shaping of our programs. And don't limit yourself to only those questions asked here or to the space provided; write as much as you want to, and then drop it in the mail to the address given below. We all truly appreciate your input!

**Sincerely,**  
Alex Gualino  
Vice-President for Programs  
1942 West Chicago Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois  
60622-5545

Member Name (Optional):

What was the primary reason(s) that prevented you from attending our Annual CHICATAFEST this past August?

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How about the WBE Certification Program this September?

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Of all the programs CHICATA makes possible on a regular/annual basis, which one is your most favorite and why?

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Which one is your least favorite and why?

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Do you enjoy having events at other members' homes? If you can, would you be willing to host one of these events at your place?

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What would you like to see covered in our programs?

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Please feel free to add your own thoughts...

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## Opportunities in certification for women-owned businesses

by Chun-Yen 'Spring' Stillman

Have you heard the exciting news about money being spent on women owned businesses? CHICATA members did at a seminar on a fine September 19 afternoon at the Women's Business Development Center in Chicago given by Elisha Neely. We not only learned about business certification for women-owned enterprises (in which men can share partnership of work and ownership), we discovered a great thing: There is money out there!

But where is this money? Indeed a lot of this money has been earmarked for people like you and me who are either women or minority business owners and operators. Did you know that in Chicago, the company ComEd each year sets aside a \$2.5 billion budget in order to spend on women and minority owned businesses? Lots of other companies share the same goal. Companies and government agencies often set aside 5% of their budget for Women Business

Enterprise (WBE), and 25% for Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) which are for ethnic minorities.

Ms. Neely showed us how we can access these business opportunities if we offer services which these companies need.

She discussed the advantages of having a national certification which these companies require. In the case of WBE or MBE certification, it offers you visibility in these special categories as well as in the Procurement Center and web link referrals. For CHICATA's majority woman members, this is a good outlet for our services.

In order to understand the application process for WBE certification we were given brochures and instruction sheets that cover in detail the steps needed to be taken for obtaining different types of certification at the Women's Business Development Center. We learned about costs of application and

renewals, the amount of days this process takes, and how to properly fill out paperwork to speed up the certification process. Furthermore, some prerequisites mentioned include a 51% or greater ownership, operational and management control, and contribution in capital and expertise.

The Center also offers financial assistance for start-up and existing businesses. Free one on one counseling is available to women and men. Seminars and workshops are fee-based. The Jump Start program is 5 weeks and the Next Level program is 12 weeks. For more information please give Elisha Neely a call at 312-853-3477. Miss Neely will offer you able help in a friendly manner. ●

*Chu-Yen 'Spring' Stillman translates between Chinese and English. She has a BS in chemical engineering, MS in chemistry, and graduate studies in economics.*

## Paul Simon's Book

*continued from page 1*

and movies... We learn through others whether or not we are getting our ideas across..."

An anecdote involves a Swiss-born writer and geologist and applicant for U.S. citizenship who was asked, "Do you advocate the overthrow of the government of the United States by force or violence?" and he replied, "By force" because he thought he was expected to choose one!

### Regarding Jobs

Compelling statistics included reference to a "1974-75 survey of 6,000 business firms, with 23 percent responding, reported more than 60,000

jobs requiring a second language." He then extrapolated that "the remaining 77 percent of the firms would at least double that number; at least 120,000 jobs among major U.S. business firms require a foreign language." (page 166)

While the aim of the book was not to "discourage people from entering the teaching profession... The evidence of the internationalization of our society and of the job market is everywhere." He mentioned that the Ford Foundation has stronger language requirements for its overseas staff than our own federal government.

In another chapter, The Trade Gap, he states, "We must learn the language

and culture of others if we expect to sell... The needs of business are not limited to salesmanship skills. United States business leaders who expect significant growth must show sensitivity to the culture or other countries, adapt their products, accommodate to other patterns of life." (pages 32-33)

Obviously, it is difficult to "tell all" in a few paragraphs. Nonetheless, in your roles as free-lance translators and interpreters, perhaps you will be tempted, as I was, to read this book and learn the depth and breadth of his research. ●

*Adrienne B. Allen specializes in translation of B2B and B2C marketing communications, English<>Spanish and English<>French.*

## Highlights of the Spanish Language Group

by Adrienne B. Allen

The Spanish Language Group (SLG) of CHICATA met on August 28 at the Liquid Cafe in Evanston. Those present are listed in alphabetical order: Adrienne Allen (writer), Victor Diaz, Victoria Diaz, Andrea Friedmann, Barbara Perez (meeting co-coordinator), Marie-France Schreiber (featured guest speaker and Chicata Webmaster).

While there were several items for us to cover and time was limited, thanks to the presence of Marie-France, we focused on the use of the Internet as a resource for the SLG. She clarified that the CHICATA Board would support the creation of a Web page for CHICATA's Spanish Language Group.

Some cautionary remarks included:

1. There is no guarantee to maintain the privacy of any documents posted.
2. We might need to reflect on what, individually and as a group, we would share with each other and any one else who would have access to this particular page.
3. The advisability of using password protection was a concern. The use of password protection would represent a great deal of work for whomever in the SLG would volunteer to take on that

function. 4. Further reflection was suggested regarding what one would want to include and how to maintain the page. In that vein, she structured a dummy page for us to sample.

Discussion followed on what content might be desirable to post on such a page for use by the members of the CHICATA SLG. Some suggestions were an inventory of glossaries, dictionaries, and periodicals held by SLG members; contact info for useful book stores; and past SLG meeting dates and topics. Other ideas are welcome for discussion and should be forwarded to SLG chair, Andrea Friedmann (comunica@earthlink.net). Nothing final was decided.

The meeting ended as it began, with expressions of deep gratitude to Marie-France for so generously taking time to travel a great distance to meet with us, for clarifying the scope of issues related to developing an SLG Web page, and for all the work she has done as Webmaster.

The next SLG session will take place on Saturday, November 6. Time, place and topic to be determined shortly. ●

*CHICATA's secretary Luisa has new email address:  
LuisaRanieriB@aol.com*

### CHICATA's 2004 CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

**January 17, 2004:** Spanish language group meeting.  
**January 24, 2004:** Annual shoptalk at Sulzer Library.  
**February 21, 2004:** Institute Day. Quality assessment in translation.  
**March 20, 2004:** New tax and health care issues.  
**March 27, 2004:** Spanish language group meeting.  
**April 3, 2004:** Translating tradition in African literature.  
**May 1, 2004:** Annual conference.  
**August 10, 2004:** CHICATA Fest at Grant Park.  
**August 28, 2004:** Spanish language group meeting.  
**September 19, 2004:** Women business enterprise certification.  
**October 23, 2004:** Panel on in-house vs. freelance.  
**November 6, 2004:** Spanish language group meeting.  
**November 13, 2004:** Interpreters Institute Day  
**December 11, 2004:** Holiday Potluck Party.

## Manual de Estilo Spanish Language Stylebook



The 'Manual de Estilo' is a stylebook on Spanish geared for use by English language journalists residing in the U.S.A. The book offers examples on proper grammar, style and pronunciation. It also translates vocabulary used in the business arena.

This Spanish language stylebook, containing 10 chapters, was underwritten by the Knight Ridder corporation and produced by the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. To obtain a copy you may contact the association through their website at [www.nahj.org](http://www.nahj.org) or call them at 202-662-7145.

NAHJ also sponsors workshops in journalism and Spanish language media. NAHJ was founded in 1984 and has approximately 2,000 members. ●

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