



SIMAGES

The Official Online Newsletter of the North American Simulation and Gaming Association (NASAGA)

Volume 3, Issue 2

Summer 2003

FRAMEGAME
Inside

Editorial Board

Sivasailam Thiagarajan
Raja Thiagarajan
Matthew Richter
Les Lauber

Table of Contents

Column: The Chair in the Corner <i>by Chris Saeger</i>	2
Featured Game: Five – Ten – Five <i>by Brian Remer</i>	3
Conference: Request for Proposals <i>by Sonia Ribaux</i>	4
Interview: Do You Know this Member? <i>by Beth Levine</i>	5
Column: On Leadership <i>by Matthew Richter</i>	6

A CHAIR IN THE CORNER

BY CHRIS SAEGER

A new regular column, *The Chair in the Corner* is written by the NASAGA Board Chair for you, NASAGA members. Chris' term as chair began in November at the San Diego conference, and he will serve until the Montreal conference in October.

As I sit here writing to you from my chair in the corner, I can't believe it's March already. Someday, spring may arrive in Washington DC. I was feeling stuck about what to write in this column so of course I asked a couple of NASAGA friends for help, so with their participation here goes.

I have to say that the past couple of months have been magical for me as I watch the growth of the email exchanges. As of today there are 317 of us participating in the mailing list, and the number of messages are way up this year. My dream for NASAGA is a year around continuation of the wonderful ideas, sharing and friendship that I always experience at the conference.

This online world begins to call the NA in NASAGA into question. North American? Our members come from 52 countries from around the globe. Many of us have never met in person yet our online community shares powerful ideas each day. On a personal note, I want to thank the participants in my Improve.me game. I asked for comments on a game I am developing and got a terrific response. The comments taught me a great lesson in cross-cultural communication as well as game design. (It's not too late, by the way, you can still go to <http://www.quicktopic.com/18/D/UH92jwsPGT2.html> and participate in the game.)

My own wonderful experience both with the conference and the online activities makes me think. What is the NASAGA experience? Can we produce this experience for more people? What is NASAGA anyway? Thinking about this took me back to a book I purchased back in 1986 at the recommendation of Nasagan, Thiagi. In many ways this book transformed my world-view. The book is *Finite and Infinite Games* by James Carse.

Carse expands our notions of games beyond our traditional thinking. He describes two kinds of games: finite and infinite. A finite game is a game that has fixed rules and boundaries, that is played for the purpose of winning and thereby ending the game. We know these games well in NASAGA, but Carse talks about them in the larger sense. War is an example of a finite game, fought to a conclusion and won by one side or the other.

The second kind of game is an infinite game. This game has no fixed rules or boundaries. In an infinite game the purpose is to continue to play. The ongoing dynamic interactions of the united nations approaches an infinite game. Thinking of NASAGA we may have some rules about who we are, the rules are not fixed and, thanks to the Internet, we are increasingly boundaryless and I believe our aim is to continue the game. So while we may play finite games within NASAGA. Who we are as an organization is clearly closer to the infinite game.

What does it take to continue the game? What does it mean to be an infinite player? "Finite players try to

control the game and fix the future based on the past. Infinite players enjoy being surprised and seek to create new possibilities."

Like NASAGA, creating a new better world is also an infinite game. We cannot set the rules for how to do it based only the study of the past. It is something new that we are discovering as we go along. It is not a game to win and then it is done. It is not something we have to do, but something we might choose to do. When rules and boundaries limit play, the infinite players find ways to include these rules within other play and dissolve them so that play can continue.

Our global participation with one another in a virtual way and the thoughts about infinite games causes me to ask myself, "Why not play in earnest?" NASAGA has the people-power to make a difference in people's lives around the globe through games, simulations, and playfulness. Here is my challenge to all of us. This year I want us to collaborate to design a simulation together—a simulation that addresses some of the pressing issues of peace and social justice that face us each day. I invite you to write me with your ideas at chris_saeger@yahoo.com.

