

# ANTHROPOLOGY *IN PRACTICE*

News from the Society for Applied Anthropology in Manitoba (Inc.) S.A.A.M. INC.

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/saam/>

Volume 5, #3 April 2000

## President's Report

Dear friends and colleagues,

This newsletter will be delivered on the last meeting of the season, a busy time for us all [no time to remember that it is April fools' Day!]. Nevertheless I hope that many of you will be able to attend the very interesting talk by Ms. Williamson, Director of Habitat for Humanity, who will tell us about issues concerning our own city of Winnipeg. Anthropologists do not need a tropical sun to look at people's lives, and especially applied anthropologists should be concerned with issues so close to home—issues about which they can do something. Our previous meeting was the well attended conference on **Globalization and Community**, held at the University of Winnipeg on March 11, 2000. By all accounts it was a success. We were privileged to have some excellent speakers, but I would not want to belittle the contributions of all the student volunteers who helped solve all the social and technical problems of running a conference smoothly. My special thanks to our gracious host and sponsor, the University of Winnipeg, and to Dr. George Fulford, Co-Chair of this conference, who worked so hard to organize it and helped so successfully to find the necessary funding. Even in crass economic

terms, the conference was also a success, since it did not deplete our small bank account. The speakers will send me their papers for a forthcoming book edition. We hope to make it available during the summer, at a small price, like the other. This is another accomplishment for S.A.A.M: two conferences and two books in two years!

Just like the mythological many-headed monster Hydra, globalization affects all aspects of our lives, and this explains the large variety of examples presented during this conference. I was impressed by the sophistication of several analyses and by the multiple ramifications as well as the diversity of many local effects of globalization. It was obvious during the question periods that despite globalization, we do not all think alike. This made possible lively and often useful debates.

I was delighted by the timely choice of topic of Monica Wiest's editorial. Just before we scatter during the summer recess, it is important to reconsider our priorities and objectives, and also to start thinking about the replacements on the executive committee. I shall step down as President at the September General Assembly. It is important for the future of our society to have an active and dedicated president, as well as an enthusiastic

executive. Think about this before the general assembly, and also think about recruiting some new members. Members do not have to be anthropologists: they qualify if they are interested in the goals of our society, and we could do better in our recruitment of non-academics. However, if our next president is not an academic, it will be important to recruit professors from the University of Winnipeg and from the University of Manitoba, to maintain links vital to our survival. Remember your three Rs: (do not) Rest, Read and Recruit new members for S.A.A.M.!

**Jean-Luc Chodkiewicz**  
President, S.A.A.M.

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## **S.A.A.M Presentation Summary (January 15, 2000)**

*Roy Dudgeon:*

*Local Knowledge in the Context of  
Globalization*

University of Manitoba PhD. candidate Roy Dudgeon began his talk of local knowledge by distinguishing the difference between the terms "indigenous knowledge" and "traditional ecological knowledge". According to Dudgeon, the indigenous knowledge (IK) paradigm combines models from ecology and agricultural development. The goal of IK practitioners such as Paul Sillitoe is not to develop an emic perspective of agricultural practices, but "to interpret local cultures through the paradigm of science." Dudgeon critiqued Sillitoe for his apolitical stance and failure to fully incorporate native epistemologies into the Western paradigm of science. Dudgeon also questioned whether the market forces driving current scientific research were capable of embracing local models of what, following the Brundtland Commission, has come to be known as "sustainable development".

Dudgeon characterized Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) as "a cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs...about the relationships of human beings with one another and their environment." As such, practitioners of TEK seek to assess the utility of indigenous knowledge on the basis of its ability to explain the world and promote locally-defined models of sustainability. They do not assert the hegemony of Western values (including science), nor do they seek to validate indigenous knowledge on the basis of Western science. Citing Gregory Bateson and Tim Ingold, Dudgeon suggested that positivistic science is far from value-free and often precludes alternative epistemological perspectives which might promote

"deep" ecological awareness. "Western science," Dudgeon said, "can never be the final arbiter of indigenous knowledge."

