



# NAPA

National Association for the Practice of Anthropology

e-Newsletter | September/October 2009

## Welcome to Our NAPA e-Newsletter

In addition to welcoming you to our e-Newsletter, I first want to thank so many of you for your active engagement with NAPA through our LinkedIn Group, Twitter, and Facebook forums. We hope the dialogue continues and develops into something that will be of value to you and your work for years to come.

In this edition, I would like to call your attention to the article "Ethics in Online Fieldwork" by Brian Estes. This article is timely in its alignment with the current Anthropology News theme and the AAA focus on ethics within our discipline. I am also very pleased to introduce Barry Bainton through a new column, "Who's Afraid of Practice." This column will be an ongoing dialogue that will also continue on LinkedIn—where we hope you will join us in lively discussion.

Please note that I will be on a research fellowship in Hong Kong from now through July 2010. Please continue to contact me through my email, [enanas@wayne.edu](mailto:enanas@wayne.edu), through the NAPA LinkedIn Group, and through Skype as user: enanas72.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Nanas  
NAPA e-Newsletter Editor

## Ethics in Online Fieldwork

Brian Estes, MA  
George Mason University and  
Public Policy Associate, AAA<sup>1</sup>

In July 2008, the NAPA Governing Council aired concerns about reinstating language from the 1971 AAA Ethics Statement. Among their concerns was the need for our ethical standards to "reflect the new ways that anthropologists work."<sup>2</sup> With an increasing number of academic and practicing anthropologists conducting fieldwork online and incorporating information and communication technologies (ICTs) into their ethnographic toolkit, standards for ethical practice within virtual realms (e.g. social networking sites, listservs, online interest groups, blogs, virtual worlds, etc.) are becoming increasingly relevant to our discipline.

Although digital ethnographers must wrestle with the same ethical issues as their offline counterparts, those operating in virtual realms and using ICTs are often faced with a distinct set of challenges relating to privacy, data security, the temporality of "public" data, informed consent in quasi-public spaces, digitization of cultural heritage, risks to censored research participants, and the protection of one's 'virtual' self (i.e. avatar), to name a few. In order to adhere to the central tenets of the AAA's 2009 Code of Ethics, anthropologists must carefully evaluate the ICTs they employ throughout the course of their research and the impact that their studies could have upon the "netizens" of virtual communities and worlds.

Several anthropologists have already joined the ranks of scholars evaluating the ethical implications of online fieldwork, and many can offer useful suggestions for responsible ethnographic work in virtual environments. The Association for Internet Researchers, American Association for the Advancement of Science, and Online Ethics Center at the National Academy of Engineering provide resources that can help prepare anthropologists for online research. The AAA could do much to build upon these resources and provide guidance for those both within and outside the discipline.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that these are my personal views and not those of the AAA or its Committee on Ethics.

<sup>2</sup> National Association for the Practice of Anthropology. 2008. "NAPA Position on AAA Return to 1971 Ethics." <http://www.practicinganthropology.org/docs/reports/aaaethicsposition.pdf>, accessed August 17, 2009.

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## NAPA Needs Your Involvement!

### Task Force on Mentoring

We need your ideas to build on the success of our mentoring program. To get involved, please contact the Chair of NAPA's Mentoring Committee, Tom Greaves, [greaves@bucknell.edu](mailto:greaves@bucknell.edu), or NAPA President, Mary Odell Butler, [maryobutler@verizon.net](mailto:maryobutler@verizon.net).

### Membership Committee

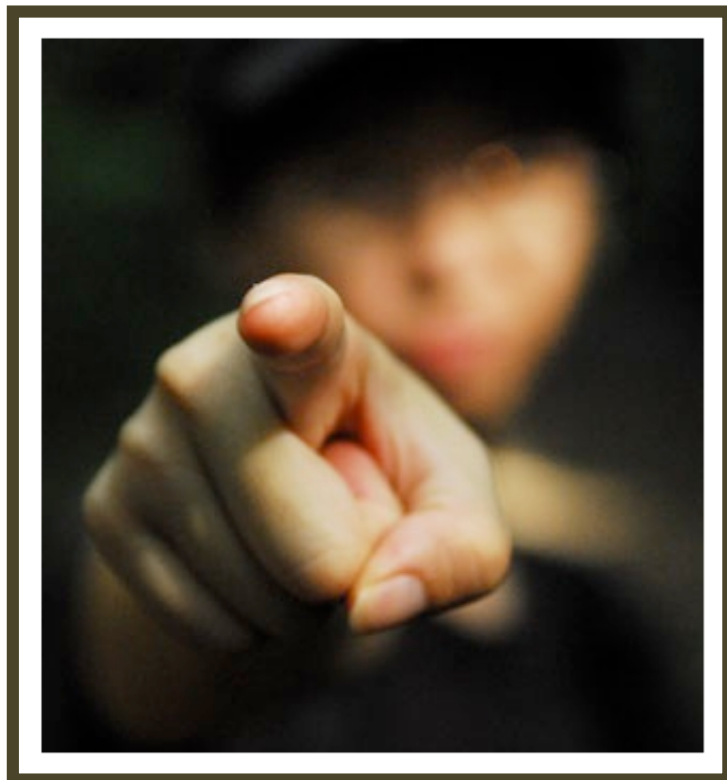
To help us develop recommendations and actions for the Membership Committee, contact NAPA's Membership Committee Chair, Micki Iris, at: [miris@northwestern.edu](mailto:miris@northwestern.edu).