So, what's it gonna be? How will we continue to play together? How can we take our spirit of play into the world and create a difference? How will you be an infinite player today?

Thank you to Sonia, Kevin, Susan, Beth, and Becky for helping me with these thoughts. All of you are wonderful players.

— Christopher

FIVE – TEN – FIVE

BY BRIAN REMER

If you would like your participants to summarize their learning in a way that's quick, creative, and will challenge them to think about the material in new ways, try this frame game. In 5 – 10 – 5, participants write sentences about the training topic using a mix of random words as well as words related to the topic. The result is a fun way to look at the subject at a more profound level.

Purpose

To summarize concepts about the topic area.

Time

Twenty minutes.

Participants

Any number, best with ten and up.

Materials

Paper, Pens, Flip Chart, Markers

Flow

- ◆ Divide participants into groups of three to five. Any number of teams is OK. Select one team and ask them to make a list of five key words related to the topic. Ask another team to make a list of five key words that are NOT related to the topic and that are not related to each other. These key words should be as random as humanly possible.
- ◆ Post the ten key words in alphabetical order on a flip chart or

overhead and give all teams the following instructions:

- ◆ “Write five sentences that are related to the topic. Your team must use all ten key words. You have five minutes.”
- ◆ Encourage teams to be as creative as possible. Suggest that they think of the key words symbolically or as metaphors. Start the clock.
- ◆ At the end of the time period, ask each team to read their sentences and check off the key words on the flip chart as they use them. Award prizes or debrief the activity according to what fits into your program.

Example

During a recent workshop about time management, the following ten key words were generated: bell, chopsticks, tuna, goals, interruption, locomotion, organize, peanuts, planner, prioritize.

Winning sentences included:

- ◆ Prioritize your To Do List by the last bell today and you'll be ready for locomotion tomorrow.
- ◆ Don't waste time organizing peanuts.
- ◆ Writing your planner without goals is like eating dim sum without chopsticks.
- ◆ Organize your tackle box or the big tuna will get away.
- ◆ Use chopsticks with grace and tact to minimize interruptions.

Suggestions

The name of the game is 5 – 10 – 5 but there's no reason to be rigid about the play or time constraints. Give people extra time to write their sentences if needed. The important thing is for them to make unexpected and memorable connections with the training topic. This usually happens most successfully when people don't think about it too much. The best ideas seem to come from first reactions and initial impressions rather than carefully thought out prose. ■

JOIN THE CIRCUS

NASAGA 2003 MONTREAL

ANNUAL CONFERENCE • OCTOBER 15-18 • 2003

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



Ever wanted to run away with the circus? This is your chance! Demonstrate your own gravity defying acts in front of a crowd of cheering fans at NASAGA's Annual conference 2003. Our audience of learning professionals is anxious to experience new tricks, to laugh and play, and to improve performance.

The Request For Proposals (RFP) has all the info you will need to put together your own circus act! Our four-ring circus attracts performers of learning games and simulations from all over the world. Be a presenter at NASAGA 2003 and be in the spotlight!

For complete information, go to our website (www.nasaga.org) and go to conference 2003.

Benefits of presenting at NASAGA 2003

- ◆ Presenters register at a special discounted price.
- ◆ Build upon your Professional Status by presenting at an international conference.
- ◆ Share your ideas with other learning professionals.
- ◆ Learn how others apply your ideas to their diverse situations.
- ◆ Network with learning professionals who are passionate about creating learning experiences that are not only effective but also memorable and fun. Increase your knowledge of the use of games and simulations to enhance learning.

Deadline

The deadline is March 31, 2003 so start planning your presentation now!

First-time Presenter?

If you've never presented before, the NASAGA conference is a great place to start. The audience is friendly and supportive. The conference is relatively small so the number of participants in a session is not intimidating (actually, Nasagans are never intimidating...even in a large group).

