

UKSG CONFERENCE ADDRESS FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE NORTH AMERICAN SERIALS INTEREST GROUP (NASIG)

Connie Foster

Although I am without benefit of inspiration from the quiz this year for my opening remarks, I certainly appreciate not having to interrupt your evening festivities in order to bring greetings from the North American Serials Interest Group, or as we call it, NASIG. I may be the only president serving the shortest term, who has had the opportunity to cross the pond on two consecutive years and for this I am very grateful. I am quite spoiled by these opportunities and already sorry that I cannot join you next year.

Last year our annual conference was held in June in beautiful San Diego, at the University of California. The theme was 'Making Waves: New Serials Landscapes in a Sea of Change.' With registration and guests exceeding 700, we delighted in the open spaces, convenient venue, nearby ocean and an abundance of sunshine. We welcomed the well-crafted observations of Christine Fyfe, who was inspired by the reception at the Birch Aquarium and shared some appropriate analogies about librarians, publishers, and fish.

One of the new program features which we introduced last year at our conference was poster sessions. They were offered during a no conflict time following lunch. In these sessions, presenters share innovative ideas, or new applications of technology in an interactive, informal and non-commercial manner, with project documentation displayed on large 4' x 8' bulletin boards and an abundance of handouts and business cards.

Challenged by such a strong programme, this year we head to Texas for our 16th meeting, May 23rd through 26th and return to Trinity University, which was the site of our 1991 conference. We will engage in the theme 'NASIG 2001: A Serials Odyssey' and be challenged by topics very similar to yours. Licences, copyright issues, e-journal management, consortia arrangements, digital

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libraries, methods of delivery and so many other controversial and practical aspects of serials management and information. Many times we find ourselves wondering just what is a serial today.

Another similarity between our organisations and conferences is the commitment to mentoring students and providing continuing education programmes. We introduce our student grant winners at the opening ceremonies, so that we can seek them out during the conference. We generally offer 8 grants and this year a Mexico NASIG student grant. Additionally, we give a \$2500 to a graduate student in Library Information Science, who is interested in some aspects of serials information. I notice that you have recently initiated a similar objective in giving awards to students who write dissertations in the field of library and information science.

Twice during the year we solicit applications for the Marcia Tuttle International Grant to encourage projects abroad. I think all of these initiatives by both of our organisations express and underscore what Margaret Croucher stressed in her education committee minutes as the need to attract people into the industry, or the serials community, at a very early stage and Christine, the thought just occurred to me, that perhaps we could initiate an effort to exchange student grants between our two international conferences.

Meetings such as this are invaluable to visionaries, publishers, agents and to practitioners, such as myself, who are considered to be intimately, if not obsessively, involved with the details of serials work. This often means using magnifying glasses to read the very fine print for checking information (my personal award goes to Christian Science Monitor for having the smallest volume and issue numbers on their front page); trying to convince a publisher that we actually do want two subscriptions to a title, not an extension of one subscription; or evaluating vendors for the best and most stable management of our serials titles, let alone the flood of print with online

choices, online only and aggregator databases and dealing with a host of other complexities on a daily basis.

UK and NASIG encourage such honest dialogues, generate ideas and provide essential information for the serials community, not to mention again the opportunity to meet so many interesting professionals. I am impressed too that one third of your membership is outside the United Kingdom.

Like you, we have undergone a logo change and web re-design. We are fine tuning the print version of our logo. Our organisation is revising its strategic plan for the 21st century and we have accepted a consultant's report on electronic records management.

I suppose one of the greatest differences between our organisations is that we are truly all volunteers. We have no headquarters, no paid staff and a membership of about 1300, with about 10% of the members involved in committee work. The other big difference, perhaps, is that we discourage and prohibit commercialism. We do not have exhibits yet our membership and conference includes vendors and publishers who come to the conference to talk informally with others and often have programme proposals accepted, but they cannot promote specific products as such.

I am looking forward to the excellent programme of the next two and a half days. I think I am sufficiently over my jet lag to enjoy this and especially the quiz tonight. I am still determined to be in the group that gets the wooden spoon.

Last year I forgot to publicly thank Alison Whitehorn and I want to thank her for her assistance last year and this year, along with Karen Sadler and Christine Fyfe. They do know the meaning of southern hospitality. Again, thank you for the invaluable co-operation between these two organisations. Enjoy every minute of the conference and exhibition and meet at least five new people each day.

Thank you.