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Designed by Jennifer McCann, courtesy of White Castle Management Company

Editorial Board: Judee Blohm, Liliane Lessard, & Brian Remer
The board and some of our members are busily working on 50th anniversary projects.

Plans for our conference in Columbus, Ohio, are moving right along. Nikki Boeshansz and Jen McCann are doing a terrific job with all the details. With the hard work of Kate Koski and others, the program is in the final stages of development. We’re happy to be welcoming some new presenters, welcoming back many of our loyal presenters, and featuring some "best of" sessions from previous years.

Board member Scott Nicholson and I have been making contact with game enthusiasts and are going to present a pre-conference session for those who want to incorporate the games they love into their current work. (See page 9) Now, when I play games with new people, I am able to share NASAGA’s vision with them: I’m getting positive responses, interest in NASAGA, and new members.

The NASAGA Training Activity Book, our first publication, is in its final stages of publication. All conference attendees will receive a copy and some of the activities will be run as sessions in this year’s conference. We will have a book signing at the Expo by the many contributors to the book who will be at the conference.

Be sure to read more about the conference on the subsequent pages, including how you might apply for a scholarship or advertise your business through a sponsorship.

We all know the conference every year is excellent, and we hope the online conversation will be better at showing what we do. We will be updating the website look and feel and hope to show the results at the 2012 conference.

We are also excited to announce that Sarasota 2013 is a go! Thanks to Kate Koski, we already have our hotel reserved in Florida and know we’ll have a great time there.

We’re pleased to involve you in 50th anniversary activities as well. Check out the great memories that members are sharing in the column by Liliane Lessard. If you want to contribute, send your responses to one or more of her questions to liliane.lessard@videotron.ca. And try your hand at NASAGA trivia by working on this issue’s puzzle.

Can you tell we are having fun working for NASAGA? Wouldn’t you like to join us? Let me know how you’d like to get involved at gkoeser@gmail.com.

Greg Koeser
Board Chair
Celebrate with us as we bring in the 50th anniversary of NASAGA! Columbus, Ohio, is sure to be the perfect location to bring the entire family and to learn new, exciting techniques to educate a variety of different learners.

As always, we will feature full-day certificate and preconference programs, keynotes, concurrent sessions, games night, an expo, and a banquet filled with fun and celebration. All participants will receive a copy of our first publication, The NASAGA Training Activity Book, meet many of the contributors, and participate in some sessions featuring activities in the book.

You can find descriptions of the certificate courses and one preconference workshop on page 5. One of our keynotes is described on page 10.

NASAGAns love to network with trainers, designers, educators, consultants, and coaches from all over the world. Most participants identify this as one of the highlights of any conference. This year will offer you this unique opportunity, too. Presenters are happy to discuss their work and you will be in sessions and at meals with some of the big names in the field. Read the historical highlights starting on page 15 of this issue to see what NASAGAns share as their conference memories.

**Sponsorships**

NASAGA is a non-profit organization run completely by our volunteers. We have thrived for the past 50 years with generous donations from sponsors such as HRDQ, White Castle, Thiagi, and The Firefly Group. There are many different ways to get your company involved with a variety of different sponsorship opportunities. The benefits of sponsorship far outweigh the costs. Being a lifelong partner of NASAGA means that you will always have networking capabilities all over the world. See the sponsorship opportunities at the conference on page 13.

**Registration rates**

Great news! We have held our conference rates to the same low rates as the last two years!

Are you ready to register? We are ready for you!

We expect the available registrations to fill up quickly. So, we would like to offer you the opportunity to reserve your spot at a reduced early bird rate! To register, click here: [https://www.regonline.com/nasaga2012conference](https://www.regonline.com/nasaga2012conference).

Save $10 on your registration fee by paying with PayPal! Simply enter the discount code PayPal when registering!

*You must currently be a full-time student to qualify for student registration. You will be asked to provide proof of full-time enrollment as defined by your institution.

**You must currently be a full-time employee of a non-profit group to qualify for this discounted registration fee. You will be asked to provide proof of full-time employment as defined by your employer.

***Group rate is available to groups of 3 or more from the same organization.
Scholarships

Each year we offer scholarships. At each conference we have a silent and live auction to raise money to bring new presenters and students to our next conference.

One of our young scholarship winners last year said,

“My experience at NASAGA in October was incredible. I have never experienced such an intellectually-stimulating two and a half days, nor have I ever enjoyed meeting new people as much.”

A seasoned educator who received a first-time incentive scholarship said,

“My experience at my first NASAGA conference was wonderful and I would suggest that any faculty member, teacher, or trainer attend next year. The sessions were all excellent Yes, every single one I attended! The people were outstanding and I made great friends that I look forward to seeing again!”

We have scholarships available for this year’s conference. See page 11 for the scholarship application.

Business Case

Do you need to make a business case for attending the conference? If so, we have two different formats on our conference tab on the website to help you make the case to your employer. Check them out at this link: www.nasaga.org.

Conference hotel

The conference will be held at:

Crowne Plaza Hotel
800-338-4462
33 E. Nationwide Blvd
Columbus, Ohio 43215
United States

Our incredible conference rate is US$119.00/night with free WIFI in the rooms! If you need a roommate, there is a posting on the NASAGA blog that asks for those interested in being a roommate to post their information so that they can be contacted.