### NAPA e-Newsletter Articles, Ideas, Announcements

We need your involvement to make our e-Newsletter even more informative and engaging. Please contact Elizabeth Nanas at [enanas@wayne.edu](mailto:enanas@wayne.edu) or through Skype as user: enanas72.



Join us on NAPA's LinkedIn Group at <http://www.linkedin.com/> to meet colleagues, start a discussion of particular interest to you, and engage with a diverse group of practicing anthropologists.



The original picture, by Greg Ong, has been cropped and is available at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/gregoryong/3015141045/sizes/o/>

## Who's Afraid of Practice?

*Barry Bainton, Ph.D., B. R. Bainton Associates*

*Elizabeth Nanas, M.Ed., Wayne State U. & Hong Kong U. of Science and Technology*

*This new section will feature discussions about the meaning of "practicing anthropology." The title of this section plays with the notion of practicing anthropology as a big bad wolf and as a location where intimate dramas and scholarly plots have been played out in both private and public contests over who and what belongs as anthropology. I hope that you will provide me with feedback regarding your own experiences, perspectives, and concerns regarding the notion of practice across time and space. We are pleased to begin our discussion with Barry Bainton who has been a central figure to our LinkedIn dialogues regarding the notion of a philosophical split between basic/academic and applied/incorporated anthropology.*

**Barry:** Hi, Elizabeth. What got you interested in the question, *What is applied anthropology?*

**Elizabeth:** The most vivid memory I have of "basic versus applied" anthropology came from a conversation at the 2005 American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting where I met a doctoral student housed at a top ranked university. As our pleasant discussion progressed, I noted that I was studying cultural anthropology with dual concentrations in medical anthropology and business organizational anthropology.

**Barry:** That's an interesting combination especially as we are debating a national health care system reform. How did she respond?

**Elizabeth:** At that point, everything about the conversation changed—it felt like the lights became a little more dim, like there was a suspicious and unwanted gaze thrust upon me, like the person I had been talking to had just vanished leaving a specter of her image for me to contend with. She told me that she was a traditional anthropologist and then proceeded to tell me about her negative perceptions of anthropologists who are aligned with business ventures. I asked her if she considered the Academy a business and the conversation ended.

**Barry:** I am not surprised. We have been having that discussion for more than half century. Anthropologists, such as Elliot Chapple, Conrad Arensberg, and Solon Kimball from the Human Relations school of thought in the 1940/1950 period were engaged in "applied" work that contributed significantly to both the academic and practical growth of anthropology. Yet, to me this is one key to the lost history that holds anthropology back.

**Elizabeth:** This was my first experience with anyone who held the position that there was a distinction between "basic" and "applied" anthropology. And since this time, I have had many opportunities to participate in and observe some of the ways that we, as anthropologists, *think* with these problematic terms and hastily-constructed borders.

**Barry:** Back in the 1970's when we formed SOPA (Society of Professional Anthropologist), the discipline was confronting a demographic and philosophic crisis, not very different from today: Too many students and graduates in anthropology and too few traditional academic or museum positions. Government and the private sectors looked attractive as an alternative employment venue for many ABDs and MAs in anthropology. The trouble was the profession was not training students for these sectors. This became the focus of my dissertation.

**Elizabeth:** My training has been at an institution where professors do not seem to make much of a distinction between anything other than the four fields of anthropology. I have often been surprised to find that there are those who self-identify as "traditional" versus "applied" anthropologists. My position is that we are all practicing anthropology so long as we are engaged with the literature and methods of our discipline. Furthermore, I don't believe that anyone can dissociate themselves from application.

**Barry:** You have a good point. The very fact that anthropologists publish their findings means that they are applying their research to promote themselves within the academy and the discipline. Further, if the anthropologist doesn't use it for some practical end, you can bet someone else will.

**Elizabeth:** Anthropology may appear to be a lone venture, but like any discipline ours is a flowing complex of people, innovations, and ideas. For me, the question is not about "basic" versus "applied," but rather one about our roles within clusters of participants—and this also then implies that there are anthropologists who are not participating in the professional organizations.