Dudgeon recommended Bateson's notion of "abduction" as a philosophical basis for TEK. Unlike induction and deduction, which are linear and causal, abduction is relational and based on pattern recognition. Dudgeon further commented that TEK must move from the mechanistic metaphors prevalent in Western science to organic metaphors that better represent both the human and natural worlds. Finally, utilitarian concepts such as "conservation" and centralized "resource management" must give way to holistic understandings of the environment incorporating indigenous values. According to Dudgeon, TEK provides a real alternative to Western science in grappling with the environmental crisis facing the world today.

Following Mr. Dudgeon's presentation, members of the audience asked a number of penetrating questions. Tom Shea described a local project to cultivate wike 'sweat fly' (*acorus calumus*), a native herb with medicinal qualities, and wondered who would benefit (local natives or pharmaceutical companies) if the plant should be grown commercially. Jean-Luc Chodkiewicz asked whether TEK research could open indigenous peoples to scientific and economic exploitation. He noted that large multinational pharmaceutical manufacturers were funding ethnobotanical research in South America and questioned whether the interests of indigenous populations were being served by such activities. Ray Wiest observed that TEK, by its very nature, is politically and economically sensitive.

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## **S.A.A.M Presentation Summary (February 26, 2000)**

*Dr. Raj Dhruvarajan:*

*Waste Pickers of Urban India: A Case Study of Bangalore City*

In this presentation, Dr. Raj Dhruvarajan of the Economics Department at the University of Manitoba discussed the realities of people who are waste pickers in Urban India. He also discussed potential initiatives to better these people's lives. Waste pickers make a living by retrieving recyclable materials such as plastics, paper, metal, glass, and rubber from household and commercial waste and then selling the material to neighbourhood waste buyers.

Bangalore has a population of approximately 6 million people and is the capital of the state of Karnataka in south India. In recent years, the city has become a centre for the computer software industry and is, in Indian terms, an affluent city. The real growth rate of income in Bangalore is a healthy 5 per cent a year. Nevertheless, approximately 750,000 residents of Bangalore live in one of approximately 430 neighbourhood slums. Slum dwellings are typically small mud/adobe houses and often lack clean water, sewage, electricity and regular sanitation services. The residents of Bangalore's slums usually work in the informal sector of the economy, which consists of small, mainly family based, enterprises such as street vendors and petty manufacturing establishments or as labour working for such establishments. This sector accounts for nearly 30 per cent of the city's GDP. These slum dwellers are generally poorly educated and belong to the lowest socioeconomic strata.

Approximately 2,500 metric tons of waste (77 per cent of which is decaying foodstuffs) is produced by the residents of Bangalore each day. Residents place their household garbage in one of

approximately 14,000 neighbourhood street bins which are emptied twice a week by a fleet of 300 garbage trucks. Waste pickers (mainly children, women and old people) pick through neighbourhood garbage bins and recycle approximately 400 metric tons of waste materials (i.e. nearly all of the non foodstuffs) each day.

According to Dr. Dhruvarajan, the average waste picker in Bangalore earns a weekly income of 182 rupees (equivalent in buying power to about Cdn \$ 30 a week). This is not much below the average income in the informal economy of Bangalore. Waste pickers are the primary producers of recyclables in a waste recycling system that includes itinerant waste buyers, local retail buyers, wholesale buyers and industrial recyclers. A diagram illustrating this process is provided below.

Waste picking involves separating recyclable materials from the often decaying food waste in municipal garbage bins (although a few waste pickers also solicit recyclables directly from householders). After cleaning the recyclables, waste pickers sell them to small neighbourhood retail waste buyers. After further cleaning and separation, local retailers in turn sell the waste to wholesale buyers who generally specialize in what they buy. Wholesalers sell the material to manufacturers either directly or through waste processors. Manufacturers reprocess items such as plastic, glass, metal and paper to make new products which eventually make their way back into the retail economy.