For now, to reserve a room, you’ll need to contact the Crowne Plaza and schedule it through them. Later it will be on their website and we will provide the link.
Certificate Programs & Preconference Workshop

On Wednesday, November 7th, NASAGA will offer a choice of two certificate programs or a preconference workshop. These are full-day programs and have an additional fee. These programs provide in-depth learning and are very popular.

Certificate Programs

Certificate A

*The Design of Games, Activities, and Simulations*

*Brian Remer and Raja Thiagarajan*

Maximum: 25 participants

This certificate program provides an opportunity for NASAGA 2012 conference participants to gain professional credibility in the design of games, activities, and simulations for education and training. Previous participants reported real value in working and learning with experienced game designers to focus their conference experience on the specific skills they wanted to build.

There are three required parts to this certificate program.

1. *The pre-conference workshop on the design of games, activities, and simulations*
   
   In this workshop, participants will explore basic concepts related to the design of educational and training activities. They will have hands-on experience in the design and development of games, activities, and simulations, including board games and online games. At the end of the workshop, each participant will identify a specific design project on which to focus her or his work for the rest of the conference.

2. *Five selected sessions*
   
   During the rest of the conference, participants will attend at least five concurrent sessions to acquire experiences and techniques to more effectively complete their design project. There will also be opportunities to meet with others in the program as well as session presenters throughout the conference to share daily insights.

3. *Presentation of design plan*
   
   On the last day of the conference, participants will present their projects and plans in a wrap-up session.

4. *Optional follow-up activity*
   
   Design certificate program participants are strongly encouraged to write up their game, activity, or simulation for publication in SIMAGES (or some other professional journal). The workshop team and the SIMAGES editorial board will assist with their editorial feedback.
Certificate Programs and Preconference Workshop, continued

**Goal**

To design games, activities, and simulations for education and training by using field-tested approaches that produce high levels of instructional motivational effectiveness.

**Objectives**

By the end of the preconference workshop, participants will:

1. Define games, activities, and simulations; specify their advantages and limitations in corporate training and education; and differentiate among simulation and non-simulation activities.
2. Briefly explore and experience different “frames” (templates) for designing non-simulation activities (such as board games, card games, improv games, online games, interactive lectures, and textra games) and different types of simulation activities (such as production simulations, interactive storytelling, cash games, and jolts).
3. Select the most appropriate frame (or type) of activity to suit their specific learning objectives and participant characteristics.

By the final day of the conference, participants will:

4. Have prepared a plan for the design, development, evaluation, and revision of the selected type of activity during the conference.
5. Present their design to peers and facilitators for critique on the final day of the conference.

**Workshop materials**

All participants will receive a copy of Design Your Own Games and Activities published by Jossey Bass. They will also have access to the resources at the NASAGA website and to another website with hundreds of training games and thousands of pages of materials on the design of learning activities.

**Facilitators**

Brian Remer, Creative Learning Director of The Firefly Group, is a designer of interactive strategies for training, facilitation, and performance improvement. He blends information, discussion, games, and participant input to insure involvement and commitment from everyone. He has worked with businesses and organizations in Egypt, Africa, Ecuador, and throughout the United States. Brian is noted for his ability to create a low-pressure, high-impact learning environment. Brian has served on the NASAGA Board of Directors, including chairing the board, and has hosted a NASAGA conference.

Raja Thiagarajan designs software programs for creating web-based training games and activities. He is the Resident Computer Whiz at The Thiagi Group. He has developed and designed many computer game shells and software such as Zingo, PuzzleMaker, and the Thiagi Timers. His technical expertise and innovative mind have added immense value to such clients as Agilent, Cadence Design Systems, and Pfizer. He is an expert game designer and facilitator who has co-delivered programs all over the world for such organizations as ASTD, ISPI, and NASAGA. Raja has also served on the Board of Directors for NASAGA.
Certificate Programs and Preconference Workshop, continued

Certificate B

The Facilitation of Games, Activities, and Simulations

Sivasailam “Thiagi” Thiagarajan

Maximum:  25 participants

This certificate program provides an opportunity for NASAGA 2012 conference participants to gain professional credibility in the facilitation of games, activities, and simulations for education and training. This certificate program complements the Design Certificate Program as well as provides the principles and procedures for participants who are interested in conducting training and educational activities that are more interactive, enjoyable, and effective. People enrolled in this certificate program will have the unique opportunity to work with and learn from experienced facilitators to focus their conference experience on the specific skills they want to build.

There are three required parts to this certificate program.

1. The pre-conference workshop on the facilitation of games, activities, and simulations

In this workshop, participants will explore basic concepts related to instructional facilitation, handling different types of participants, and conducting debriefing discussions. They will gain hands-on experience in agile techniques for getting their participants ready for interactive learning, improvising just-in-time adjustments to the activities to increase their instructional and motivational effectiveness, and conduct after-activity reviews to encourage participants to reflect, gain insights, and share them. At the end of the workshop, each participant will develop a specific plan to improve her or his facilitation style and skills.