If you're interested in presenting but you're not sure, we've set up a dream team of coaches to help you out. These coaches are seasoned presenters at NASAGA (as well as many other conferences) and they can help you help you in different ways.

- ◆ Help you to think through your ideas for a presentation
- ◆ Help you focus your presentation for a NASAGA audience
- ◆ Give you feedback on your presentation plan

Please don't hesitate to contact one of our coaches:

Kevin Eikenberry kevin@discian.com

Leslie Bruner Leslie.Bruner@kp.org

Chris Saeger chris_saeger@yahoo.com

Brian Remer brian@mds-nh.org

Keynote Speakers

We are currently in the process of selecting keynote speakers for the Montreal conference. If you know of someone who is an excellent speaker and you think might be appropriate for NASAGA, please don't hesitate to contact Sonia Ribaux (ribaux@sympatico.ca)

See you in Montreal! ■

DO YOU KNOW THIS MEMBER?

BY BETH LEVINE

In the upcoming SIMAGES I will be providing interviews with members as a way for folks to get to know each other. I have always found that it is the people and friendships that really keep me coming back to NASAGA. Now I have an excuse to get to know more folks and ask some of those questions I always have. (It's also a way to avoid having to write a dull column on the Membership Committee, but don't tell Thiagi.)

Meet Guila Muir!

How long have you been a NASAGA member?

I joined about 4 years ago but let my membership lapse until I participated in the 2002 San Diego conference. People are right—the *people* make NASAGA great!!

How did you learn about NASAGA?

Thiagi mentioned it at an International Association of Facilitators (IAF) Conference, so I checked it out.

Are you planning to attend the Montreal Conference?

Wouldn't miss it!

What do you do to earn money?

I'm celebrating my tenth year as the sole proprietor of my training company here in Seattle.

We help people "pump up" their training, facilitation, and presentation skills. I love participatory adult education. I have worked in this field since 1981, when I taught Thai teachers to design and deliver adult education (on Urban Survival Skills) in a Thai refugee camp.

I particularly love helping experts transform their wisdom into participatory, focused seminars and workshops. Many experience their own

creativity in a completely new way through this process.

What do you do to sustain your energy?

Girl, I swim. I took on "learning to swim in the real way" as my adult learning project about 2 years ago. I always loved the water, but never really learned to "do the crawl..." I try to swim at least four times a week, and constantly strive to improve my stroke. Swimming nurtures not only my endorphin addiction, but a large part of my spiritual needs!

I also have a wonderful partner of 19 years, and a dog named Saba. (Notice how they come *after* swimming?)

What's the thing most likely to drain your energy?

A certain type of puzzle/analytical, even mathematical thinking, I hate to say. Isn't that pitiful? It exhausts my brain. I really considered not joining NASAGA because I thought it might be all that type of brain-orientation. However, I do love working with people whose brains work very differently than mine. This always presents a creative and fun challenge for me.

What kind of music do you listen to?

Mainly classical. My favorite symphony is Brahms's First....I want it played at my funeral. I was a music major in college (french horn) and currently march in a marching band in the summer, playing the euphonium. (A prize to anyone who knows what *that* is!)

What's the most recent movie you've seen?

The Hours. I agree with the critic who said it was a terrible book but made a great movie.

What are you reading?

I just joined my first book group! That forced me to read "*Hidden Power: Presidential Marriages That Shaped Our History*," which I never would have considered reading before. I liked it, but could barely bring myself to read about the Bushes...either set. Yecch!!!

Other than that, I read a ton, mainly good fiction. Loved "*A Delicate Balance*." Am reading, on and off, an infuriating but intriguing book, "*Why Men Don't Listen (And Women Can't Read Maps*"-) a sketchily researched book about the difference in men's and women's brains. It challenges many of my assumptions and beliefs, but I think there's some truth to it. "*As Nature Raised Him: The Boy Who Was Raised as a Girl*" had the same impact on me.

Would you rather be able to fly or be able to become invisible?