According to Dr. Dhruvarajan, there are about 25,000-30,000 waste pickers, 500-1,000 retail buyers, 30-50 wholesale buyers and 1,000 itinerant buyers operating in Bangalore. Although waste pickers are free to do business with any buyers in the recycling network, they generally only sell their recyclables to a single waste buyer. The reason for this, according to Dr. Dhruvarajan, is that waste pickers and waste buyers are in a patron-client

relationship. That is, waste pickers prefer the steady demand for their products assured by the waste buyer with whom they establish ongoing business relationships. Waste buyers also provide a safety net to their waste pickers in bad times when material prices are low, through small loans and grants. In addition, many waste pickers are children from broken homes who look upon their patron as a source of physical protection and occasional shelter. Although waste pickers provide a valuable service to their communities by reducing the city's waste burden and improving the environment, they receive very little in return; they have low incomes, they are shunned by householders and harassed by the police. Buyers frequently sexually abuse young girls. In addition, waste pickers suffer from a number of job related injuries and diseases, including dog bites, cuts, respiratory infection and gastrointestinal disorders. The few government programs that exist for slum dwellers have little direct beneficial impact on the lives of Bangalore's waste pickers. Some non-governmental organizations such as Raggickers Education Development Scheme and Waste Wise provide facilities for waste pickers to clean themselves and socialize. Although waste pickers in some cities have organized unions to improve their working conditions and incomes, waste pickers in Bangalore have not yet unionized.

Dr. Dhruvarajan identified a number of initiatives which could, if implemented, lead to an improvement in the working conditions of waste pickers in the short run and getting them out of the degrading profession in the long run. These include: organizing volunteer doctors to visit the slums on a regular basis; provision of first aid treatment for children suffering cuts and wounds while picking waste; encouraging households to separate recyclables from organic waste; providing tools such as tongs, footwear and masks so that waste pickers are protected from immediate hazards of waste picking; issuing identification badges to

waste pickers, thereby giving them a limited sense of occupational dignity; provision of public facilities for the cleaning, drying and sorting of recyclables; improved education and apprenticeship programs for slum children.

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## Editor's Corner

### Where Do We Go from Here? Future Directions for S.A.A.M.

Since its re-inception in 1996, S.A.A.M. has aspired to unite both academics and practitioners in addressing pertinent issues in the field of applied anthropology. In its state as a relatively small and young organization, S.A.A.M. has contributed to progressive and provocative gatherings which have consistently reflected the activities of anthropologists and other professionals working internationally and at the local level. At the 1998 conference "The Current Status of The Northern Flood Agreement", S.A.A.M. invited Cross Lake community members, community advocates, social scientists, and government officials to discuss and debate the extensive social impact of the Northern Flood Agreement on Northern Manitoba First Nations. These representatives signify S.A.A.M.'s ability and desire to form networks and promote the circulation of anthropological knowledge. This objective was further enhanced by the participation of Menno Wiebe and Jean-Luc Chodkiewicz to the Interchurch inquiry into Northern hydro development in June of 1999, and the publication in August 1999 of a book based on the conference and co-published by S.A.A.M.: *First Nations and Hydroelectric Development in Northern Manitoba*. The 2000 conference "Globalization and Community" demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of anthropological interest and S.A.A.M.'s participation in enhancing those interconnections. Having established a solid base from which to move

forward, S.A.A.M. must now consider the next step and explore ways in which it might develop in order to offer its members relevant and applicable information while building upon a professional network.

It takes organizations time to build desired networks and to establish an image of professionalism. As an organization gains credibility and a solid membership, the steering committee must negotiate between adhering to the stated agenda and assuming a flexible stance in terms of pursuing new ideas or avenues. Those driving the organization must ask themselves and their membership “to what extent are we attaining our stated goals of building professional networks, sharing anthropological knowledge and interests, uniting academics and practitioners, and how should we adapt to better achieve these goals?”

S.A.A.M.’s strengths lie in providing diverse and high quality presentations that reflect an interdisciplinary approach—in fact, many presenters have been scholars trained in fields other than anthropology. Its discourse in current and relevant issues, nonetheless, has predominantly involved voices that come from within the walls of the so-called Ivory Tower. These voices are rich in knowledge and theory and have contributed much to the ongoing circulation of information that S.A.A.M. strives to achieve. Yet in an era in which a significant proportion of anthropologists—and other social scientists—are using their expertise outside these walls, much wisdom and insight is overlooked. It is time for S.A.A.M. to broaden its scope beyond that of the academic social scientist by networking with ‘practising’ applied anthropologists. Without a doubt there exists a wealth of practitioners and consultants who are trained in the understanding of human cultural behaviour and who use anthropological approaches to problem solving, yet do not call themselves anthropologists. Who are these practitioners, and how do we find and

involve them?