2. Five selected sessions

During the rest of the conference, participants will attend at least five concurrent sessions to acquire more experiences and techniques to increase and improve their facilitation skills. In addition to participating in these concurrent sessions, they will also record facilitator behaviors on a systematic observation form.

There will be opportunities to meet with others in the program as well as session facilitators throughout the conference to share daily insights.

3. Presentation of facilitation plan

On the last day of the conference, participants will present their personal action plans in a wrap-up session.

4. Optional follow-up activity

Certificate program participants are strongly encouraged to submit a proposal for the NASAGA 2013 conference (or some other professional conference). The workshop team and the NASAGA conference committee will assist with suitable feedback.
Goal
To conduct games, activities, and simulations by using effective and flexible techniques that result in more engaging activities, thoughtful reflection, and applicable learning.

Objectives
By the end of the preconference workshop, participants will:

1. Differentiate among training, “pure” facilitation, and instructional facilitation; specify the advantages and limitations of instructional facilitation.
2. Identify critical dimensions of activity-based training (including pace, intensity, competition, and playfulness); select, maintain, and balance appropriate intensities of these dimensions; also make appropriate adjustments along these dimensions while facilitating a group.
3. Recall and implement improvisation principles that enable co-opting participants in the design and delivery of training.
4. Create instant training activities that incorporate existing sources of training content.
5. Recognize disruptive behavior patterns among participants; reduce and eliminate these behaviors by transforming hostile participants into active collaborators.
6. Recognize the importance of the debriefing process for linking the training game or activity to the workplace reality and apply a powerful six-phase model for maximizing learning from experience.

By the end of the conference, participants will:

7. Observe facilitators of at least five concurrent sessions during the conference and record their behaviors on a systematic observation form.
8. Create and present their personal action plan for improving their facilitation skills for their peers and facilitators on the final day of the conference.

Workshop materials
All participants will receive a copy of the book, The Instructional Facilitator’s Toolkit. They will also have access to the resources at the NASAGA website and to another website with hundreds of training games and practical articles on facilitation skills.

Facilitator
For the past 40 years Sivasailam “Thiagi” Thiagarajan has been earning a fairly decent living by designing training games, activities, and simulations. He is currently the Resident Mad Scientist at the Thiagi Group, an organization that specializes in effective and enjoyable approaches for improving human performance. He produces a monthly online newsletter, Thiagi GameLetter, that is available on his website. Thiagi has hosted five NASAGA conferences and has been a board member and chairman of the board several times.
Certificate Programs and Preconference Workshop, continued

### Preconference Workshop

**Calling All Gamers: Using your Passion in the Workplace**  
*Facilitated by Scott Nicholson and Greg Koeser*

The goal of this workshop is to help hobby gamers explore ways by which they can take their love for gaming into the workplace.

In this preconference workshop, participants will:

- learn about some common ways hobby games can be used in the workplace;
- play some examples of games based upon commercial games appropriate for corporate settings;
- document their own gaming interests to understand what aspects of their gaming background might be most useful;
- explore how their gaming interests can connect to various workplace and consulting opportunities.

### Audience

This workshop is designed for hobby gamers. No experience in corporate or training games is expected.

### Facilitators

**Scott Nicholson**

*Dr. Scott Nicholson is an associate professor at the School of Information Studies, Syracuse University. He has been a gamer for over 30 years, was the host of Board Games with Scott, and is a published board game designer. He has used his passion for games in working with libraries, and wrote the book Everyone Plays at the Library: Creating Great Gaming Experiences for All Ages. He has also consulted with various organizations on how to use games for training and teaching, and is now focused on using games to change minds through meaningful gamification. More about Dr. Nicholson’s research can be found at http://becauseplaymatters.com.*

**Greg Koeser**

*Greg Koeser is a Senior Training Consultant with RWD, A Division of GP Strategies and the current Chair of the NASAGA Board. He has worked with dozens of Fortune 100 companies and incorporated games into the training/change management of his projects. Greg has been an avid game player for years and years and is pursuing board game designing.*
NASAGA’s latest Ifill-Raynolds lifetime achievement award winner, Brian Remer, will be a keynoter at the conference in Columbus. Here is a description of his keynote and his bio. —editors

Keynote: My Favorite Training Toys

Remember as a kid how the toy box was always more interesting at your best friend’s house? The trucks had bigger tires and the Barbie dolls had longer hair. As adults, our toys are different but it’s still fun to bring them to the sandbox where discovery and fun intersect. In this no-doze play-and-learn keynote, Brian will share the favorites from his training toy box. You’ll play with a number of strategies that grab attention, enhance engagement, and deepen learning. You’ll learn what makes these training toys tick, determine when to use them, and discover how to modify them for any training situation. And unlike your grade school friends, Brian will even let you take his toys to play with in your own sandbox at home!

Bio

Brian Remer, Creative Learning Director of The Firefly Group, is a designer of interactive strategies for training, facilitation, and performance improvement. He blends information, discussion, games, and participant input to insure involvement and commitment from everyone. Through the practical application of experiential education techniques, he creates a learning environment that blends action, reflection, and theory. As a result, participants gain a commitment to continuous learning and leave each session with their own action plan for future growth. His special interest is in helping other trainers to become more effective educators.