**Barry:** I think this is what we should be exploring: ways to connect these two functionally-constructed branches, "academic/basic" and "practicing/applied" in the NAPA LinkedIn site and here in the Newsletter. Academic anthropology needs input of real problems from the applied world and the applied world needs the development of theory and methods to solve those problems.

**Elizabeth:** And we all need to see how permeable our totemic identifications with one or the other are. I envision an examination of our discipline's social network and think this would likely reveal that the only boundaries between us are those that we have constructed to assert ourselves for various strategic reasons. As the AAA increasingly takes into account the diverse kinds of anthropologies being practiced, I hope that we become better equipped to see our interrelation rather than fragmentation. *For more on our conversation, join us at NAPA's LinkedIn Discussion Group. We look forward to continuing this discussion and beginning new discussion in this e-Newsletter as well.*

## **Calls for News, Proposals, and Ideas**

**Anthropology News Addresses Repatriation: Submit Your 300-Word Article Proposal by November 16, 2009.** In recognition of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), *Anthropology News* seeks contributions for a thematic issue on repatriation, broadly conceived. The full CFP is available at [www.aaanet.org/issues/anthronews/CFP-Repatriation.cfm](http://www.aaanet.org/issues/anthronews/CFP-Repatriation.cfm).

**NAPA is seeking contributions for our bi-monthly e-Newsletter. Submission Deadline: November 5, 2009.** For the November/December 2009 NAPA e-Newsletter that will supplement the *Anthropology News* focus: (1) Aging and the Life Course, and (2) The Future(s) of Anthropology.

**AAA is pleased to announce the launch of "Public Anthropology Reviews," a new review section in *American Anthropologist*.** Public Anthropology Reviews will highlight anthropological work principally aimed at non-academic audiences, including websites, blogs, white papers, journalistic articles, briefing reports, online videos, and multimedia presentations. The editors will also consider other traditional and innovative mechanisms for communicating anthropological research and concepts outside of academic realms and welcome suggestions. Please note that this review section will complement existing review sections and will therefore not review books, films or museum exhibits.

**NAPA's e-Newsletter** is edited by Elizabeth Nanas. Ideas & submissions may be addressed to her at:  
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E-Mail: [enanas@wayne.edu](mailto:enanas@wayne.edu)

We are now accepting submissions for materials to be reviewed in the June 2010 issue of AA. Please send materials for review, ideas for review essays and inquiries to the review editors: Melissa Checker (CUNY Queens C), Alaka Wali (Field Museum) and David Vine (American U) at [publicanthreviews@gmail.com](mailto:publicanthreviews@gmail.com)

## Upcoming Conference Announcements

If you have conference announcements, please contact Elizabeth Nanas at [enanas@wayne.edu](mailto:enanas@wayne.edu)

For a continuously updated list of meetings, please visit the AAA's "Other Meetings" link at: [http://aaanet.org/meetings/meetings\\_cal.cfm](http://aaanet.org/meetings/meetings_cal.cfm)

### American Anthropological Association

Philadelphia, PA USA, December 2 – 6, 2009. For details, see: <http://aaanet.org/meetings/>

#### THE END/S OF ANTHROPOLOGY

What is the relevance of anthropology in today's world? Where does our discipline stand in the age of hyper-science and the genome; during an era in which ethnography – as a method and form of textured representation – is being mobilized with vigor and confidence by those working in other disciplinary formations; at a moment when the questions we're asking are also being answered by others in the humanities, social sciences, and media (and often with much more popular recognition)? Does anthropology still provide a unique contribution? What are its contemporary goals, and are they different from those of previous intellectual generations?

The 2009 meetings of the American Anthropological Association will provide a critical space to tackle these scholarly, theoretical, and political concerns head-on as we examine our academic and public roles in relation to the most pressing problems confronting our world today. We intentionally offer the double entendre of "ends" (as both conclusions and purposes) in order to focus attention on anthropology's changing relationships to other disciplines and to a variety of publics. Perhaps thinking collectively about our traditional subjects, objects, and projects would allow us to find new sources of energy for anthropological work. We hope to generate serious conversation about these issues as we continue to reinvent anthropology for this new millennium.

### Society for Applied Anthropology

Merida, Mexico, March 24-27, 2010. For details, see: <http://sfaa.net/sfaa2010.html>

Theme: Vulnerabilities and Exclusion in Globalization



Globalization is changing the context in which we work, the people we work with and the way in which applied researchers and practitioners address real world problems. The 70th Annual Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in Mérida, México will bring attention to the growing challenges facing applied practitioners in the 21st century, especially the effects of globalization on the peoples we work with resulting in higher levels of exclusion of vulnerable populations. How do these factors impact applied practice and social science research? Participants are encouraged to submit presentations, roundtables and workshops around this theme.