I'd rather live underwater. That other stuff seems too pedestrian.

What's the question I should have asked you?

I don't know! That Dr. Clue and I have an intense, long-distance relationship going that revolves around "Survivor?" ■

So now that you've gotten a brief introduction to Guila, you may want to contact her for even more answers to questions. She can be reached through e-mail at guila@guilamuir.com. And if you would like to be interviewed for next month's column, please contact me at levine@fwenc.com, I'd love to "meet" you!



ON LEADERSHIP

BY MATTHEW S. RICHTER

There has been a recent trend in both the public and private sectors to explain the greatness of their organizations by clearly identifying and establishing values statements. It occurred to me, and I realize I am certainly not the first to be hit in the face by this epiphany, that this very powerful movement toward a values-driven work environment faces two challenges. The first problem is that there is a dichotomy between a values statement and the application of the value, which leaves a wide gap that affects performance. In fact, a word such as *integrity* has become so overused in values statements that it is virtually meaningless, and serves only to make executives feel good that they participated in a “humanistic” and “fuzzy” activity. True values need to contain a deeper meaning, an application within the context of the organization, and encourage a passion for adhering to them. The exercise of generating values company-wide is pointless unless the leader’s organization is willing to change its culture to fit the values, or conversely, the values are actual descriptions of the current culture.

The second challenge stems from the schizophrenic tendency to espouse ill-defined principles and then behave in a completely different way. Sometimes the hardest thing to do is to really figure out our own values

systems. What is it we really care about? We see this in political speeches all the time. Everyone agrees that compassion is good, but we have programs that offer charity by diminishing the self-esteem and sense of well-being of their recipients. How these universal values manifest in society differs from group to group.

For example, the owner of one company wanted so desperately to have a business that valued creativity, new ideas, and high quality that he went out and got what he wished for. He wanted the best people available in order to enhance collaboration and to learn from each other. He wanted an environment where people would have the flexibility to be their best and therefore hit home runs with customers. In fact, he spent years and many dollars trying to implement and apply values he, although unaware, didn’t actually believe in or need. In reality, he valued alignment, safety, control, implementation, steadiness, and hierarchical respect. The words coming out of his mouth were not compatible with the way in which he acted. His people experienced the implementation of the second set of values as dismissive, disrespectful, and reductive because their expectations were different. In order to compensate for the dissonance he experienced, he micromanaged, undermined independent thinking, and

stifled the much-vaunted creativity. The resulting exodus that followed over the years left him with a group of drones who would shout “*yes, how high*”.

Today, however, he is successful, mostly because there is a correlation with what he espouses and how he behaves. Sometimes a word or an idea that is positive, seduces us. Honesty and openness; collaboration and respect are so appealing as value statements. They glide off the tongue and reverberate effortlessly through our halls. But are they legitimate descriptions of how we live, how we work, and who we are? We don’t challenge the validity or merit of a value like *accountability*. On the other hand, are we living the essence of accountability when what we really mean is “*we’re not going to help you. You do it. And tough nuggies.*”

Given the complexity of values, it is important to look at them as a system. Bay Area consultant, Patrick Lencioni, in his article “Make Your Values Mean Something” (HBR, 2002), categorizes organizational values in four ways:

◆ **Permission-to-Play Values:**

These values echo the minimum behaviors and standards required by employees in the organization. They are generic in that every organization on the planet would

agree that these are important values to have. Nothing sets them apart. *Integrity*, for instance, is a Permission-to-Play value.

◆ **Core Values:** An idiosyncratic set of values that distinguishes one organization from another. These values may not be compromised and reflect the spirit of the organization. They should provide, as Lencioni says, “a blueprint for employee behavior.” For example, Siebel Systems uses the value of professionalism to set it apart from other Silicon Valley companies.

◆ **Aspirational Values:** These are potentially the values to shoot for. The organization requires these standards to succeed in the future, but currently lacks them.