With a B.A. in psychology and an M.A. in Intercultural Management from the SIT Graduate Institute, he has worked with businesses and organizations in Egypt, Ecuador, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and throughout the United States. He is a regular presenter at three national training-of-trainers conferences. Brian is a member of the International Society for Performance Improvement and has served on the Board of Directors and as chair and president of the North American Simulation and Gaming Association. He is the 2011 recipient of NASAGA’s Ifill-Raynolds Award for lifetime achievement and the author of Say It Quick! 99-Word Stories About Leadership, Learning, and Life. Every month he writes two on-line publications: The Firefly News Flash for trainers which features a discovery, ideas, and an activity and 99’s on the 9th, a self-contained learning activity for teams. Brian is noted for his ability to create a low-pressure, high-impact learning environment.

Brian Remer
The Firefly Group
802.257.7247
brian@thefirefly.org
www.thefirefly.org
Scholarships &
First-Time Attendee Incentive Awards
for the
NASAGA Annual Conference

Crowne Plaza
33 East Nationwide Blvd
Columbus, Ohio

Deadline for Application: May 11, 2012

NASAGA is a network of professionals working on the design, implementation, and evaluation of games and simulations to improve learning results in education and training. Each year NASAGA holds an annual conference. The goal of the scholarships and first-time incentive awards is to allow more individuals to participate in the conference by paying for part of their conference expenses.

Description
The scholarship covers the conference fee. The conference is from November 8-10, 2012. Those receiving awards are responsible for their travel and accommodations at the conference hotel. They are also responsible for paying for a preconference workshop or certificate program on November 7, 2012, if they wish to attend one.

Eligibility
All first-time attendees are eligible for this award. Priority, however is given to:

- Students who study in the fields of education, educational technology, training, adult education, and related fields.
- Students presenting at the conference.
- Students or teachers who have designed games or simulations.
- Students or teachers who have a current project related to games or simulations.

Notification: All candidates will receive award decisions by June, 2012.

Application
Please provide the following information concisely in a Word document.

Part one: Contact information
Provide us with the following contact information:

- Your name
- Mailing address
- Phone
- Email address
- Name of organization or work affiliation, if applicable
- Educational institution or school district, if applicable
• Address of educational institution or school, if applicable
• Field of study (education, educational technology, etc.) or teaching disciplines
• Degree (undergraduate, graduate, or other: please specify)
• Student status (part-time or full-time), if applicable
• Indicate if you are interested in a full or partial incentive. If partial, what would you like covered?

Part two: Interest
Please include a short essay describing your interest in simulations, games, or other interactive learning.
For example: Have you used games/simulations for education/training purposes? Have you developed games/simulations or other interactive training methods? How do you plan to use games/simulations in your work?
Limit your essay to 500 words.

Part three: Attachments
Please include the following:
1. If applicable, provide a proof of your status as a student in a recognized institution (including your status as part-time or full-time). This should be on the letterhead of your school. A scanned copy is acceptable.
2. Two references
   Please provide two reference letters explaining why you are a good candidate to receive this scholarship. Include their contact information. The letters are expected to come from professors if you are a student or current co-workers or supervisors if you are not a student.
3. Resume
   Include your resume.

Part four: Send
Send by e-mail to: Marla Allen at marlaallen@aol.com. If you have questions, contact Marla at 704.957.1400.

Part five: Telephone interview
You may receive a phone call regarding your application.

Get involved with NASAGA!
• Share conference information with 10 colleagues
• Post a comment or question on the website forum discussion or respond to a blog post
• Use the Facebook Like button to put NASAGA news on your Facebook
• Plug NASAGA when you introduce yourself, or do a presentation or training
Sponsorship Opportunities

**Sponsor Conference Events & Items**

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<th>WHAT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>COST</th>
<th># OF SPONSORS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>Opening night</td>
<td>$500</td>
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<td>Breakfast &amp; Breaks</td>
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<td>Game Night/Expo</td>
<td>Thursday night</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Public acknowledgement; logo in conference program</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Program</td>
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<td>First-time incentive</td>
<td>Cash donations or payment for</td>
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<td>Any amount</td>
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**Marketing Opportunities**

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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Full page:            5 by 8 inches</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flyer in conference bag</td>
<td>Please provide:       150 copies</td>
<td>$50</td>
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Donations and ads are due by August 17th, 2012 in order to be included in the program.

**Contacts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONFERENCE EVENTS</th>
<th>MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>LIVE AUCTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer McCann</td>
<td>Nikki Boeshansz</td>
<td>Julia Feng</td>
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<tr>
<td>PO Box 1498</td>
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<td>614-559-2423</td>
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We are the North American Simulation and Gaming Association!
We are a creative community of professionals who are looking for other consultants, trainers, designers, coaches, or educators who use games, simulations, or experiential learning in their work. We promote the use of interactive methods of education.

NASAGA is Free!
Go to www.nasaga.org to join. Membership provides access to information and participation with the click of a mouse! Read our blog and forum where you can join the conversation: post training/education questions, suggest or ask about resources you know or want, and get immediate responses from people all over the world. Join discussion groups. Gain access to our online newsletter. Read insightful discussions about difficult training issues, and, of course, learn about and register for the 2012 conference in Columbus, Ohio!

