



# SIMAGES

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

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## How to Stop Stressing Over Change and Go with the Flow



### Editorial Board

Les Lauber  
Brian Remer  
Matthew Richter  
Raja Thiagarajan  
Sivasailam Thiagarajan

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# A CHAIR IN THE CORNER

BY CHRIS SAEGER

Wow! It's the first day of fall already and NASAGA Montreal is only weeks away. This year's conference looks to be the best ever. The conference will explore simulations and games in and beyond the classroom. The keynote presenter Nicolas Richard from Othentika promises a truly unique experience. To get an idea about what's in store visit the Othentika web site at <http://www.othentika.com>.

I am also excited to report that four of the five Ifil-Reynolds award winners will be at the conference this year, and that with other old timers will hold a tribal campfire on Thursday evening.

The board has also taken steps to use some of the conference proceeds to provide student scholarships to future conferences as well as making a contribution to a non-profit organization with a related educational mission.

You can still register. Go to the site now and join us for what promises to be a great time.

The conference brings to an end my time as chair of NASAGA. As I look back on the year it has been a whirlwind. I am excited about some of the work that we have started this year and have high hopes for the upcoming year under Beth Levine's leadership. Beth has been a wonderful vice chair this year always cracking the whip to see that things were moving forward.

## Where We Are

We are in process of revamping our online community. We will move from Yahoo groups to a new service provider. The new service will be Ad-free, have increased capability to hold multiple conversations, and manage the email that you do and don't want to receive. It will also have a chat room available for your use as well as for NASAGA events.

We are working with the Icohere company on an all online conference in the spring of the year. The world of online learning will be a different place after this unique event. To learn a bit more about the Icohere

conference environment and get an idea about what's in store visit <http://www.conferencelink.com/>.

I am also pleased to announce that planning is getting underway for NASAGA 2005 coming to Washington DC! Washington has not been home to a NASAGA conference since 1981. It is also the place where the East Coast War-Gaming council became NASAGA. DC is a great conference venue and we promise you a terrific time.

## Thinking Ahead

Beth Levine and I will be doing a closing session at the conference that we call Fed-Ex from the Future. During the session we will begin to identify the things that are important for us to be working on in the years to come. We will extend this offer through the online community to engage everyone as we move towards a more joyous and playful world and where NASAGA is viewed as the first place to go for the last word on active learning.

— Christopher

# JOIN THE CIRCUS

## NASAGA 2003 MONTREAL



ANNUAL CONFERENCE • OCTOBER 15-18 • 2003

### **Not too late!**

It's not too late to register for the conference. We have an amazing lineup of pre-conference workshops, keynote addresses and concurrent sessions. The web site is updated regularly with new session descriptions — so have a look.

### **Auction**

If you are interested in donating an item for the auction, please contact Kevin at [Kevin@discian.com](mailto:Kevin@discian.com). This year 6 students are participating in the conference with the money that was raised at last year's auction. It's a good cause.

### **Opening soirée –Tribu degli Tricornes**

We are absolutely delighted to announce that the opening soirée for the 2003 NASAGA conference will

feature the Italian group Tribu degli Tricornes. Fiore del Domani and his gypsy musicians are well-known throughout Europe for their enchanting music and captivating ambiance. The opening soirée will take place at a martini bar near the hotel.

If you would like more information about Tribu degli Tricornes, check out the site:

<http://www.tribu-degli-tricornes.ws>

### **Montreal in October**

What can we say about the weather in Montreal in October? It can be beautiful during the day (average temperature 60°) but it will definitely be cool at night. Definitely no snow yet. September has been beautiful and we're keeping our fingers crossed that it will continue. ■

## IT'S HAPPENING SOON...

# ANTICIPATING CHANGE? DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH

BY BRIAN REMER

Looking for a simple activity to introduce a big change in your organization? Here's something you can do in ten minutes and debrief for an hour.

Ask your participants to count their rate of breathing while sitting comfortably relaxed. Give them a start signal, count fifteen seconds to yourself, and signal them to stop. Ask them to record the number of breaths they took in the time period and keep their number to themselves.

Now tell them that, on your signal, you'd like them to take a deep breath and hold it for as long as they can. Emphasize that this is not a contest. You don't care how long anyone holds their breath. Rather, you'd like them to notice what they are sensing and feeling while holding their breath. Encourage them to keep from breathing as long as they can, until it feels as if their eyes are ready to pop out and their

skin is turning blue. Give the signal and wait.

When the room is breathing again, ask this question: "Stop and think for a moment. I asked you to hold your breath. Your lungs began to ache and your head began to spin. You couldn't wait any longer. At what point did you first begin to feel relief?" Most people will report that they felt better as soon as they began to exhale. A few may say they felt better once they took a breath but upon reflection, they will agree that the first sign of relief comes as air leaves the lungs. In fact, it doesn't matter if you have a big gulp of air in your lungs. It's only when that air is in motion that your lungs can extract the oxygen that you need!

