

# NASIG Newsletter

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## Profile of Steve Kelly: President of NASIG

Wm. Joseph Thomas

Steve Kelley is the head of continuing resources and database management at Wake Forest University, where he has worked since 2002. His department is charged with serials receipt and cataloging, physical processing, authority control, and catalog database maintenance. Steve is also the liaison to the Russian and East European Studies Department.

When asked what he did before he became a librarian, and what led him to library school, Steve started his answer with his undergraduate degree. He earned his B.A. in history, with a Russian minor, from Washington University in St. Louis in 1991. After Steve graduated, he worked as a temp for a while, and then found a “permanent” job at a sporting goods wholesaler. Steve said that he really didn’t enjoy working at the wholesaler. His older brother had been working as a copy cataloger at Washington University in St. Louis for a few years at that time, and seemed to really like working in a library, so Steve got a job at the same library in the Serials Department.

In 1993, Steve moved to Chapel Hill, NC, to attend graduate school for history. That wasn’t a good fit, so he left the program. Having really enjoyed library work, he pursued a paraprofessional job at UNC-Chapel Hill in January 1994. Steve divided his time, working in the Backlog Unit of the Copy Cataloging Section in the morning, and in the Collection Development Department in the afternoon. It gave him an interesting view of multiple areas in libraries, and it inspired him to start library school that fall. He went to graduate school



part time and continued to work full time, so he didn’t graduate until December 1999 (But at least he didn’t have any graduate school debt!).

Steve’s first professional position was as cataloging librarian at Ball State University from 1999 to 2002. In 2002, he began working at the Z. Smith Reynolds Library at Wake Forest University. Prior to his current position, Steve worked at Wake Forest as a serials cataloging librarian and then head of resource maintenance. His job has gradually grown through the years; now he supervises periodicals check-in, binding and marking, and catalog maintenance (including withdrawals, batch loading, record corrections, and authority control).

Steve noted that he likes “solving problems...figuring out processes.” A co-worker of his has called him a

“junior Henry Ford” because he really likes figuring out a process for new areas of work. Conversely, the parts of his work he likes least are probably those things that are repetitive. He deals with them by listening to music while he works. He understands that other folks might find it distracting, but he feels that it helps him focus.

Steve has been a member of NASIG since 2000. He first explored the organization because the dean of technical services at Ball State (and former serials cataloger) suggested that he go to the NASIG annual conference, especially to attend a serials cataloging pre-conference. Of course, the fact that the conference was held in San Diego, California that year might have helped draw him.

Steve is an active member of the organization. Before being elected vice president/president-elect in 2013, he was vice chair and chair of the Membership Development Committee. In 2009, Steve was elected a member-at-large of the Executive Board for a term. He worked with the 2007 and 2009 conferences as well. Steve served as the audio-visual coordinator for the Conference Planning Committee for the 2007 conference in Louisville, Kentucky. He was then lucky enough, as he describes it, to be tapped to be the co-chair (with Eleanor Cook) of the Conference Planning Committee for the 2009 conference in Asheville, North Carolina. Steve says his favorite NASIG conference was probably this conference, in Asheville. It was a huge amount of work, he says, but it was also a lot of fun. He continued, “Doing something like that is sort of a trial by fire, and you can really bond with the people you share the experience with.”

Steve is also active in ALCTS and the North Carolina Library Association (NCLA). For ALCTS, he has served on the Continuing Education Committee of the Cataloging and Metadata Management Section, on the Continuing Resources Cataloging Committee of the Continuing Resources Section, and as a jury member for the Ulrich’s Serials Librarianship Award, Edward Swanson Memorial Best of LRTS Award, and the Esther J. Piercy Awards (whew!). Steve is still a member of the Continuing Resources Committee and in the third year of his membership of Cataloging Committee:

Description and Access (CC:DA). As a member of the NCLA, Steve has been active in conference planning activities, managing exhibits for three NCLA conferences, and overseeing the conference store.

How has NASIG supported Steve in his varying professional positions? Although his job has grown over the years and includes a variety of responsibilities, Steve describes himself as a serials cataloger at heart, saying that NASIG has been enormously helpful in keeping him up to date on changes in serials cataloging, as well as keeping him informed about the serials world in general. The service opportunities that NASIG provides have also been a huge help, and the professional contacts he has made have been very valuable to Steve.

When asked about his hobbies and special interests, Steve admits to being a “general purpose music nerd,” a big music fan who mostly listens to various forms of rock. He was a punk rock/new wave kid as a teenager (Do any pictures survive, Steve?). He goes to a lot of concerts and has been to the South by Southwest music festival several times. Steve also loves baseball, especially the St. Louis Cardinals. He described himself as “rather obnoxious when NASIG was in St. Louis in 2011,” and says he wore a different Cardinals shirt every day of the conference. He is also a comic book reader and collector. He hasn’t counted them in a long while, but says he probably has between thirty-five and forty thousand comics.

When asked what changes he sees for serialists over the next five years, Steve replied, “That’s a tough one.” He thinks that we’ll see more resources that aren’t traditionally defined as serials becoming more serial-like. “That is,” he continues, “we’ll see more resources that are available through subscription payments rather than outright purchase (like a lot of e-book packages), and more electronic resources that grow over time rather than remain as static, clearly-defined things.” Steve further believes that serialists will be brought in more and more to help figure out how to manage these increasingly serial-like resources because serialists understand how to manage things that are paid for by

subscription and how to describe things that change and add content over time.

NASIG can help serialists be prepared for changes like these by continuing to provide great educational opportunities, especially through our conferences and webinars. Both help serialists stay aware of changes in the field. NASIG also provides a forum for discussion that he thinks is very important. Steve feels that the manageable size of NASIG helps this discussion flourish, because some organizations are so large that one can feel rather lost. And, as he noted earlier, Steve believes that serials and subscription-based resources are only going to become more important in the library and publishing worlds, and NASIG is a great place to learn how to deal with them. Steve remembers a joking suggestion by Bob Boissy that NASIG adopt the tag-line, "NASIG: Because We're 80 Percent of Your Materials Budget." Steve observed that there's a lot of truth to that rather tongue-in-cheek statement. He concluded with a short commendation for serialists and NASIG, noting that what we work on is important for our libraries and our institutions, and NASIG provides a community of support and continuing education for serialists.