The 2012 OHIO Conference
Our conference this year hosts a 50th anniversary celebration, commemorating the on-going proven success of our organization. All attendees will receive our upcoming first publication of highly motivating interactive ideas presented by world leaders in simulations, games, and active learning.

Features of the 2012 Conference
- Certification programs in game design and game facilitation
- Games night to experience full serious games and simulations
  - Keynote speakers who will motivate and educate
- Interactive concurrent sessions addressing various teaching and training topics
  - Expo of presenters and book signing
- Networking opportunities with trainers, designers, educators, consultants, and coaches from all over the world!

Scholarships Available
NASAGA offers a scholarship program to bring students, teachers, and young professionals who are dedicated to the use of simulations, experiential learning, and games, to the conference. Look for our scholarship information on our website.

Register for the NASAGA conference at:
https://www.regonline.com/nasaga2012conference
Membership in NASAGA is FREE!
Memories of NASAGA Over the Years — Part 1

When I went to my first NASAGA conference I was very excited that some of the keynote speakers and presenters were people whose books I had on my shelf and that I used frequently. I looked forward to attending their sessions and perhaps even meeting them. Well, not only did I meet them but the casual atmosphere of the conference was such that I could chat with them over coffee, share a glass of wine, or perhaps sit with them at the banquet. These were people that I looked up to and, to my surprise and delight, who treated me like a peer. This continued every year and eventually led to co-facilitating sessions, collaborating on projects, and publishing games.

Thank you to everyone at NASAGA (whether your book is on my shelf or not) for making me feel that I too had something to contribute.

Sonia Ribaux, sonia@ribaux.ca

My most memorable NASAGA conference activity is assuredly one led by Thiagi in Montreal, about 10 years ago, where we learned no-nonsense instructional design (ID) with almost no time and no budget. He simply created a list of questions for the participants and we had to find the answers in a stack of documents. There was a SME available whom we could consult as needed. I learned that ID can be as simple as instructions for self-learning followed by a debriefing session.

Another memory worth sharing... I met Gilles Chamberland at that same conference but had never had a chance to hear about him until recently. But, when I did hear the name again, I perfectly remembered participating in his session on games and simulations, documented in a book he had written: his session had been really outstanding and engaging, and a great learning opportunity.

Diane Martel, Diane.MARTEL@bdc.ca
Memories of NASAGA Over the Years — Part 1, continued

1982 in Ann Arbor was the most memorable NASAGA conference for the simple reason that Bernard Suits gave the keynote speech entitled "Games and Utopia: Posthumous Reflections" (later printed in "Simulation Gaming" in March, 1984). As anyone who was in attendance will immediately recall, Suits was in rare form, helped along by some pre-speech cocktails. It was a totally humorous and absorbing addition to his classic book, "The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia."

Fred Goodman, fgoodman@umich.edu

My most memorable NASAGA conference was of course when I received the Ifill-Raynolds lifetime achievement award, which, at that moment, turned out to be a large plastic ruler thing. And, of course, the honor itself, which, when I finally believed they weren't joking (those joking people) was one that I still cherish.

And getting to present at the same session with my friend and guide Garry Shirts, whose humor and insight was a gift to us all. And learning from Thiagi that I was the one who inspired him to get more involved in Simulation Games. And my conducting the world's first Tabletop Olympics event, which was eventually turned into a full-fledged simulation game sold by HRDQ.

And the wonderful willingness and playfulness of my fellow participants and the amazing game workshops that I got to teach because of them.

Bernie DeKoven, bernie.dekoven@gmail.com

Having been to ten conferences and having organized two, it is hard for me to pick one specific memory. I do think though that the most memorable moment for me was MCing the circus-themed dinner at the Montreal conference wearing that hat and tights combo. I adore my NASAGA colleagues and find such great inspiration every time I attend.

I look forward to sharing some conversation and a bit of scotch with the fabulous SIMAGES editor (Judee Blohm) at every conference I have the opportunity to attend.

David Matte, daveyvr@mac.com

I was involved with NASAGA on two separate but inspirational moments. I attended the San Diego conference on the recommendation of my friend Dave Matte. I was immediately taken with how smart and how fun everyone was. I remember learning the game Sharks & Dolphins and how it made me consider aspects of group dynamics and people that I had not considered. I had fun playing and meeting people and then I was approached to run for the board. Since I am an improviser I always say 'yes' and to my surprise I was elected! Wow, talk about a welcome! When I sobered up though I thought it might be too soon and I was worried about the cost of travel so I resigned.

Several years later Mr. Matte was in charge of the conference when it was held in Vancouver. He asked if I could perform our Improvised Game Show with The Bobbers and it was an honour and delight to see so many wise and happy faces again!

David C. Jones, www.davidcjones.ca
Memories of NASAGA Over the Years — Part 1, continued

My greatest NASAGA experience is the number of “lifetime friends” that I am honored and blessed to have met: these professional relationships date back almost 20 years and several have even turned into strategic partnerships in business transactions. The NASAGA networking opportunities have been the “oxygen” in the heart of my consulting and training practice.

