

N A S A G A

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NASAGA 99

by Andy Kimball

It was a dark and stormy night. Detectives roved corridors sniffing out clues. Suspects lurked in meeting rooms, looking guilty. Participants leaped onto inflatable toys, volunteered to be cut in half, solicited strangers for a fling on the beach, searched out and defused exploding frogs, told stories, drew pictures, learned. Just another night at NASAGA99. As I turned out the last lights in our Holiday Inn meeting room, I carried a warm smile and a large bag of well-being. What a pleasure it was to spend time with such an extraordinary group of people. As one presenter put it, "Gosh, I never imagined I'd find such a large family of people who made a living having fun, making a contribution, and learning."

Thanks to an extraordinary group of volunteers and QBI staff, I had plenty of free time to sample the treats of NASAGA99 and check in with many of the participants. I heard lots of excitement and praise for the event. I also heard some concerns and ideas for future events. Some people wanted fewer concurrent sessions and more free time. Some wanted more sessions in their particular area of interest. Some participants wanted more programmed time to play the mystery. Some wanted less emphasis on the mystery and more time spent on sessions. Some wanted more serious programs. Some wanted more fun. Some explained that they couldn't learn unless there was less debrief and more play. Other's wanted more debrief and discussion about how to apply the games and less play. In our never-ending quest to put on the perfect conference, all of this feedback has been listened to, entered into our evaluation database, studied intensely, interpreted for unspoken nuances, and passed along to the NASAGA2000 President, Diane Stoy for implementation in next year's event. Thank you to all who participated in NASAGA99. Thank you to QBI staff. Thank you to Discian Group staff. Thank you to NASAGA board members who gave tirelessly of their time. Thank you to those of you who came, who saw, who played.

Working with Passion

by Kevin Eikenberry

Last week I attended the Annual Conference of an organization (the North American Simulation and Gaming Association - <http://NASAGA.org>) that I have served on the Board for for the past six years. During that time I have served as the Chair twice and our company produced the Conference once as well. Never have I learned as much about myself at one of these

conferences as I did last week. One of the things that was made so clear to me last week by the people, surroundings, and events of the conference, was the power of passion at work.

"Passion is involved in your approach to everything that is truly worthwhile."
- Jack Lemmon

I observed the passion with which many of the presenters and sessions leaders worked. This showed in their faces and work and maybe more importantly, in the results they achieved in helping others learn more about their area of expertise. I observed the passion of the collective community of participants to seemingly never tire through a long Conference program each day - with smiles and new friends and new ideas for their work.

The Conference was near one of my clients, so I spent part of one day working with them. I arrived on the client site ready to work, but dressed differently than usual. I was wearing a tie - a sight increasingly out-of-place in this strictly business casual organization. This raised questions as to why I was dressed that way.

My wardrobe led to a brief conversation as I was ready to leave. I was sharing some about the Conference with two of my Customers. They could see the excitement in my voice and body language - it was clear to them that I was enjoying this conference a great deal. As I started to leave the office, one of them said, "Kevin, you are having too much fun". I paused just outside the door then turned around and said. "That is the way work is supposed to be. When you love the work you do, it IS fun."

My comment made an impact and I didn't think too much more about it. The following day at our banquet, I was given a surprise honor for my service to the organization and I told this quick story as I said thank you. What I didn't do was finish the story for those folks at the banquet that night. Maybe they got it and maybe they didn't. Maybe I didn't even get it yet then.

The rest of the story is that having fun in your work, comes from passion. When you find that passion, you are duty bound to share it. My work for NASAGA never took all of my time, and there were certainly weeks when I never did more than 30 minutes work for the organization. But what drew me to be involved was a passion for my work that is represented well in this organization and at its conferences.

Having been drawn in, by all accounts I did a good job of helping the organization move forward. (At least many people said lots of nice things to me during the Conference.) I typically responded with "Thanks, but I was just doing my job."

Just doing your job is one thing. Just doing a job you are passionate about is quite another and that is what I learned, or re-learned or became clearer about last week. When you find work that you are passionate about, miracles can occur. I am now working on how I can live more closely in alignment with those things I am most passionate about more of the time. Last week gave me ample proof of the power and energy and results that can be created by doing that.

So where are you? What is your passion? Are you finding ways to express it and share it with others? If not, why not? When was the last time you felt true joy and passion in your work? If you can't answer that question quickly, I urge you to think about how you can find that experience again (or for the first time).

Don't delay - do it today. Find ways to express your life passions in your life and work. You will benefit, but even more so, you will serve those around you.

Yours in passionate learning,

Kevin :)

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Cool Stuff !!

A Icebreaker Activity from the Thiagi Game Letter.....

Game Designers: David Scott and his teammates, from a workshop in Vancouver.

Key Element: Participants guess little-known facts about others by asking yes/no questions.

Time: 20 minutes.

Participants: Any number.

Materials: 3'x5' index cards and a pencil for each person.

Flow:

1. Distribute one index card and a pencil to each participant. Ask participants to write one little-known fact about themselves on their cards and to keep them hidden from others.
2. Divide the participants into two equal-sized groups. Collect the cards from both groups. Then call one group the "confessors" and give their cards to the other group (called the "inquisitors"), once card per participant, with the written side down. Warn the inquisitors not to read the statements on the cards they receive. (Keep the other cards to reverse roles later.)
3. Ask all participants to stand up. Tell the inquisitors to hold the index cards against their foreheads with the written side showing. Make sure that inquisitors cannot read what is written on their cards, but that everyone else can. Ask the inquisitors to walk around the room, asking each confessor whether the card belongs to him or her. Confessors must say "Yes" to their own cards.
4. After inquisitors have tracked down the correct confessors, they are to ask a series of questions that can be answered by either yes or no to discover the exact nature of the little-known fact. The confessors are to respond truthfully, but limit their responses to "Yes" or "No."
5. The question-and-answer session continues until the inquisitors discover the confessors' little known facts. Inquisitors verify their guesses by reading the statements on the cards. they place the cards on top of their heads and walk around the room in search of someone else holding a card on top of his or her head.
6. Participants with cards on top of their heads swap cards with one another (without reading the cards) and repeat the search-and-question process with the confessors.

7. Conclude the first round of the icebreaker after a suitable amount of time (when each inquisitor has met a few confessors.)

8. Run a second round of the activity with the cards you are still holding, making the confessors the inquisitors and vice versa.

This revised excerpt is from the Thiagi Gameletter,
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IFILL-RAYNOLDS Lifetime Achievement Award

NASAGA annually recognizes one of its members who develops and/or uses simulation games with joy and serious purpose, in the spirit which our colleagues Gennie Raynolds and Don Ifill, who died in 1995, brought to all their work, and specifically to their work with simulation gaming.

Nominations are accepted from April through July annually. The nominees are reviewed and selected by a committee of three NASAGA board members.

The selection criteria for the Ifill-Raynolds Lifetime Achievement Award is as follows:

The recipient's work should respect and make use of the power and spiritual richness of simulation gaming within practical settings. In an exemplary way, their work should:

1. Foster a sense of community among those who interact with it.
2. Deepen understanding of a cultural, organizational, and/or global common good as it provides for interaction with the situation(s) and/or system(s) being modeled.
3. Enable active, positive listening by participants to themselves and/or those different from themselves, enhancing their understanding of themselves and others.
4. Contribute to strengthening and/or changing an organization's or group's climate and spirit while building a deeper understanding of its purpose.

Congratulations to Thiagi for being selected as the 1999 recipient of the Ifill-Raynolds Lifetime Achievement Award.