In a field like applied anthropology where the boundaries of association are blurry, there exists the danger of too broad or too narrow criteria for participation or membership. The ANTHAP (The Applied Anthropology Computer Network) defines applied anthropologists as:

...professional consultants and on-board problem solvers in many fields that require a theoretical and practical understanding of human cultural behaviour or human biology. They work in advertising, market development, health care, cultural resource management, educational research, business management, economic development, migrant settlement, forensic analysis, and many other areas.. They utilize the research techniques and background information of the anthropological sciences in practical settings where they also develop special anthropological approaches to problem solving ([anthap.oakland.edu](http://anthap.oakland.edu)).

For example, in a contract that I fulfilled at a Winnipeg factory, one element of my job was, in a sense, to do an ethnography of the company’s “plant floor” culture. I had to assess what factory workers who spoke English as a Second Language most needed to know in order to better function in the company (I discovered the company’s goals were both to promote intercultural understanding and to maximize productivity by minimizing mistakes due to misunderstanding). This involved talking to—via interviews and casual conversation—senior and junior management, and plant floor employees and generally spending time on the plant floor. The other component was to develop and deliver English lessons that met the needs of both students and the company. It was essential to demonstrate to the company that their English as a Second

Language program is worth the investment. I applied my anthropological knowledge and techniques in this context but was labelled a workplace consultant. As I think ahead to my graduation with a Master's degree in Anthropology, I may not necessarily label myself as an 'anthropologist', depending upon employment opportunities. This label, though, is not what is so essential in the practice, communication and dialogue of anthropology. My personal experience highlights the importance of reaching out to those who DO anthropology (or could learn from those who do it) but who may label themselves not as practical anthropologists—first and foremost—but as consultants, advisors, or managers.

I believe that by continuing the interdisciplinary interaction S.A.A.M. has demonstrated in the past together with a branching out to non-academically employed practitioners with training or an interest in applied anthropology, S.A.A.M. can be a locus in which the dialogue of the anthropological perspective and method is facilitated and enriched. Involving non-academically employed practitioners presents relevant voices into these discussions and debates. Furthermore, it would enhance the sharing of knowledge, expertise and methodology, heighten public awareness of anthropology and its potential practical and theoretical contributions to society, and increase university ties to the local and practical realm. It also makes more visible practising anthropologists who are often hidden under the guise of consultant or advisor and raises the profile of applied anthropology to the general public and potential employers.

Beyond an invitation to speak at meetings, in what ways can S.A.A.M. become more relevant and useful to practising anthropologists and those interested in learning more about issues and tools of the trade? The following suggestions are the results of brainstorming sessions with fellow aspiring anthropologists (these suggestions do not necessarily represent the views of the executive

committee). While I hope they are productive, I recognize that some would require much time and resources to develop:

- The formation of temporary or permanent partnerships with local organizations (which might become a source of employment or new and dynamic membership)
- Regular member's meetings: focussed meetings in which discussions revolve around job experience, problems, successes, limitations, learning experiences, new techniques, etc.
- Professional development sessions: to facilitate training to effectively write proposals, access funding, and work with the press, lawyers, government, etc.
- The creation of a list serve
- Local job posting or list of consistent employers or types of employment
- The establishment of a mentorship program for students or newly practising anthropologists
- The continuation of S.A.A.M. meetings : involving academics, practitioners, community workers (what can we learn from them, what could they learn from us?)

By stepping out the traditional academic boundaries, we can better promote anthropological interests, methods and insights to a broad range of people: activists, policy makers, international, national and local organizations and learn from them too. Let's hope that the upcoming meeting can be a productive example of this!

If you have any comments about this editorial or other suggestions for future directions for S.A.A.M., please e-mail Monica at [umwiestm@cc.umanitoba.ca](mailto:umwiestm@cc.umanitoba.ca). Please indicate whether you would like your comment included in the next newsletter.

Monica Wiest

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## Book Synopses

*The Third Wave of Modernization in Latin America: Cultural Perspectives on Neoliberalism*, edited by Lynne Phillips, Jaguar Books on Latin America, Number 16. Scholarly Resources Inc., Wilmington, Delaware, 1998.