Marla Allen, marlaallen@aol.com

NASAGA has been a fabulous resource in my career and I have been to about 15 conferences over the last 20 years. At NASAGA, I have met wonderful people who have become dear friends. Because of the intimate nature of the conference and the fact that we are all playing and learning together, there is a natural connection that happens and we get to know folks quickly and easily. I have even had some of my most important business contacts made through NASAGAns who are very generous with their ideas and with helping others get started in game design and facilitation. NASAGA has always been the most valuable conference I attend in any given year.

Leslie Brunker, lbrunker1@msn.com

I have such a smorgasbord of NASAGA memories. I’d like to start with an embarrassing confession. Many years ago, I had run for the Board of Directors but never heard about the outcome. Somehow no one got in touch to let me know that I really was on the Board. It was the epitome of slipping through the cracks. Since I figured I hadn’t made it, I was too embarrassed to ask about it. At one point, Barbara Steinwachs held a Board meeting at her home in Washington, DC, where I also lived. I stopped by to say “hi” and was really touched that so many people seemed genuinely pleased to see me, never realizing that they thought they were greeting a long lost member of the Board. I didn’t stay for the meeting (since I didn’t think I was supposed to) and ended up never attending a single Board meeting my whole term.

My first NASAGA meeting in Los Angeles in the 1980s stays with me because I walked around in total awe, thinking what fun these folks are and realizing how important simulation games really are. I remember Cathy Greenblatt in her Nixon outfit. I remember meeting Garry Shirts, Don Coombs, Barbara Steinwachs, and so many others who became friends over the years.

Another highlight of my years with NASAGA was the conference in Atlanta when I won the Ifill-Reynolds Award. Barbara had corralled several presenters to make the award and my daughter and son-in-law had come just for the event. Almost as important that evening, I was initiated into the Chucklett group, fans of Chuck Petranek. That was really special! I have also been on the presenting end of the Ifill-Reynolds and enjoyed playing with Thiagi in giving the award to Judee Blohm at the conference in Alexandria, VA.

So many friends, so many memories—they make a life.

Sandy Fowler, sfowler@apa.org

I Owe It All to NASAGA: Clearly the NASAGA community can take credit for much of my professional (and personal) success. I attended my first NASAGA in San Francisco in 1999 soon after I began working for Andy Kimball at QBInternational (now QUBE Learning, I believe.) As a sponsor of that conference, Andy offered me two fabulous opportunities. First, the chance to participate in the Noir-styled mystery role-play that ran throughout the conference. Aside NASAGA luminaries that I was too naive to be intimidated by, I played a femme fatale, complete with beret and cigarette holder, and had the time of my life. Second, he offered me the opportunity to present.
My fledgling consulting and training career (I was only a couple years out of grad school) focused on applied improv though I am not sure that was even a term then. Using improv principles and techniques to enhance creativity and communication was obviously what I should present on, but my colleague and mentor Alain Rostain, was already scheduled to do a session on that. I took a risk, as improvisers are wont to do, and presented on storytelling as a learning tool instead. I shared improv tools and approaches to crafting, harvesting, and sharing stories, and offered some ideas about the ways stories could be used to enhance training. I, as I was the first to explicitly admit, was far from an expert, but with the support and enthusiasm and collaborative engagement of NASAGA participants, I was on the way to developing what would become a cornerstone of my work and professional reputation.

At this initial conference I formed relationships with many people who would become some of the most influential in my life. An incomplete list includes Andy Kimball, the incredible mentor in facilitation and training skills who gave me many of my first shots; Kevin Eikenberry who made me believe I could write a book and then took me to Book Expo where I met my publisher; the incomparable Thiagi who is the uber-Guru to us all and who has supported me in countless ways, including writing the foreword to my book, upping sales significantly, I'm sure; Mel Silberman who became a sort of professional surrogate Uncle; Matt DeMarco and Dave Matte who ran with the little crumbs I offered up at conferences and continuously made the work stronger and better; and of course, Matt Richter, with whom I created our most precious of all wonders, our daughter Lia.

It is hard to imagine what my life would be without my NASAGA contacts and experiences. I feel indescribably lucky to have been embraced by the NASAGA community and wish similar riches to anyone in our field.

Kat Koppett, [www.koppett.com](http://www.koppett.com)
Twelve Reasons Why Games are Great for Teaching
By Brian Remer

1. Games are fun. They enhance interest and spark motivation in learners.

2. Games are disarming. People are drawn into the play and begin learning before they have the time to let their inhibitions about learning kick in.

3. Games build teams. In the activity of play, people create bonds that extend to the workplace.

4. Games provide practice and feedback. People can rehearse procedures and see the immediate results without serious consequences.

5. Games let people try out different roles. People can experiment with different leadership styles before using them in the workplace.

6. Games are memorable; they enhance retention. Games provide a context for what is being taught that is easy to recall.

7. Games have an emotional impact. When emotions are involved, learning is deeper and has a longer lasting impression.

8. Games fulfill multiple needs. They can be used to assess what people need to learn, to solve problems, to generate ideas, and to evaluate what people have learned.

9. Games make abstract concepts more concrete. They provide an in-the-moment application of the ideas being taught.

10. Games teach decision-making skills. Both individuals and teams learn techniques to evaluate data and make strategic decisions.

11. Games encourage holistic learning. You can use games to transfer information and knowledge, to practice skills, or to change attitudes.