◆ **Accidental Values:** These values occur as outgrowths from the organizational culture. They do not derive from the leadership. They can be good, fostering growth and collaboration, or bad, stemming from the reinforcement of negative behaviors.

So what does this have to do with leadership? Often, these values

statements just sit around in frames on the wall, gathering dust. Why do values matter so much?

Simply, values are the standards by which we operate. They are fundamental to our identity. They are rules that dictate our behavior and inform our choices. Our values act as guides toward implementing the organizational vision.

What can you do? The first step is to be able to answer the questions below.

1. First identify what distinguishes your organization from others. What values and what beliefs make you unique and special? How do your values support and validate what you do? What values are necessary for the growth and development of your company?
2. Have you identified any Core or Aspirational values that are really just Permission-to-Play values?
3. Are you aware of the cultural drives that affect the values system?
4. Are you being honest with yourself? Are you willing to disregard a

value you think you already have and support when it really isn't reflected in your organization?

5. The converse is true as well. Are you willing to acknowledge a value that is present, but not one you would espouse? Are you willing to engage in long-term and *hard-to-do* cultural change if that value isn't necessarily attractive?
6. Values like *integrity, good communication, respect, and honesty*, etc. are wonderful Permission-to-Play values. They are also unclear. Can you define your values specifically, contextually, and clearly?

Are we really willing to see what values truly drive us toward our vision, or are we willing to be blind for the sake of expediency, conflict avoidance, and ignorance? Most important, are we willing to do the work? There is a reason most organizations avoid a proper values discussion. It's hard work. We don't have a heck of a lot of time to do our day jobs as it is. But in the end, it is pretty simple: do the work and we can be even greater than we already are. Don't do the work properly, and our leadership should be questioned. ■

PLEASE E-MAIL
YOUR IDEAS,
ARTICLES, AND TIPS
FOR SIMAGES TO:

thiagi@thiagi.com

ABOUT NASAGA:

THE NORTH AMERICAN SIMULATION AND GAMING ASSOCIATION (NASAGA) IS A GROWING NETWORK OF PROFESSIONALS WORKING ON THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF GAMES AND SIMULATIONS TO IMPROVE LEARNING RESULTS IN ALL TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS. WE BELIEVE GAMES AND SIMULATIONS ARE AN EXTREMELY USEFUL TOOL FOR CREATING RICH LEARNING.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN NASAGA OR ARE CURRENTLY A MEMBER AND HAVE QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR MEMBERSHIP, VISIT WWW.NASAGA.ORG

MONTHLY ONLINE NASAGA CHAT

April 3, 2003 at 8:00 Eastern, 20:00 GMT-5

The first Thursday of every month, Chris Saeger, NASAGA chair, will hold a live chat for NASAGA members. You must be a NASAGA member who participates in the yahoo group email community to attend. The chat will be located in NASAGA's yahoo group [chat room](#).

Note: When you click on the link you will be asked to log in using your Yahoo ID. You can also register for a Yahoo ID on this page if you have not done so. Please be sure to use the email address where you are currently receiving email from NASAGA when you sign up. This connects your yahoo ID to the NASAGA yahoo group.

For help with Yahoo registration, please visit this website:

<http://help.yahoo.com/help/us/edit/>

BECOME A NASAGA MEMBER

Become a member to NASAGA for FREE! No hassle about having to renew each year. This membership includes full access to the web site, use of the mailing list, and an electronic copy of our newsletter, SIMAGES.

If you would like to become a member, please complete the form at http://www.nasaga.org/become_member.asp . If you have any questions concerning memberships, please send an email to info@nasaga.org.

PLAY FOR PERFORMANCE

As a NASAGA member you are invited to the March issue of this online newsletter. To access this issue point your browser to

<http://www.thiagi.com/pfp/IE4H/march2003.html>

Read, play, and enjoy!

SIMAGES



NASAGA
North American Simulation
and Gaming Association
info@nasaga.org