*Globalization and the Rural Poor in Latin America*, edited by William M. Loker, Directions in Applied Anthropology, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, Colorado, 1999.

Prognostications on impacts of globalization abound, and grounded comparative analyses are now beginning to appear. Anthropologists are joining the effort to examine the local-global interface, building on a legacy of concern for localized “others” on which the outside impinges. Two new anthropological books on globalization in Latin America are likely to be of interest to local readers: *The Third Wave of Modernization in Latin America: Cultural Perspectives on Neoliberalism*, edited by Lynne Phillips; and *Globalization and the Rural Poor in Latin America*, edited by William M. Loker. Formal reviews of these books are forthcoming in *Anthropologica* and *Practicing Anthropology*, respectively, so comments here are limited to a comparative synopsis.

These two books complement each other thematically and interpretively with a rich array of case studies and overview analytic articles – all original essays. The collection edited by Phillips covers rural as well as urban contexts, whereas the collection edited by Loker has an explicit rural focus. Loker argues that rural regions need particular attention to offset the urban and industrial bias inherent in globalization forces consistent with dislodgement of rural small-holders,

commodification of labour, and widespread rural-urban migration. In other words, the Loker collection intends to address rural impacts with an eye to enhance rural society defences and diminish reasons for rural-urban migration.

The Phillips collection works around the “modernization” concept and its continuities with the past, i.e., Northern imposition of value systems, market development, and resource transfers out of local communities and regions. The Loker collection focusses on the rural poor, consciously attempting to identify positive impacts of globalization – “successful engagement with the market” – among the rural poor. Both books highlight the contradictory processes associated with the current wave of globalization in Latin America. The following impact themes are addressed: loss of local autonomy, undermined livelihood, social net disruption, privatization of social supports, declining quality of life, rising unremunerated family labour inputs, disproportionate setbacks for women, increasing marginalization of rural and urban underclasses, rising factionalism, stratification tendencies, ecological destruction and sustainability, collective resistance in the face of open and disguised political repression, and reinvention of local social relations of production and ideology.

Individually and collectively, the essays in these two books draw attention to multiple understandings of the globalization process, diverse impacts on peoples’ lives, and varied engagement with globalization. The evidence drawn from the essays suggests short-lived fragile benefits from application of the neoliberal agenda; impacts are assessed to be preponderantly negative. Consequently, many of the authors give attention to creative local responses to globalization challenges – collective awareness, organizational adjustment, and political action, including a considerable range of resistance organization and potential. The reader

gains a clear sense of the dynamic and dialectical character of the local-global interface, and the complex connection between cultural creativity and the economic and political realities of peoples' lives. The unique contributions of anthropology are well exemplified: a more complete view of globalization processes; a challenge to claims of uniform responses to globalization; and attention to linkages between economic processes and changes in political organization and ideology. All of the contributions offer compelling critical reflection on fieldwork experiences and contributions of applied anthropology.

Dr. Raymond Wiest

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## Membership Profile

*Kevin Spice graduated from the University of Manitoba with an M.A. in Anthropology in 1996. Although he is currently not a member of S.A.A.M., his profile is relevant and inspiring for those interested in practising anthropology. We must ask ourselves, then, how can S.A.A.M. change to appeal to people like Kevin? If you read the Editor's Corner, you might note that many suggestions are echoed here (without collaboration, I might add! MW)). He writes:*

When I was asked to write this profile, I began to think about what members of S.A.A.M. (specifically student members) would want to know about working as a professional anthropologist. I will hope to illustrate what kinds of projects that I am involved in, how I get involved in them, and where I think applied anthropology should be going in the next few years.

For the past two years I have been working in Hollow Water First Nation which is a two hour drive north of Winnipeg on the East side of Lake Winnipeg. As an applied anthropologist, I have done research and writing on justice issues (specifically on the professionalization of Corrections Canada), prompted changes to the legal definitions of aboriginal rights (regarding the Delgamuukw Case), and have written proposals for the Band to access funding from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (which deals with the legacy of residential school abuse). I have written a proposal and initiated a project to reduce community members' dependency on social assistance. Currently, I am working with Chief and Council to set up a process of communication for community members to develop their own election code. In the future, I anticipate becoming involved in issues of both social and economic development. Although the opportunities on the reserve for applied work seem endless, I also teach anthropology courses in Hollow Water through the Brandon University Northern Teachers Education Program (BUNTEP) in which I always include an applied aspect.

