



NASIG Newsletter

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President's Corner

Katy Ginanni

Fall in western North Carolina was not quite as splendid as the prognosticators of such things predicted, but it was splendid enough for me. After two autumns in San Antonio, Texas and two in Johannesburg, South Africa (neither of which has any fall color to speak of), I reveled in the glory of fall in the Smoky Mountains. Last weekend, though, it seemed winter was at our doorstep as we had the first flurries of the season! I have now purchased rain boots, snow boots, flannel sheets, an additional quilt, more turtlenecks, a windshield scraper, lock de-icer, and salt (for the front steps), and I plan to lay in a provision of canned goods for the pantry. I think I'm almost ready for my first winter in the mountains!

Contingency Planning

You may recall that the day prior to the beginning of our conference in Palm Springs, the Executive Board and representatives from each committee met with consultant, Mark Lane, for a day of planning various scenarios that could occur in the next two and four years. Since then, the board has formed an internal task force to make some recommendations to the full board about actions we should follow in the coming months and years. The task force, chaired by Vice President Steve Shadle, will report to the board on their activities at the upcoming fall board meeting in St. Louis. We will probably have at least a brief report from them in the March issue of the *Newsletter*. What I'd like to do here is give you just a taste of what we talked about in June during that day-long session.

Mark Lane was an excellent facilitator. He began the day by educating us about different types of analysis, including SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) and PEST (political, economic, socio-cultural and technological factors). We also talked about issues vs. risks, or things that are currently issues and those that might become issues. As you might guess, we split into smaller groups and each group was tasked with coming up with scenarios that might likely occur in two years and in four years. The scenarios could be positive or negative. We re-grouped and culled out the duplicates. Then we put each scenario into a matrix that included the following: high probability/low impact; high probability/high impact; low probability/low impact; low probability/high impact. Each group took several scenarios and set about coming up with possible actions, or contingency plans, for each. Some of the actions were short term, and some were long term. It is this list of scenarios and suggested actions with which the task force is currently working. I'm sure you can guess some of them: what if the economy doesn't improve or worsens? What if sponsorship of NASIG conferences drops? What if audience preferences change? And so forth.

One of the more interesting exercises was coming up with a group of words to describe the following organizations: NASIG, ALA, and the ER&L conference. Later in the day, Lane asked us, "If you were re-creating NASIG today, what two words would you like to associate with it?" He suggested the organization agree

on two words, and then use them in all NASIG materials.

Some final questions Lane suggested we focus on to re-create NASIG included what products you are offering, and to whom. How will you deliver your value? What's the overall message, and at what price? Important questions, indeed, and ones the executive board will continue to grapple with in the coming months.

Telecommunications Task Force

In 2009, Rick Anderson created the Telecommunications Task Force (TTF), sometimes also known as the Conference Calling Task Force. Char Simser served as chair and was assisted by Selden Durgom Lamoureux (North Carolina State University) and Derrik Hiatt (Wake Forest University). Although the executive board was not dissatisfied with its conference calling provider, we thought we should investigate options to make sure we were getting the best and least expensive service. The final recommendation of the task force was to keep the current service, but also to encourage committees to use Skype whenever possible. We know it won't always be possible for everyone to use Skype. Some organizations don't allow employees to download software, and some won't allow Voice-over-IP calls to go through a firewall. Although it is possible to make a Skype to land-line call, there is a charge for those calls. We investigated the possibility of setting up a small NASIG account to pay for such calls, but further

research (and actual use of Skype to land-line) showed the sound quality is not yet up to our standards. So, we'll continue our current conference calling service, but if all members of a committee are able to download and use Skype, that will save a little money for NASIG. We've asked all committee chairs to add a note to their committee manuals to use Skype when they can. For those who are unfamiliar with Skype, and for those who have not used it for conference calling, the TTF created a "how to" document which currently resides in the ECC's Manual Wiki. You can see it at <http://nasigeccmanual.pbworks.com/w/page/26970906/Skype-for-Conference-Calls>. The TTF has now been sunsetted, and we thank Char, Selden and Derrik for their service.

Meet Me in St. Louis!

Oh, c'mon. Someone had to say it sooner or later. I've had a sneak peek at the program and activities being prepared by Program Planning and Conference Planning Committees, and I am really looking forward to our conference in St. Louis next June! I hope many of you are planning to attend. St. Louis is an exciting, interesting city, and I'm sure our conference will continue to live up to its reputation of excellent programs and presentations. The conference website will probably be populated with information not too long after the fall board meeting. Check http://www.nasig.org/conference_registration.cfm soon!