12. Games provoke thought on multiple levels. Games can teach factual information but they can also encourage thinking on the deeper levels of “How?” and “Why?”

13. Games provide reinforcement and reward. People can gain immediate satisfaction and accomplishment in their learning.

14. Games appeal to different learning styles. People who read, write, draw, or learn through movement can find an outlet in games.

15. Serendipity! With a well-designed and well-run game, you always get more than you expected (Just like finding 15 reasons for using games instead of only 12)!
Training in Virtual Worlds:
An Interview with Anders Gronstedt

Anders Gronstedt (anders@gronstedtgroup.com) is founder of the Gronstedt Group which provides customized learning programs that employ next-generation digital simulations, podcasts, vodcasts, mobile learning, social media, gaming, and virtual worlds to teach people the skills they need in a context that's immersive and energizing. With offices in Denver and Stockholm, the Gronstedt Group serves an international roster of clients, helping industry leaders like HP, Eli Lilly, Ericsson, Jamba Juice, Dell, Coldwell Banker, United Healthcare, and American Eagle Outfitters, along with government clients like the City of New York, innovate their way to better, more cost-effective learning and communication solutions for the new generation of digital natives. — editors

SIMAGES: How did you get started in the design of on-line learning and what drew you specifically to 3D immersive virtual worlds?

Gronstedt: I left a job as a marketing professor at the University of Colorado to start the Gronstedt Group during the Internet boom, when eLearning was a hot growing field. Most eLearning was, and still is, taking the worst of a failed classroom model and moving it online. In contrast, we custom-develop learning simulations that are engaging and fun. When Second Life burst onto the scene five years ago, we saw the potential to make learning even more engaging and social. We began developing everything from sales simulations to emergency response simulations for clients and we launched a weekly virtual worlds speaking series, Train for Success, that’s still running every Thursday at noon ET. Today, we’ve moved beyond Second Life to more robust enterprise platforms of 3D virtual worlds.

SIMAGES: Describe a couple of the projects on which you are working.

Gronstedt: We’re working on a number of interesting projects for communication leader Avaya’s sales organization. A “Mission Impossible” themed performance challenge is designed to certify sales reps in eight skill areas. The “missions” are introduced with a dramatic video that explains the situation and ends with, "Your mission, should you decide to accept it.” The top performers are featured on a leader board and, for each successfully completed activity, the learner earns a badge, which is displayed in the learning environment. In the “Client Value” challenge, participants prepare for a sales call with a fictitious client and go through a video-based sales simulation where they select questions to ask and watch the client responding.

In another program for the same client, we created a 3-D "Virtual Rehearsal Studio," in Avaya’s own web.alive platform, where sales representatives practice preparing for a customer visit and role-playing customer conversations. The virtual workshop, "Maximizing Your Sales Call Preparation," is focused on helping account managers improve their skills at preparing for a sales call. Sales reps take turns playing the role of Julia Parker, the CIO of International University, and the Avaya Account Manager, while other reps give feedback on the performance.
SIMAGES: What are some of the challenges in designing training for a 3D virtual environment?

Gronstedt: The challenge is to make clients reinvent learning instead of just repurpose tired, old learning formats; to do “new things in new ways,” rather than “old things in new ways.” Clients frequently want the 3D world to be an exact mirror image of their live facilities and they want to run exercises the same way they do in the classroom. They want to drag in 2D PowerPoint slides and lecture people instead of using the 3D virtual world for what it does best which is simulating, role-playing, gaming, and collaborating.

SIMAGES: What are some ways in which working in virtual worlds is easier than working in other formats?

Gronstedt: Doing break-out activities is almost impossible in 2D webinar flatland platforms like WebEx and Adobe Connect. You frequently need a facilitator in each break-out group to make them work effectively because people are just talking to disembodied voices that they can’t “see” in the meeting. In the real world, break-out activities take a lot of time to herd people into separate rooms. In the 3D virtual world, breakouts can be done on the fly. It takes seconds to get in break-out groups and start working. And if you need the attention of the facilitator, you can just jump up and down with your avatar to bring their attention. This image shows an example of two breakout groups working side by side around a whiteboard from the virtual worlds workshop (http://www.regonline.com/builder/site/tab1.aspx?EventID=994846) we run with Andrew Boyarsky of CUNY Graduate Center. The breakout groups can see each other but they are far enough apart that they are out of voice range and can’t hear each other.

SIMAGES: What happens in a training session that is held in virtual worlds? What goes on that’s different from what one would experience in a webinar?

Gronstedt: The difference between a webinar and what we do in virtual worlds is the difference between looking through the window of a house and going into the house. You have an incredible sense of presence in virtual worlds. You suspend disbelief and feel that you are going to a place together with other people. In our book, there are seven archetypal activities that virtual worlds are particularly good at: games, informal learning, collaboration, practice and simulations, storytelling, 3D visualization, and role-playing. This image shows an example of 3D data visualization, with a 3D bar chart.

SIMAGES: It seems like using virtual worlds for meetings and training makes sense when people are geographically distant. Are there
Training in Virtual Worlds: An Interview with Anders Gronstedt, continued

advantages to using it when people are in the same location?