My introduction to Hollow Water results from a teaching position that my girlfriend (at the time) had at the school there. While visiting her, I had the opportunity to meet people and begin learning about the context of the community. Asking many questions, I took an active interest not only in the community's problems or needs, but also in the history, identity, language, and goals and aspirations of community members. Although I had no knowledge of the area before I came to Hollow Water, I tried to overcome this by thinking critically and adopting a holistic view of how specific programs, institutions and projects fit into the bigger vision of the community. I spent a lot of time "positioning" myself—familiarizing myself with

different contexts and situations, building rapport and integrity, demonstrating the applicability of my skills, listening to the concerns of the community and looking for opportunities at the local, national and global levels. I have adapted, in a sense, an entrepreneurial attitude as I am always looking for connections to projects.

Of course, the projects that I am involved in must directly benefit the community members and pertain to issues to which I feel committed. In the development and implementation of projects, I consistently build in community involvement, be it through employment or training (my goal is to adequately train individuals in writing proposals for example, to eventually phase myself out of a job). If I produce high quality work in which there is widespread benefit, I am more likely to be approached to be involved in other projects.

Initially, my income was very unstable and insecure. I provided some free or low-cost work to prove my commitment to the community and to show people what I could do to assist them. Once I established a good reputation, people began to ask me to be involved in their projects. I usually include my fee into the budget proposal; be forewarned, payment from the federal government is often delayed six months or more which meant I have had to rely on a variety of sources of income to get me through the "famine" times. These have included substitute teaching, teaching Tai Chi classes, driving "taxi", providing tutoring services, and working on sub-contracts from other consultants in Winnipeg.

From my experiences as working as an independent applied anthropologist, I have developed some ideas about directions for applied anthropology in the future. We should be actively organizing to professionalize applied anthropology. Professionalization requires that we establish a strong program for the development of knowledge,

training and experience. This would provide the basic philosophy that would guide professional behaviour, identity, approaches, techniques, and training methods. It would also help in the evaluation of students' understanding and internalization of applied knowledge and values, and provide guidelines for continuing professional development. Such a philosophy should be based on participatory research and the praxis model of thought. More specifically we need to develop a recruitment process, curriculum, mentorship program and professional development courses. We need to develop strong and meaningful ethics that are relevant to professional anthropologists and the means to ensure ethical standards are met. The development of a strong society that promotes and provides information-sharing among a network of professionals would provide an opportunity for professional anthropologists to work together, acquire large contracts, and provide links to new clients or new work opportunities.

We should establish a professional connection with First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities and organizations as the breadth of the socio-economic issues and needs is boundless. Anthropologists are in a position - ideologically, politically and pragmatically to work with First Nations people. There is a great need for anthropologists with a variety of skills and interests to assist in overcoming past and current forms of oppression. Furthermore, there is a great movement toward self-determination of First Nations peoples and there are many resources available to help these peoples take control of their own lives.

These kinds of connections will raise the profile of anthropology, but we need to go further; public awareness needs to be an increased in terms of an understanding of what professional anthropologists do (and will do). A professional society that acts as an advocate for its members is one that would work

together to market our skills to specific potential clients (government, business and other professions), evaluate the quality of our work, and handle ethical issues. If we can achieve a unified professional society that provides consistent training, development, evaluation, and ensures that the professional anthropologists provide high quality services, then potential clients will better understand what to expect from us. This society should also work on behalf of the professional anthropologist to provide insurance, advocacy, benefits, legal support and jurisdictional protection to ensure our position among other professions. Without a strong effort toward the professionalization of applied anthropology we will all remain as struggling independent consultants.

Kevin Spice

If you haven't already done so, check out our web site at:

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/saam/>

This is where you will find past and current newsletters, relevant links to applied anthropology sites, information about S.A.A.M and its executive committee

Thank you to Roy Dudgeon for developing and maintaining it!

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**Keep your ears open for our annual meeting in September. We need every member's input to sustain and further develop a professional anthropology association!**