## **So here's the first learning point:**

Many people approach change as if they were holding their breath. They try to freeze the present, hold things static, and resist change in an attempt to control the world around them. But our organizations, our

teams, our families, and our communities are alive. They live, breathe, and change every day. They need movement. The purpose of work for each of us is to create movement, to produce some sort of change for the organization. Without movement toward its goals, the organization will suffocate.

Next, tell people you'd like them to hold their breath again for as long as they can. As before, the duration is not important. This time, however, ask them to silently count how many breaths they take in the first fifteen seconds after they exhale. Have them record the number of their breaths next to their previous breathing rate. Give the start signal. Ask people to compare their two different breathing rates. Most will report that their second rate is higher. After holding your breath, your body needs to breathe faster and more often to reach a state of equilibrium. Even though relief comes when you exhale, every one of us is thinking about that next breath – and the ones that follow! We need that regular rhythm.

**The second learning point, then, is this:**

Successful adjustment to change is not just movement, it's movement with predictability. We know what will happen when we exhale. We will take a breath, and then another, and another. There is a predictable rhythm there that we know will sustain us, give us something solid to rely upon, and help us reorient ourselves after the initial shock of change. It's much harder to adjust to change if there's nothing familiar in sight at the other end. Challenge your group to think about how they can use the rhythm of their own life activities to make their adjustment to change smoother. What can managers do to help the people they supervise integrate changes into the flow of their work?

This sense of movement and regularity is what some people refer to as "flow." It is a state in which we are fully present in the moment because we are not preoccupied with what will happen next. We become absorbed in the present activity giving it our full attention and energy, even losing track of time. In his book, *Creativity*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi writes about the lives of creative people from all walks of life. The people he interviewed found themselves most inventive when in a state of flow. It was then they were able to make mental connections, to learn, and to grow.

Flow is available to everyone as a way to be more creative or to adjust to change. Just take a deep breath and move into the flow! ■

# DO YOU KNOW THIS MEMBER?

BETH LEVINE INTERVIEWS  
CATHY MCNALLY FROM NORTHAMPTON, MA

***How long have you been a NASAGA member?***

Since the November conference in San Diego.

***How did you learn about NASAGA?***

Through the conference (which I learned about from an improv colleague.)

***What do you do to earn money?***

A lot! I'm a free lance writer of direct mail and other promotional materials for nonprofits and small businesses through my business McNally Communications. I also am a corporate writing trainer with Better Communications of Boston. And last but not least, I do lots of performing and teaching of improv comedy. My troupe, NetMirth, provides customized comedy performances and improv training for businesses and other organizations.

***What do you do to sustain your energy?***

Goof around with my family and friends. Laugh. Get exercise.

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

Trying to solve computer problems. Listening to people who talk too much.

***What kind of music do you listen to?***

Believe it or not I'm trying to teach myself to sing rap by my 50th birthday (Like all middle aged white women,) so I listen to that a lot lately.

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

American Splendor - Wonderful!

***What are you reading?***

The Once and Future King.

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

Fly - It's been my wish from childhood and I often fly in dreams. You could have immediate escape and complete freedom. If I was invisible I'd just be indulging my nosy streak and feel guilty.

***What's the question I should have asked you?***

I have an incredibly beautiful smart funny family: son James 22, daughter Katy 19 and husband John. ■

# BACKLASH FROM STUDENTS

BY RAJA THIAGARAJAN AND  
SIVASAILAM THIAGARAJAN

An OQ is an open question presented on a web page. Your task is to read the question and type an appropriate answer in a convenient form. Once you have contributed your answer, you can self-evaluate your answer with a scoring key. You can compare your answer with experts' answers. You can compare your answer with other participants' answers.

Here's the background scenario: While chauffeuring me around Atlanta recently, my friend Beverley talked about her experiences in assigning team projects to her students. Although these students learned a lot and applied the new principles and procedures to authentic tasks, they complained, "You made us do all the work. You did not teach us anything. Why didn't just tell us what we were supposed to learn?"

Here's the OQ: If you were Beverley, how would you respond to the students?

Type your response on this month's [OQ page](#). ■

## 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.

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

[thiagi@thiagi.com](mailto:thiagi@thiagi.com)

## 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](http://www.nasaga.org/become_member.asp) . If you have any questions concerning memberships, please send an email to [info@nasaga.org](mailto:info@nasaga.org).

## PLAY FOR PERFORMANCE

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

<http://www.thiagi.com/pfp/IE4H/october2003.html>

Read, play, and enjoy!

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