

It should therefore be stressed that “ritual community” is not intended to connote a formalized and publicly acknowledged grouping of people but, rather, a subsection of the population united by a shared belief in the efficacy of incantation bowls as a means of warding off evil—a community of users. Thus, the utility of analytical categories such as “ethnic,” “religious” and “ritual” community lies only in their ability to provide us with an artificial starting point from which to seek out the dynamic, often contradictory, nature of social interactions.

*Ali G Scotten won MES Best Student Paper for “Magic and Inter-Communal Relations in Sasanian Iraq: The Case of the Incantation Bowls.” A version of this paper, which also constituted his 2007 MA thesis at the University of Chicago, will be published in London as a chapter in a book on the Sasanians. After finally realizing his dream of excavating in Iran, Ali has moved on to study US-Iran relations at Georgetown’s School of Foreign Service, where he hopes his archaeological background will provide him with fresh insights into current problems.*

*Please send your contributions to MES Contributing Editor Emilio Spadola (es363@columbia.edu).*

## National Association for the Practice of Anthropology

INGA E TREITLER, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

### New NAPA Listserv

NAPA membership will be invited to receive and contribute to a new listserv sponsored by the AAA in a few months. Experience shows that the most successful listservs are those that are maintained by a moderator, but to which membership are invited to post freely. If you are interested in taking on the moderator role, please notify Communication Committee Chair Jim Mullooly (jmullooly@csufresno.edu).

### NAPA Panels at the AAA Annual Meeting

Twelve NAPA panels are scheduled for the 2007 AAA Annual Meeting, November 28–December 2. A detailed list can be found at [www.practicinganthropology.net](http://www.practicinganthropology.net).

### Practitioner Brief

As you are reading this, a new program is being launched at the Sorbonne. It will be the first of its kind in France and is as rare in Europe as in the US. The program, a “professional” PhD in the social sciences, will train students to translate business questions into research design and then render practical actions and solutions.

### Professionalizing Anthropology in France

*By Dominique Desjeux (Sorbonne, U Paris-Descartes) and translated by Ray Horn*

At the 1995 AAA Annual Meeting in Atlanta,



**Dominique Desjeux**

I discovered that 50% of the US-trained PhDs in anthropology worked outside of the university. In the US practitioners seem to be more frequently employed in social work, government, local organizations and NGOs than in business—with a few notable exceptions such as Marietta Baba, Jean Canavan (Motorola), Julia Gluesing and Elizabeth Briody (GM), who have worked in organizations, and Ken Erickson, Hy Mariampolski and Patricia Sunderland who do consumer research.

In France about 10 years ago universities began to examine the job opportunities available to anthropology students, because there are far fewer university posts available than the number of MAs and PhDs awarded. The total number of anthropologists who have graduated in the past 30 years is not huge—about 1,000 PhDs and MAs—but more and more of them are looking for work in the public sector, where job openings are also limited; and in private companies, which now offer more opportunities, albeit with less job security.

In recent years, three constraints have limited professional anthropologists in the private domain. The first is the marked resistance of anthropology faculty to train students for work in business and market development. The second is that students are apprehensive about working in business, preferring to work for the government or local or international charitable organizations. The third constraint is that few companies in France recognize the utility of anthropology. Marketing and human resources departments are much more likely to seek out an expert in psychology than an anthropologist.

The situation appears to be changing, as witnessed by a study I recently did of 150 of my former Sorbonne students from the Magistère of Social Sciences Applied to Intercultural Affairs, Organizations, Consumer Research and the Environment, at the University of Paris-Descartes. Anthropology represents 50% of the courses in the program.

Space does not allow me to present detailed findings here, but broadly speaking it is evident from the study that compared to the 1980s, anthropologists have a wider array of options in the fields of consumer research and health than in urban affairs, which was long a primary outlet for social science students in France, and more opportunities in the private sector, but less job security. To find work, students need a broader background than just anthropology; they must also learn how to conduct field studies, to transform their research into practical applications, and to manage teams of researchers.

To meet these more practical needs, in January 2008 we are launching a professional doctorate at the Sorbonne (University of Paris-Descartes) to train students in directing research and marketing studies in an anthropology-based program. This is a first in France. It demonstrates

my confidence that anthropology can continue to contribute to our understanding of national and international society and allow us to take part in them more effectively.

*Dominique Desjeux is professor of social and cultural anthropology at the Sorbonne (University of Paris-Descartes). He also moderates [www.argonautes.fr](http://www.argonautes.fr), a social science website presenting research and consulting, and edits the journal, *Consommation et Société* for Harmattan. Les échelles d’observation de la consommation was published in *Comprendre le consommateur, éd P Cabin, Auxerre, Sciences Humaines, 1998*.*

*Send news, issues or photos of interest to NAPA members to Inga E Treitler (ingate@knology.net), or propose yourself or someone else for a practitioner brief.*

## National Association of Student Anthropologists

MELINDA BERNARDO, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR  
JENNY CHIO, INCOMING CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

### What Can You Say in 15 Minutes at the Annual Meeting?

*By Alice Campbell (UT Austin)*

“Don’t get too excited,” a colleague urged me. “You’re going to hear a lot of really bad papers.”

Such was the scoop that he, a AAA veteran, gave me, a AAA rookie, when we bumped into each other on the first day of the 2005 AAA Annual Meeting in Washington DC. Having now attended two AAA Annual Meetings, I do not quite share his cynical perspective. I have heard dozens of papers that might be terrific, in print, that did not necessarily translate well to verbal performance. Some were rife with theoretical invocations that went unexplained; others relied on burdensome PowerPoint presentations that projected far more detailed information than audiences could take in; others still were simply unrehearsed. What my colleague and I might share is an understanding that the paper and the conference paper are different, if related, genres and a frustration that a good number of presenters, for whatever reason, neglect to make the transposition.

Graduate student and junior scholars’ papers enjoy the reputation of being among the tightest and the freshest. Nevertheless, this same genre trouble underpins the anxious question, often made by graduate students over drinks and after their sessions, that I wish to address: how can I distill the sophistication and the nuances of my particular research into an eight-page paper without reducing it beyond recognition?

We might do better to admiringly ask, how do others make the 15-minute presentation format work so well? What can I learn from, to take one example, Lesley Fordred-Green and David Green’s terrific presentation at the 2005 AAA Annual Meeting? They spoke about a virtual reality game they developed in response to their