Gronstedt: There are several scenarios in which this can work. If you have a large conference with some people in the same location and others participating remotely, a “mixed reality meeting” can be effective: you stream a video recording of the live meeting to the virtual world and you feature the virtual world in the live meeting.

Another scenario is if you have a 3D simulation that people go through together. Case in point, New York City runs the hurricane simulation we developed in partnership with CUNY where small groups of 3 or 4 persons go through the simulation together, sitting in the same computer lab.

SIMAGES: What does the gamification of training mean for you in your work and why is it important?

Gronstedt: It’s a game changer, excuse the pun. We incorporate game features in all the training we do: points, score, badges, levels, high scoring lists, cut-scenes, stories, etc., to keep learning fun and engaging. The new generations of virtual worlds in which we now work are built with state-of-the-art game engines like Unity and Unreal, making it easy to build in elements of gamification.

SIMAGES: Where are we headed with our technology? What will the landscape look like for training five to ten years from now?

Gronstedt: Learning is becoming more and more mobile, leveraging camera, gyro, GPS, touch screen, and other unique features of the mobile devices. In a few years’ time, we will move beyond smart phones and tablets and have the learning in our eye wear, creating a magical lens through which learning is superimposed over the world around us. The technology is here already, we just have to get over our own inertia and start innovating.

For a free weekly meeting, you can use these links:

The meetings are held every Thursday at noon ET at our Train for Success Island in Second Life [http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Business%202/22/33/23]

Some weeks the meetings are held in AvayaLive Engage (formerly web.alive), you can find the schedule at our Facebook page: [http://www.facebook.com/TrainForSuccess]

Do you know a unique training resource NASAGAns might like to know about?
Write a review for SIMAGES and send to Brian Remer
brian@thefirefly.org
Building Teambuilding is a game created by Mary Broussard, Cynthia Downs, Charlotte Flynn, Sharon Forrence, and Joayne Larson at the NASAGA 2011 conference.

The goal of Building Teambuilding is to enhance team functioning. The objective of this activity is for teams of four to create a structure that holds a 500 ml bottle of water at least two inches (2") off the table. Teams have ten minutes to create their structures.

Sequence of activities

1. **Introduction of activity** — Explain roles and rules

   **Roles:** Team members choose an object (in our case, we used pompoms), the colors of the pompoms represent different roles:

   - Yellow (pompom) = Designer
     (Uses paper and markers to design structure; can’t talk)
   - Purple (pompom) = Builder
     (Only person that can manipulate objects and build structure)
   - Orange (pompom) = Communicator
     (Only person who can talk)
   - Black (pompom) = Observer/timekeeper
     (Notes process, keeps time for the group)

   **Rules:**
   - No talking (except for communicator).
   - Every person must change their role (previously designated) at least once during the activity BUT a participant can only offer their role to another team member; a team member cannot just ask for or take someone else's role.
   - If not all the participants switch roles during the activity, then the whole team loses.

2. **Activity**

   - Team members pick a pompom to determine what their initial role will be.
   - Teams are given the details of their role and the rules of the game.
   - Teams are given a set of materials (craft sticks, pipe cleaners, markers, and paper).
   - Activity begins.
Building Teambuilding, continued

3. **Debrief**

Possible debrief questions might include:

- What was it like for the Designer? Builder? Communicator?
- What helped/hindered the process?
- Observer comments?
- How does this exercise apply to working as a team?

Notes:

- We used a bottle of water to measure stability because it was at hand. You can also use another object (coffee cup, conference binder) as your measure of the structure’s stability.
- Depending on the desired outcome, the game can be made more competitive by determining a “winning” team. For example, the winning team could be determined by how many bottles of water the structure can hold, or the tallest structure that can hold a bottle of water, etc.
- Not all groups will divide evenly by four, so plan in advance how you would deal with a team that had less than, or more than four members.
- You may want to develop an observer handout identifying the key areas on which to focus (for example, what helped/hindered process).

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**Answer to NASAGA’s Origins**

This was an “extra letter” puzzle. Words in the original sentences had an additional letter in each and each word was scrambled. When words were unscrambled and the extra letter removed, they formed these sentences. The EXTRA letters formed the sentence below.

**NASAGA traces its origins to the The National Gaming Council which held seven annual conferences of mostly educators, historians, and sociologists. Some of its members chartered a plane to attend an ISAGA conference in Berlin and liked the organization’s charter. Previously, the National Gaming Council had been known as the East Coast War Games Council which had held six annual conventions.**

EXTRA Letters:

**In the mid seventies it became The N. American Simulation and Gaming Assoc.**
Unscrambled: NASAGA Trivia

Read each clue in numbers 1-8 and write the answer in the appropriate boxes. Then use all of the letters from the circles within the boxes to form the answer to number 9.

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  
5.  
6.  
7.  
8.  
9.  

Clues:

1. One of two direct precursor organizations to NASAGA.
2. Major professional group of first members.
3. Name of NASAGA’s lifetime achievement award.
4. NASAGA’s online newsletter.
5. International journal with which NASAGA is affiliated.
6. Member who has hosted the most conferences.
7. Well-known female founding member.
8. Something all NASAGAns do.
9. NASAGA’s mission.

Hint: Last issue’s puzzle will help with some items.