In my previous President’s Corner column I discussed the idea of holding a vote at the next conference’s Business Meeting to change the official name of our organization from the North American Serials Interest Group to simply NASIG. This sparked a great deal of conversation among the membership, and a number of people suggested that such a vote should be conducted online, rather than at the meeting, so that we can get maximum participation. The Board agreed, and so there should currently be a measure before the membership regarding the name change (I’m writing this in early November and I hope we do actually have the measure under consideration at the time this is published).

When the issue of changing our name was brought up to the membership, several alternative names were suggested. Our initial hope was that we could have a vote among the several contending name suggestions. However, when the Board consulted the Bylaws, we saw that the organizational name is codified in the Bylaws. Any change to the Bylaws must be approved by a two-thirds majority of those members voting. We knew that if we offered several name choices, no one name choice was probably ever going to receive a two-thirds majority, but a single alternative to the current name might be able to muster a two-thirds vote. Based on feedback that the Board received, both publicly and privately, and the preferences expressed, we have decided to put forward a measure to change our name to NASIG. As this measure is a Bylaws change, the proposal has to be put before the membership for a thirty day period of comment. We should be nearing the end of this period at the time this column is published. We are hoping to open the voting period in the middle of December (we’re shooting for December 10th). We will hold the voting period open for a six-week period, to allow for the disruption of the holiday breaks and to give everyone a chance to vote. The Board acknowledges that this is a big change that we’re proposing, but we think the time is right.

The Board is also working on crafting a draft code of conduct to submit to the membership for comment soon. Conference codes of conduct have become an important issue in the last few years, with a number of high profile incidents of bias and/or harassment occurring at various conferences. I know we like to think that this kind of thing will never happen at NASIG (and hopefully it won’t!), but we need to be prepared in case such an incident does occur and have a policy in place. We have had several potential speakers and attendees ask about whether or not we have an official code of conduct, including some who have said that they would not attend the conference if such a policy is not in place. The Board hopes to have a version of a code of conduct available for public comment by early in 2015 and to have a code of conduct in place well before the 2015 conference.

Speaking of the 2015 NASIG conference, don’t forget that this conference will run on a different schedule than usual. We’ll begin the conference on Wednesday, May 27th in Washington, DC with joint programming
with the Society for Scholarly Publishing (SSP). We have a block of rooms available on Tuesday, May 26th, so be sure to come in early and get some rest before the programming begins. We’ll open the NASIG Conference after the joint programming session ends, and the conference will run through the morning of Saturday, May 30th. After the conference, there will be post-conference workshops available (like our regular pre-conferences, just after the conference). Plus, we’ll be having a special celebration of our 30th anniversary, so be sure to mark your calendars for the 2015 NASIG Conference in Washington, DC.

One final note. As all of NASIG’s financial details are public, I think I should let you all know that the 2015 Conference will be more expensive than usual. The combination of the costs involved with the joint programming with SSP, the 30th anniversary celebration, and the general expense of Washington, DC, means that this conference will have higher operating costs than we’re used to seeing. Luckily, the Executive Board set aside the profits from the 2014 Conference in Fort Worth to add to our contingency fund. We might not even have to touch this money, but I wanted to warn the membership upfront that the expenses for 2015 will be unusually high.

However, I believe that the wonderful location, our fantastic programming, and the great opportunity to interact with SSP will attract a huge conference attendance and lots of exhibitors, and that the 2015 Conference will be an enormous success. Be there.