



## President's Corner

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Betsy Appleton

I've been tossing ideas around for my first President's Corner column for a couple weeks now, and the one that is coming to mind today is thinking about the idea of a literal President's Corner, as if I were joining you via videoconference. It put me in mind of the Twitter account, @ratemyskyperoom. This account passes lighthearted judgment on the video conferencing background choices of public figures. Some of these are polished and professional, others full of personality, and occasionally some are panned as unpolished, cluttered, or too austere.

My own video conferencing corner could use a bit of work, I fear: I share what used to be my actual home office with my now seven-month-old child: It is really a nursery now, and the corner where my desk sits is the only indication it has a different purpose these days. Instead of the bookshelf of interesting, eclectic books and knickknacks off my right shoulder that would lend credibility and authority (apparently), my colleagues will spy a makeshift diaper changing station overwhelming the just-barely-large-enough sewing machine cabinet: the only place this necessity fits in the room as currently arranged. I could probably clean up the clutter on the organizer hanging over my left shoulder, but there's always something else that needs doing before I take the ten minutes to rehome it.

I also wish my colleagues could see what I'm seeing instead: Out the window just over my primary monitor is the canopy of four trees, home to cardinals, insects, and the occasional hummingbird. If I turn my head, there's a crib that coordinates well with the wall color

and space-themed watercolors hanging above. Not to mention that currently sleeping baby inside it.

There are a few things I'd love to highlight in my NASIG President's Corner, and if it were a literal, physical corner I think @ratemyskyperoom would give it a high rating. I am blown away by the work done by our all-volunteer-led committees, particularly those that helped to bring the 2020 conference online in just a few weeks. The 2020 conference was an enormous success and one of the most impressively implemented projects I've ever witnessed. Four times our usual number of attendees were able to join us—over 2,700 registered, and the majority of those attended for the first time. The programming we support and the work we do is important: It matters to our organizations.

Another lovely feature in this corner is that we have a clearer picture of our finances thanks to the efforts of Jessica Ireland and Cris Ferguson this past year to redesign/reformat our working budget. I'd love to shine a light on the work of our committees, continuing to push forward webinars, work through standards, and ensure we will have an incredible program in Madison and beyond. I leave every NASIG board meeting and committee meeting absolutely energized by the dedication and vision of my colleagues.

There are of course some things that I'd like to keep out of my President's Corner, but they are as necessary to NASIG as the diaper changing station I can't obscure in my home office/nursery. Our finances are going to be very tight this year, and what the 2021 conference will look like is entirely unpredictable at this writing. We

have been planning, contingent on funding, to take our conference proceedings Open Access this year.

Unsurprisingly, fundraising during a pandemic/economic downturn has fallen short of our goals. OA proceedings align with organizational values and goals, and yet the reality is that we haven't found a way to make publishing OA proceedings sustainable. Our membership is bearing the brunt of economic downturn: Many of us are furloughed, laid off, or have found ourselves on the job market in the middle of a pandemic amid hiring freezes. Does NASIG have a role in supporting our members or potential members as they navigate their careers in a pandemic? What is our role in supporting our institutional leaders making difficult, and at times literally life-and-death, decisions?

Perhaps the next time you are in a meeting with me, things are going to look a little different in the background. My column deadline happens to be the delivery day for a gift from my child's grandmother: a beautiful dresser that will serve as a far more functional diaper changing station than that sewing machine cabinet. I'll have the opportunity to use my sewing machine again, rearrange the nursery/office, and perhaps even clean up that stack of clutter.

Things are not happening in my home according to my plans these days, nor are they happening for NASIG according to the plans we made even six months ago. Appearances in these corners are mixed right now. But good work is moving forward, and I'm excited to see what accomplishments will be in the background for my next President's Corner this winter.